THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

CJN

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Remembering Eddie
Brian Greenspan recalls his brother's passion for the law and commitment to justice. **PAGE 8**

Canada and Cuban Jews
Will American Jews supplant Canadians now that the U.S. has moved to ease diplomatic relations? **PAGE 16**

Shmot

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:34 p.m.	5:43 p.m.
Montreal	4:11 p.m.	5:21 p.m.
Toronto	4:41 p.m.	5:48 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:29 p.m.	5:44 p.m.
Calgary	4:31 p.m.	5:48 p.m.
Vancouver	4:15 p.m.	5:29 p.m.

Conservative Judaism's interdating conundrum

Responses varied on youth wing's policy change, **PAGE 12** New rule signals respect and inclusivity: Opinion, **PAGE 13** The USY decision: A CJN conversation, **PAGE 20** Comment, **PAGE 6**

'I call it brotherhood'

Members of 1930s-era youth clubs still meeting more than 70 years later. **PAGE 14**

End of an era as Quebec camp closes

Pripstein's was the last of its kind in the Laurentians. **PAGE 19**

'Hospital veteran' pens play on ethics

Personal story grew out of experiences with her ill son. **PAGE 24**

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An 'unacceptable' ranking, and a now-forbidden gravesite

At least it was ahead of Syria...

The U.S. State Department apparently finds Israel more "unacceptable" than Pakistan, Russia, Egypt, China, Afghanistan or Iraq. According to a recent article in *Foreign Policy* by journalist Micah Zenko that looked at how many times countries' actions were condemned as "unacceptable" in 2014, Israel ranked fourth, behind Syria, Iran and North Korea. Most of the censure related to housing built beyond pre-1967 borders, but some was for Israel's actions in the Gaza war. Vladimir Putin, eat your heart out.

Black Hebrew leader dies

Ben Ammi Ben-Israel, spiritual leader of 3,000 African Hebrew Israelites, known as Black Hebrews, a group of non-Jewish African-Americans in Israel who believe they're descendants of the biblical tribe of Judah, died Dec. 27 in Dimona at age 75. Cause of death wasn't announced. Born Ben Carter in Chicago, he believed some African-Americans descended from members of the tribe of Judah who migrated to West Africa and were sold as slaves in the United States. In 1966, he and a few hundred followers settled in Liberia before moving to Dimona, in the Negev, in 1969. He said the angel Gabriel told him to "return to the Holy Land." Prior to forming the movement, which practises veganism and polygamy, he'd dropped out of high school and joined the U.S. Army.

Ben Ammi Ben-Israel

Pilgrimage cancelled

A court in Alexandria, Egypt, cancelled the annual Jewish pilgrimage to the grave of 19th-century Moroccan Rabbi Yaakov Abu Hasira, in Damanhour in the Nile Delta. The ruling on Dec. 29, the anniversary of his death, was part of a lawsuit alleging the festival violates local traditions. Hundreds of Israelis annually visit the grave of the rabbi, who was on his way to the Holy Land when his ship sank. He survived and made his way to Egypt, where he died in 1880. The court also revoked a 2001 decision by Egypt's Ministry of Culture that listed the tomb as a heritage site and ruled the rabbi's remains shouldn't be transferred to Israel, which made a request two years ago. Visits to the site had been suspended since president Hosni Mubarak's ouster in 2011. ■

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COVER PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Gematria

8.3 million

The population of Israel at the end of 2014 – 75 per cent Jewish, 21 per cent Arab and 4.3 per cent "others" – the Central Bureau of Statistics reported, up two per cent over 2013.

2016

The year Palestinians will equal the number of Jewish Israelis in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

Quotable

Most people will never visit Auschwitz. Let them know it, then, through exhibitions like this.

— Laszlo Mezei on his photo exhibit at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. **More on p. 34.**

On CJNEWS.com

Terror attack victim Howie Rothman's family gets financial help from Canadian Jews.

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Letters to the Editor

Tribute to Béliveau

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed Paul Lungen's tribute to Jean Béliveau ("Hockey legend Jean Béliveau was my idol growing up," Dec. 25).

Although I've been a lifelong Leafs supporter, I've always been a great admirer of Béliveau. He was the only player who had the potential to sway my loyalty. I watched the entire funeral service and tried to think of any player, past or present, who would garner the type of attention and accolades that were so much a part of Béliveau.

Béliveau made hockey the game that it was meant to be, played for love of the sport, not for the dollar.

Ellen Weiser
Toronto

Carlebach and Cosby

It is hard to find a more perfect example of character assassination and lashon hara than Asher Lovy's comparison of Bill Cosby and Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach ("Carlebach and Cosby: can we separate art and artist?" Dec. 18.)

The actor and comedian Bill Cosby is accused by numerous women of drugging and raping them while they were unconscious – a truly criminal act.

Rabbi Carlebach was part of the 1960s free love movement and did break the Orthodox taboo of *negiah* (forbidden touching) by hugging his holy brothers and holy sisters, and many women sought him out precisely to feel the warm embrace of this charismatic and gifted rabbi.

There have been innuendoes over the years that his loving hugs of some women may have crossed the line into impropriety, but that is hardly in the same category as Cosby, and sadly, Rabbi Carlebach is not alive to defend himself.

In fact, the only thing Cosby and Rabbi Carlebach have in common is that their last names start with a C.

Ezra Franken
Montreal

Premier doesn't merit award

I am profoundly troubled that the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) would honour Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne with the Words and Deeds Leadership Award, given the position previously and aggressively adopted by her when she opposed the public funding of our Jewish day schools.

Wynne was utterly disrespectful of our views and opinions when she attacked those who would argue in favour of equity in the public funding of our children's schools. We were treated like second-class citizens then, and she continues to treat us as such.

Honouring Wynne demonstrates a serious lack of judgment on CIJA's part. CIJA is clearly out of touch with the thousands of parents who continue to suffer the debilitating financial burden of sending their children to Jewish schools.

Perhaps Wynne will respond to CIJA's efforts to aggrandize her by contributing more funds to build large and expensive edifices, which our community leaders believe we so desperately need. Buildings alone, however, will not generate a new generation of Jewish children who are supportive of Jewish and Zionist values.

Joseph Adler
Toronto

Rescue versus collaboration

I have been following the argument of whether Reszo Kastner was a collaborator or a rescuer ("When rescue is not collaboration," Dec. 4).

One very important comment is missing. Those people he was able to save paid a ransom (Swiss bank accounts, gold, silver, diamonds, etc.). It is well known that only rich families were able to do that.

I survived the Holocaust in Budapest. I was a forced labourer, digging trenches beside the Danube River, and then liberated from the ghetto.

Frances Blau
Toronto

The impossibility of peace

Yossi Klein Halevi says, "The [Israeli] right was correct about the impossibility of reaching an agreement with the Palestinian national movement that denies our legitimacy in any borders," (Dec. 11). He ignores the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative endorsed by every Arab state at the Arab League summit in Beirut, and re-endorsed at their 2007 meeting. It is a significant denial of that "impossibility."

Bernard Katz
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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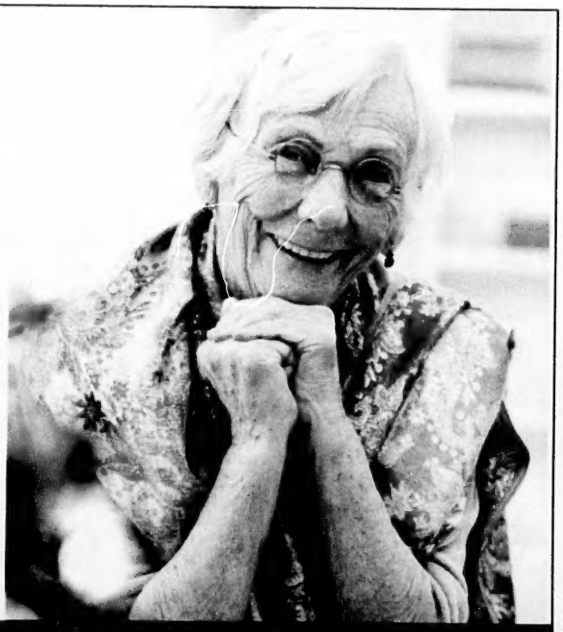

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RABBI·2·RABBI

The power of the pulpit

Talmudic and halachic brilliance has its place, but the pace and intensity of the synagogue rabbinate, as well as tending to congregational needs, present challenges and opportunities

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Scheier: There's a great saying attributed to Rebbe Uri of Strelisk (also known as HaSaraf, 1757-1826): "None of us serves our generation alone. For example, David continues to inspire the downcast with his fiery passion, generation after generation. And Sampson's heroics continue to give courage to the meek until this day."

In my journey of learning, I've been blessed to encounter many "greats" whose teachings and attributes I attempt to share with my community. In addition to the great attributes of out ancestors, there are contemporary Jewish heroes who inspire and influence. If only I could convey Rabbi Avi Weiss' love of Jews, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' brilliant articulation of Jewish values and ideas, and the late Rabbi David Hartman's passionate struggle with, and love for, our tradition.

Who are the greats you invite to accompany you as you serve our generation?

Rabbi Cutler: In my rabbinic life, the creative tensions between the teachings of rabbis and professors Joel Roth, Neil Gillman and Gordon Tucker at the Jewish Theological Seminary continue to influence the way I think and teach about Judaism.

In my personal life, I have been drawn to the character of Elisha ben Avuya, as he is portrayed in rabbinic literature and Rabbi Milton Steinberg's classic book *As A Driven Leaf*. The pull he felt between tradition and modernity, between the Jewish world and the secular world, is a theme that inspires the way I choose to live my life.

Certainly, when I think of rabbis whose best characteristics I try to emulate, I think of my childhood rabbi, the late Joseph Kelman of Toronto's Beth Emeth Synagogue, and his foundational role in establishing programs for Jewish adults with developmental challenges. I am also fortunate to serve alongside a wonderful senior rabbi, Baruch Frydman-Kohl, whose tirelessness and remarkable devotion has taught me much.

It's interesting to me that two of the three rabbis you list spent much of their career outside of the pulpit rabbinate. It was after they left the pulpit that rabbis Hartman and Sacks gained their international reputations and exerted their strongest influences. Is there something about the pulpit rabbinate that makes certain types of Jewish expressions or scholarship challenging? Does moving beyond our synagogues open up space for greater influence or the expression of values that are otherwise hidden?

Rabbi Scheier: When I was deciding which rabbinical school to attend, it was important to me to be exposed not only to great talmudic and halachic brilliance, but also to role models in the practical rabbinic pulpit.

My rabbinical school, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, did just that, beginning with the founder, Rabbi Avi Weiss. Further, of the many rabbis and scholars I learned from, the one who had the greatest impact on my life (in terms of ethics and *weltanschauung*) was a pulpit rabbi: it was the concern for humanity and genuine interest in his parishioners' lives that I observed in Rabbi Aryeh Sokoloff (formerly of my hometown, Rochester, N.Y.) that made me believe in the potential power of the pulpit rabbinate.

Everything about the pace and intensity of the pulpit, along with the responsibility of tending to institutional and pastoral needs, challenges the primacy of Torah study in a rabbi's life. The great paradox is that a rabbi's hectic schedule often makes finding personal time for Torah study one of the rabbi's greatest challenges.

Rabbi Cutler: What I continue to love about the pulpit rabbinate is that every day presents new challenges and opportunities. Many often think of pulpit rabbis as specialists, but we know that we're general practitioners. We get to preach, foster institutional change, teach, counsel, manage budgets, lead communal prayer and much, much more. Five-and-a-half years out of seminary, I continue to get excited when my phone rings, never knowing what the next question or task will bring. The sheer diversity of what I do keeps me excited to come to shul every day.

More than any other Jewish institution, synagogues are the key to fostering a vibrant, meaningful Jewish life. We connect to more people at more key points in life and offer a larger variety of services than any other single institution. Synagogues are playing a central role in the creation of a positive future. ■

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From the Archives | Hockey classic

GORDON MENDLY /ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Youths at Ner Israel Yeshiva College brace themselves against the cold and get together for a hockey game in 1965.

SeeJN | Storm brewing

YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

A woman holds an umbrella to protect herself from the rain as she walks in downtown Jerusalem on a stormy day Jan. 4. The city was bracing itself for a major snowstorm expected on Jan. 7.

From Yoni's Desk

Taking sides on the USY decision

On Dec. 22, United Synagogue Youth (USY) announced a change to its policy on interdating for young leaders. In this week's *CJN*, we explore the controversial decision by the youth wing of Conservative Judaism and what it means for the greater Conservative movement.

As Rabbi Adam Cutler explains in an engaging dialogue with Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, the previous wording directed USY leaders to "refrain from relationships which can be construed as interdating." The new language, by contrast, encourages young Conservative authorities to "strive to model healthy Jewish dating choices" – which includes "recognizing the importance of dating within the Jewish community."

The difference between the old and new text is small, and interdating remains taboo, albeit perhaps less so than before. Moreover, the decision affects a tiny number of young Jewish leaders. As United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism CEO Rabbi Steven Wernick tells *CJN* reporter Sheri Shefa, the interdating rule – both the old one and the new one – is enforceable only for "kids who wish to become regional officers or international officers or board members." That's less than 100 people in total.

Even so, some Conservative leaders are welcoming the amendment as a sign of greater progress. "The previous language was negative, and they replaced it with positive language," Rabbi Stephen Schwarzman of Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Toronto tells Shefa. "I think it's an effort to be in step with the times, and when I say that, I don't mean it negatively, I mean it positively."

Meanwhile, in an article in this week's *CJN*, Emma Pascoe, a recent USY leader, argues, "USYers aren't denying that dating within the faith is an important principle. However, they note that some USYers come from families where only one parent may have grown up in a Jewish home, or who may have at one point had a relationship with a non-Jew." For Pascoe, the change in language is proof that "values of respect and inclusivity are alive and well in today's Conservative Jewish youth."

But for other Conservative leaders, the USY amendment sets a dangerous precedent. Rabbi Jarrod Grover, the spiritual leader of Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto, pulled no punches when he spoke to Shefa. "I think this shows a weakening of the movement's principles," he said, "and I am appalled about what happened."

"I think it is important that the movement knows what it believes in, as it should know what it does not believe in," he continued, "and that's the problem. That we are afraid to say what we do not believe in."

Rabbi Cutler maintains that "a generous reading of the amendment would result in no practical change." And yet, he admits "a subtle practical shift has, in fact, taken place."

The USY decision is only a few weeks old, and it remains to be seen to what extent the actions of young leaders will affect the greater Conservative movement. Conservative decision-makers are already taking sides on the matter, and time will tell whether the two opposing viewpoints can find some middle ground. As Rabbi Frydman-Kohl tells Rabbi Cutler, "bridges are important, but there also have to be borders."

The question is: when do you build bridges, and when do you secure your borders? ■ — YONI

The Wajcblum sisters: Auschwitz saboteurs

Sharon Abron Drache

From her liberation in 1945 until her death in 2011, Anna Wajcblum Heilman faithfully marked the anniversaries of two uniquely related Auschwitz events. The first was the Oct. 7, 1944 Sonderkommando uprising, during which Crematorium IV was blown up. The second was the Jan. 5, 1945, hanging of four young women – Ala Gertner, Roza Rabota, Regina Safirsztajn and Anna's sister, Estusia – held accountable for smuggling gunpowder to the Sonderkommandos.

At Auschwitz, the Wajcblum sisters were passed from one kommando (slave labour unit) to another until they volunteered for a kommando at the Weichsell Metal Union Werke (the Auschwitz Munitions Factory). They were assigned to separate work detail – Estusia to the Pulverraum, where the gunpowder was manufactured, and Anna to a work table of 11 girls outside the Pulverraum. Each girl was handed a measuring instrument called a *lehre* (gauge) to check the accuracy of indentations created by a giant machine called the *Presse*.

To save herself from the tedium of the robotic assignment, Anna dared to sneak over to the *Presse* to see how it worked. She discovered that the distance between her table and the machines was incredibly short, and she stored this information at the back of her mind.

As work at the factory continued, the girls learned that the Polish Home Army (PHA) was in contact with the Polish Underground in Auschwitz (PUA). There was a plan in place for the PHA to attack the camp from the outside while the PUA and other prisoners would do what they could to help from the inside. Reminded of their Hashomer Hatzair (Zionist youth group) resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto, Anna and Estusia joined the insiders to collect and hide whatever implements they could find for the future revolt, including hammers, ropes, axes, knives, insulated wire-cutting shears and even guns.

Anna Wajcblum Heilman
WAYNE CUDDINGTON, OTTAWA CITIZEN PHOTO

To keep up their spirits, the girls talked long into the night. One evening, Ala Gertner revealed that the Sonderkommandos, male slaves responsible for leading prisoners to the gas chambers and removing the corpses after they were showered with poisonous gas, were also planning a revolt in conjunction with the PHA. (Every few months, the Sonderkommandos were liquidated, shoved into the ovens by their replacements.)

In her diary, Anna wrote: "We didn't have weapons. What we were collecting was better than nothing, but not much… I talked to Estusia about trying to steal gunpowder from the factory and passing it to Roza. Estusia was aghast. She wouldn't hear of it. It was impossible, ridiculous, forget it. I wouldn't let her be. Finally, with trepidation, she gave in."

The gunpowder was slate grey with the consistency of coarse salt. Estusia's seat was the first leading to the inside door of the factory. Anna writes: "Once a day I used to walk in with an empty box, give it to Estusia, and get a box full of debris to be emptied into the garbage bin. Estusia would put small quantities of gunpowder wrapped in pieces of knotted cloth, hidden among the garbage."

Back at the work table, Anna stuffed the gunpowder into small pouches sewn inside her dress. The smugglers returned to the camp in groups of three, always trying to be in the middle of a column, never at the end, never at the beginning, so that when they heard the dreaded word "inspection," they had time to spill the hidden gunpowder and grind it into the ground. They succeeded in bringing back substantial quantities of gunpowder to the camp, passing it from one insider to another until it reached Roza Rabota, who deposited it at the wires near the crematorium for her lover to pick up.

As they waited for their password, the Sonderkommandos made crude grenades from metal shoe polish tins, packing them with the stolen gunpowder to be ignited by small wicks of braided cotton. But when an informer told the SS of the impending plot, they decided to act on their own, blowing up Crematorium IV on Oct. 7, 1944. Analysis of the gunpowder traced it to the union factory.

Interrogations began. Rozyczka (Rose Meth), who worked in the Pulverraum with Estusia, was terribly beaten. She revealed nothing. During an inspection of the union factory's night shift, Klara, a Russian (whom Anna and Estusia had never trusted) was questioned when she was found with a parcel of bread that her boyfriend had given her. Instead of betraying him, she told the SS guards that if they let her go she would name one of the girls involved in smuggling the gunpowder. Klara betrayed Ala Gertner. After a terrible beating, she broke down and denounced Roza Rabota and Estusia, who were taken to the *bunker*, a prison in the men's camp under the control of the Jewish kapo, Jacob. A few days later, they were released, more dead than alive. In December, Estusia, Ala and Roza were taken back to the bunker with Regina Safirztajn, the supervisor of the Pulverraum.

Marta, who worked in the *packerai* (post office) in the men's camp, became the messenger for the two sisters during Estusia's final torture sessions. With Jacob's orders from Berlin to hang the girls, one last note came from Estusia: "I know what is in store for me, but I readily go to the gallows. I only ask that you take care of my sister Hanka, so that I may die easier." Marta responded, "Estusia, I promise that I will never abandon Hanka."

• • •

On June 19, 1991, in the memorial garden of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, a monument was dedicated to Ala Gertner, Roza Rabota, Regina Safirztajn and Estusia Wajcblum. Anna and her oldest sister, Sabina, were given the honour of lighting the eternal flame.

Anna Wajcblum Heilman died on May 1, 2011. She was buried on May 2, exactly 66 years after she was officially liberated. Whenever she spoke about the gunpowder plot, she bore witness reluctantly, with the ghost of her beloved sister hovering close by. ■

Sharon Abron Drache's most recent book is Barbara Klein-Muskrat then & now.

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Eddie Greenspan: dedicated to justice and defending the defenceless

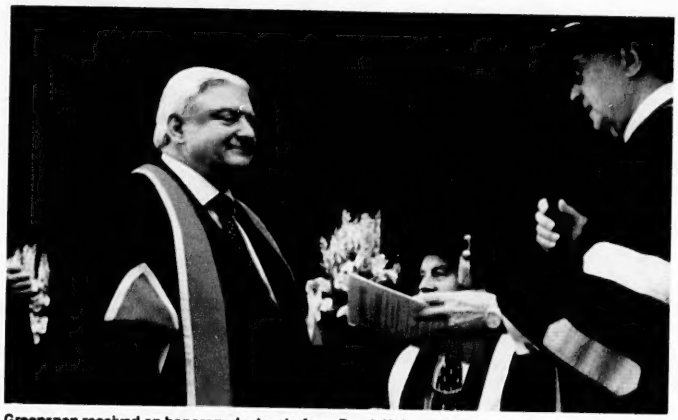
BRIAN GREENSPAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

(Editor's note: Eddie Greenspan passed away Dec. 24 at the age of 70. Below is an excerpt from his brother Brian's eulogy.)

My brother Eddie ascended, and eventually transcended, the very peak of the legal profession. From a fiercely talented, young advocate, he rose to become the model for all of us who wanted to be lawyers in the first place. The tributes to Eddie's remarkable life have eloquently and publicly resonated throughout our country these past few days – it is clear from the countless messages of admiration and affection that so many of you share our profound sadness and that our heartbreak is your heartbreak – our entire family is deeply grateful for the tremendous outpouring of love and respect.

Eddie's devotion to our justice system is legendary. His enormous contribution to the administration of criminal justice has been and will continue to be a source of inspiration to current and future generations of those who view the role of the defence as Eddie did: as the defenders of democracy. As the safeguard against tyranny.

But his passion for justice – and his passionate fight against injustice – represented only one aspect of his remarkable life. He was intolerant of intolerance, he couldn't fathom disloyalty, and despite his apparent comfort and ease with the smell of the greasepaint and the roar of the crowd, he was intensely private, in some ways almost shy. He was passionate about his family, he was passionate about his friendships, he was passionate about literature and film, he was passionate about food and travel, and he was passionate about his continuing search for knowledge. Eddie's library was the temple in which he thoughtfully and meticulously housed his life of learning and ideas, ideas he shared so generously with law students, colleagues, friends and family.



Greenspan received an honorary doctorate from Brock University in 2012. BROCK UNIVERSITY PHOTO

Eddie was not only our lifelong friend and confidante, he was the barometer by which we judged our successes and our failures. Despite his toughness at times, Eddie embodied our mother's values – he was unfailingly and genuinely courteous and respectful to everyone he met. His celebrated sense of humour, his impeccable timing, his deadpan delivery, were foreshadowed by his contagious sense of mischief – the twinkle in his eye. He was addicted to the comedians of the '60s – while our friends listened to Motown, he recited verbatim Shelley Berman, Lenny Bruce, Jackie Mason, Bob Newhart and the Smothers Brothers. Eddie would take a simple line – a simple theme – and make it a comedic symphony. It always began with that twinkle in his eye, that sense of mischief – always self-effacing, relentlessly on target, but never mean.

I fondly recall perhaps the one occasion when neither his sense of mischief nor his sense of humour put a smile on our mother's face. While home for the weekend in Niagara Falls during his first year in university, he asked our mother if he could borrow the car to go out on a date. Mom, always a soft touch, gave him the car. Only he hadn't told her that the date was almost two hours away in Toronto.

He phoned me, his 16-year-old brother, at midnight. "Cover for me," he said. He had been at Fran's Restaurant with his date, only to discover that mom's car had been stolen while he was eating a hamburger.

"What should I say?" I asked. "Be creative," he replied.

But no amount of creativity could have saved the day. By the time he called again, a few hours later, the car had been found downtown, crashed into a wall. Still, Eddie's creativity, his early advocacy, did save the day – he convinced mom that she had, in fact, known he was going to Toronto and that he was the victim of this horrible and traumatic crime.

Niagara Falls was not only our birthplace, it was a town in which the values of loyalty, friendship and generosity – values in which Eddie so deeply believed – were fostered and embraced. When our father passed away, Niagara's small, but tightly knit Jewish community provided both emotional and financial support, and arranged subsidies for us to attend Young Judaea camps. Our family had been firmly rooted in Yiddish tradition and culture, and through our involvement in Young Judaea – which Eddie brought to Niagara Falls – we developed a strong and indelible connection with Israel. It was a connection to which Eddie was devoted throughout his life: Israel as a beacon of democracy and hope.

Canada's pursuit of social justice was both enhanced and advanced on almost a daily basis over the course of the past 45 years by my brother, just as on a daily basis he enriched the lives of family and friends. The courts, his colleagues and his clients will long remember his forceful advocacy, and his dedication to justice and the defence of the defenceless.

Those of us who knew him and loved him will cherish the memory of his warmth, his intellect, his humour, his perceptiveness, and his sage advice. Eddie's life was not only well lived, it was lived courageously, with an unerring sense of purpose and compassion. ■

Brian Greenspan is a defence lawyer in Toronto.

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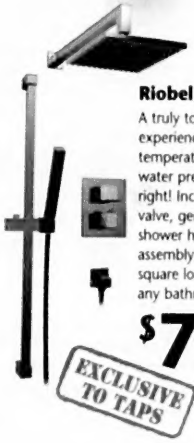

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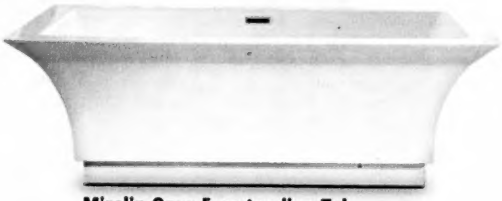

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Time to expose hypocrisy of campus anti-Zionists

Gil Troy

Part of the reason why most of my pro-Israel advocacy, on campus and off, focuses on building a positive, proactive Zionist vision is because much pro-Israel advocacy is depressing. The arguments go round and round. The hatred against Israel is irrational, disproportionate and often vicious.

The now-infamous video of an ISIS flag welcomed when waved at UC Berkeley – and an Israeli flag repeatedly denounced – reflects a broader epidemic of idiocy – and unfairness – on campuses. ISIS activists are sadists. Anybody who pays attention to the Middle East would find videos of these Islamosadists gleefully beheading opponents and randomly shooting at civilians, all in the name of their Islamist state. Yet despite this despicable behaviour, I am unaware of a single demonstration against ISIS on campus. Meanwhile, the demonization of Israel continues.

Israel isn't perfect, but the pile-on against the Jewish state is disproportionate, irrational and not only about Israeli actions or Palestinian rights. Further proof of the bias has come from two exposes by honest college students who refuse to be manipulated any more by the haters.

Holly Bicerano, a Boston University student, was an Open Hillel activist. Believing in free speech and open debate, she naively joined the movement to push the Jewish umbrella organization on campus to host anti-Israel speakers. Why Jews must host anti-Israel speakers when feminist organizations never host misogynists, gay organizations never host homophobes, and anti-Israel organizations never host Zionists is beyond me. How this becomes a free speech issue when there are so many other venues on campus for anti-Israel programs, including anti-Israel "apartheid" weeks, is also beyond me. I guess I'm not a good enough academic to ignore facts and logic and simply embrace ideology.

Bicerano, however, noticed two disturbing trends at (allegedly) Open Hillel, the more she became involved. First, Open Hillel wanted to host pro-boycott speakers – that an organization devoted to openness would welcome crusaders for shutting down contacts and debate made no sense. She also discovered the intolerance of the supposedly tolerant, that "many Open Hillel leaders are intolerant of pro-Israel voices that they dislike." In other words, much of Open Hillel was more about creating a one-sided anti-Israel Hillel, using often the only Jewish space on campus to trash the only Jewish state. She resigned, and outed Open Hillel in a *Times of Israel* column.

Similarly, over the summer, Anthony Berteaux, a non-Jewish, pro-Palestinian columnist at San Diego State University, noticed that Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) "demonized Israel and Jewish students" in trying to get "the public to see Israel as a terrorist state." The rhetoric, falsely comparing Israel to annihilationist Nazi Germany and to racist South Africa, disturbed him. He watched the news and saw Israel trying to limit damage in Gaza. He read Israel's declaration of independence and saw the commitment to "equality." Feeling duped, realizing that "Hate… is not a pathway toward peace," he denounced SJP and was then targeted along with other pro-Israel activists on campus as an Islamophobe, ethnic cleanser, etc.

These two undergraduates should be commended for having the intellectual integrity to go public, correct their mistakes and out their dishonest colleagues. But we should be careful. Just because there is some dishonesty on the anti-Israel side does not make Israel perfect or every Israel critic an anti-Semite. Yet there are disturbing patterns: mass blind spots demonizing Israel while excusing Palestinian and Islamist behaviour. Academics and activists with integrity should ask why while pro-Israel activists need to make sure that in our justifiable anger, we don't go overboard and mirror our enemies by shutting down debate or demonizing enemies. Berteaux noticed that the campus pro-Israel club did not mimic its enemy. The Zionist activists had "integrity." That's more precious than winning the occasional debating point. ■

Information technologies, community and thinking

Sara Horowitz

Whether you embrace or reject new information technologies, it's clear that new ways of communicating, generating and absorbing knowledge have an impact on how we learn and think. Much of our world now happens online.

With the accessibility of the web, print publishers increasingly struggle to maintain a reader base and financial solvency. The end of 2014 saw the effective demise of the *New Republic*, a century-old magazine defined by its in-depth analyses of politics and culture, progressive orientation and support for Israel. Its owner, Facebook billionaire Chris Hughes, forced out senior editors Franklin Foer and Leon Wieseltier and began morphing *TNR* into a trendier and more profitable digital media company that promises a "more diverse" outlook (something many interpret as signalling a different stance on Israel).

It's hard to not read into the *New Republic* saga a cautionary tale about new technology and what drives readership and profits on the web. Many periodicals that began as print publications make their digitized content available online – including daily and weekly newspapers, magazines and scholarly journals. The Jewish world has been enriched by this access, as well as by e-zines born as online venues, such as *Tablet* and *Jewcy*.

Sometimes this makes print publications superfluous. For example, with our 2014 issue, my co-editor, Gilah Langer, and I decided to wind down *Kerem*, a journal of creative explorations in Judaism. We founded *Kerem* in 1992 to publish articles with a modern take on Jewish thought, texts and rituals. Today, the online archive of our magazine (www.kerem.org) joins many other virtual homes for such material, which appears with an immediacy that print cannot match. Want a baby-naming ritual for girls? I can get you 40. Want an egalitarian wedding ceremony? Here are 50. How about interpretations of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac, in Genesis? Wait – over 200.

So what does this technology bring us? A richness of resources? An overwhelming but uncurated collection of material? A dumbing down? A smartening up? Yes and yes! In truth, we are still in the throes of this revolution. We cannot yet assess how it will change our ways of learning, thinking and relating to one another. But change them it will, just as did the previous technology revolution – the printing press.

How will this affect our Jewish lives? Well, the printing press did not kill Torah. Instead, industrialized printing enabled the proliferation of Bible, commentaries and other things Jewish. More economical and quicker to produce than hand-written scrolls and folios, printed volumes facilitated study. But they also changed the way people engaged. Literacy displaced memory – or, to put it differently, reading began to replace memorization and recitation.

The sensory experience of learning shifted with the move from recitation to reading. With recitation, space and time are important. We must gather together at the hour and location where recitation takes place, stand or sit as the setting and protocols permit, and hear the same words. The ear, the voice, the breath come into play. We constitute community because we literally come together, and because we partake of the same sensorium.

Reading introduces a tension between individual and community. We choose the space, time and duration. But we can converse with folks in many places about what we've read. We become a community of readers, bound not by geography and time, but by our minds.

Even as Jewish learning embraced the opportunities of print technology, Jewish ritual retained earlier learning practices. Rather than fading into artifact, the scroll and its recitation maintained a crucial role in the enactment of Jewish community and spiritually. In retrospect, Judaism accomplished an important feat, embracing both the new and the old.

Still in their infancy, today's and tomorrow's new technologies will change how we learn, think and constitute community in ways we can't yet anticipate. Our challenge will be to embrace what they make possible, but to hold onto what they threaten to eclipse. ■

I guess you missed the joke

Michael Taube

For my first *CJN* column of 2015, I'll be dealing with something I wrote about in 2014.

A strange way to start the new year? Yes, but I wanted to set the record straight on a piece that was unfortunately misinterpreted. It's a rare occurrence when I need to issue a mea culpa, but this is one of those moments.

Briefly, I wrote a column in November about the Jewish political shift from the Liberals to the Tories in the 2011 federal election. To be provocative, I attempted to show that this phenomenon may have some historical roots.

I brought up the example of the "first Jewish Liberal-Conservative," Henry Nathan, Jr. The B.C. Liberal MP was the first Jew ever elected to the House of Commons. At the same time, he strongly supported Sir John A. Macdonald and the Conservatives – or, as they used to be called, the Liberal-Conservatives.

Nathan had valid personal and political reasons for siding with Canada's first prime minister. Even so, I still wrote, "Did this political shift suddenly occur with the [Stephen] Harper Tories, or has it been going on since Macdonald's time? You decide."

For the record, I was just trying to have some fun. I've written extensively about Canadian politics, and the history of Canadian conservatism, for nearly 20 years. This includes comparisons of Red Tories and Blue Tories, fiscal conservatives and social conservatives, right-leaning political parties, and every Tory PM from Macdonald to Harper.

Hence, I know that Nathan was never a Tory. I know that the Macdonald Conservatives were politically and ideologically different from the Harper Tories. As well, I know – and have even mentioned it in this publication – that the Jewish political shift to the Tories can be primarily traced to the 2011 federal election.

So, what happened? I assumed readers would understand I was being edgy and provocative. Some people did, thank goodness. Others didn't.

In particular, it was Bernie Farber's rebuttal column that caught my eye.

It may surprise some people, but I've always liked and respected Farber. While it's true that his political and economic views are "radically different" than mine (no arguments there, Bernie!), he provides an alternative perspective on various issues. I've always been pleased to read his work, and the fact that I rarely agree with him is rather trivial in the grand scheme of things.

Farber has also been a strong defender of the Canadian Jewish community and was the last CEO of the now-defunct Canadian Jewish Congress. He, along with Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs CEO Shimon Fogel, recently retired B'nai Brith CEO Frank Dimant and newly appointed B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn (who, as fate would have it, is a cousin of mine), all deserve respect. They've earned it.

That being said, when Farber wrote about my "rather fantastical theory that Jews have been moving into the political Conservative fold gradually, as opposed to in what most pundits have agreed has been a major and sudden shift of allegiance," I was stunned. When someone who has read my work for years misinterprets my position, I know I've done something wrong.

In many ways, it's my own doing. I tend to be a serious writer and thinker, mixing in the occasional lighthearted and/or dark comedic line or paragraph. I may have a sense of humour, but I'm definitely not a comedian.

More to the point, all I needed to do was add a small reference to show that I was teasing. It's a rookie mistake to assume that an audience is in on the joke. I'm not a rookie, and have the grey hair and war wounds to prove it. Hence, I should have known better.

Could I have swept this entire matter under the rug? Easily, but that's not my style.

So, I'm sorry. I'll be more clear in the future. And that's no joke. ■

Arava oil spill has many impacts and lessons

Paul Kay

Consider this scenario: a petroleum pipeline crosses a political entity. Its charge of crude oil originates outside that state, destined for use perhaps in that state or, more likely, beyond its borders. There is a break in the pipe, and large quantities of oil leak onto the land and into the water table of this in-between state. Sensitive ecological systems are damaged or threatened, economic costs are large and political oversight is revealed to be compromised.

It sounds like the basis for the plot of a political thriller or a scenario concocted by opponents of the XL Pipeline in the United States, the Northern Gateway project in British Columbia or Enbridge's Line 9 through Toronto. But in fact, just such an event occurred in the south of Israel last month.

On Dec. 3, a breach in a 42-inch pipe of the Trans-Israel Pipeline began leaking crude oil near the small Arava community of Be'er Ora. Almost immediately, Israel's Ministry of Environmental Protection called the situation "one of the gravest pollution events in the country's history." There were at least three major reasons for such an assessment: environmental, economic and political.

Some 5 million litres of oil leaked nearly seven kilometres south into the Evrona Nature Preserve. The Arava is extremely arid. Lines of acacia trees mark the dry watercourses, which flood in rare rain events. Acacias are an important food resource for desert insects, rodents, larger mammals and birds, including the vast number of migrants that follow the valley twice a year. Acacias are also shallow-rooted, so even if quick action is successful in vacuuming most of the oil that has pooled on the surface, residual oil that seeps into the soil may threaten their survival.

It was feared the oil might also reach Eilat, some 20 kilometre away, threatening the Red Sea coral reefs. Hard work succeeded in building containment berms, spreading absorptive materials, and pumping up pooled oil to avert this threat. However, environmental damage was done at Evrona, and the long-term prospects are unclear.

Economic concerns are multi-faceted. There is the lost revenue from those millions of litres of oil and the costs of emergency response. The company and the ministry may be sued for damages. Hidden costs may also include long-term health effects. Although air quality monitoring suggests there was no threat to residents in Eilat, high levels of benzene were noted at the site of the spill. And there was at least one report of 80 people being hospitalized in Aqaba, Jordan, due to exposure to hydrogen sulphide.

The Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline was built in the 1960s to transport Iranian oil across Israel, mostly for sale to European markets. Although that arrangement with Iran ceased with the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, oil continues to enter the pipeline. The Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Company (EAPC), established to market Persian oil via Israel, is a private company that operates opaquely due to outdated laws: the 1952 oil law did not contemplate environmental concerns, and a 1968 government order declares EAPC's operations confidential (supposedly for geopolitical security reasons), which also protects it from enforcement of environmental regulations. Indeed, the Nature and Parks Administration and the city of Eilat, professed ignorance of what the pipeline carries. Interlocking relationships between members of the government and civil service and the directorship of the EAPC further complicate the situation.

Pipelines will leak. No mechanical system lasts without constant maintenance and oversight. On the scale of known oil disasters elsewhere, the Arava leak is quite small. But the damage to local environment, the costs of clean-up and remediation, and the damage to political relationships – and the trust of citizens in government – are nonetheless important to consider.

We need to get oil from source to point of use. But we must do so in a trustworthy and environmentally conscious way. ■

Paul Kay is associate professor emeritus of environment and resource studies at the University of Waterloo.

News

Cover Story

Opinions vary on USY interdating policy change

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

United Synagogue Youth's (USY) recent decision to amend the language in its constitution concerning interfaith dating for its teen leaders has Conservative rabbis and movement members debating the implications of the move.

Late last month, 750 teens came to Atlanta for the USY international convention, and the Conservative youth movement's board voted to adopt a number of new amendments, including a controversial change to the wording of its interdating policy.

"They had a standard for leadership that used to say USY leaders should refrain from dating that might be construed as interdating," said Rabbi Steven Wernick, CEO of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

"The new language says that USY leaders should strive to make healthy Jewish dating choices, including the recognition of the importance of dating Jews and treating all people *Betzelem Elokim*, in the image of God… The old ruling was 'thou shalt not,' and the new ruling is 'thou shall.'"

Rabbi Wernick explained that the amendments were drafted by USY teens who have been working on it for nearly a year, seeking guidance from sources ranging from their peers to prominent rabbis.

"They processed the input, talked about the pros and cons, and ran an excellent meeting," Rabbi Wernick said.

"There were 42 present for the final discussion and vote, but the standards affect less than 100 kids. They affect the kids who wish to become regional officers or international officers or board members… It was a true constitutional process. This is all about the teens wrestling with… how to connect traditions to their awareness of their realities. That's what this was about."

He said to the best of his knowledge, the former interdating clause had never been enforced to the point of having to dismiss any USY leaders on the grounds that they were dating a non-Jew.

"But I do know that people were discouraged from running for office if they couldn't commit to that, and I can tell you that we are going to continue to review with those who wish to run for regional or national office that these are the standards USY has set for themselves and we want people to understand them and acknowledge them and commit [to the idea] that if they are going to be a leader, this is what they are going to do," Rabbi Wernick said.

Rabbi Stephen Schwarzman, spiritual leader of Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Thornhill, Ont., which is home to a USY chapter, said he doesn't think the change in the wording of the policy will have a serious effect on the movement as a whole.

"I think it's an effort to be in step with the times, and when I say that, I don't mean it negatively, I mean it positively. The previous language was negative, and they replaced it with positive language," said the American-born Rabbi Schwarzman, who came to Toronto last year after serving congregations in Maine and Massachusetts.

"I know as a rabbi… especially in the U.S. – less so here in Canada – there are not a whole lot of conversations you can have that begin with the language of [what's] forbidden… What you have to do as a rabbi is recognize that we live in an open… society. No one is required to be Jewish anymore. Those who choose to be Jewish need to be motivated and inspired, and I think that their decision to go from negative language to positive language is probably part of that," he said.

Rabbi Steven Wernick

"I do appreciate how different Canadian Jewry is from American Jewry. We speak the same language, and for all intents and purposes, we look and sound the same, but things here really are different… There is an intensity and involvement in the Canadian community that I've seen so far, and the American community would do very well if they could emulate it."

The spiritual leader of Toronto's Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Rabbi Jarrod Grover, is not as forgiving.

"I think this shows a weakening of the movement's principles… and I am appalled about what happened," Rabbi Grover said.

"Remember that a week before [USY voted to amend its policy], there was a big controversy in the movement because a rabbi at a prominent Conservative synagogue in Boston suggested that he would be conducting interfaith marriages. So in the midst of this, to come out with softer language is part of the struggle of the movement, which is dying in the States," he said.

Rabbi Grover added that the movement is struggling to find a balance between adhering to its religious principles and becoming as welcoming as possible.

"I think that this move on the part of USY – again it affects hardly any people – it is not going to have any real impact, but it sends a message about the direction of the movement's leadership – that they are afraid to state what they are about and what they are not about," he said.

"Everyone says it is not a real change, it doesn't say anything, it's just language. Then why would you do it? You're doing it because you're afraid to say what you disagree with. Because to draw a line is to exclude people, and what it so bad about excluding people? I think it is important that the movement knows what it believes in, as it should know what it does not believe in, and that's the problem. That we are afraid to say what we do not believe in." ■

More coverage on pages 13 and 20.

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GUEST VOICE

USY interdating change signals respect, inclusivity

EMMA PASCOE

At their recent international convention, teen leaders of the Conservative movement's United Synagogue Youth (USY) group from around North America voted to amend their constitution, adding changes to the list of standards of behaviour that USY leaders agree to when they assume their positions.

I can imagine the excitement at this meeting, since I was a USYer not too long ago, serving in various positions on the Eastern Canadian Region (ECRUSY) executive board, including as president in my final year of USY, as well as a year on the social action/tikkun olam international general board. We planned activities, Shabbatons and conventions for other high school students, organized social action and community service programs, and advocated for Israel. After high school, I remained involved with USY as a staff member with ECRUSY, and I've been able to watch my brother, sister and USYers that I led grow into leaders in USY and in the Jewish community.

USY leaders sign a contract, colloquially called "standards." These standards, created by USYers themselves, acknowledge that USY is a Jewish youth group and that its leaders should act as Jewish role models. Until recently, the standards consisted of upholding Jewish laws of kashrut, Shabbat and holiday observance, as well as the more general values of avoiding drugs and underage drinking. They also expected that leaders "will refrain from relationships which can be construed as interdating."

Last month, USY leaders from across North America chose to recognize additional Jewish values of avoiding *lashon hara* (gossip), zero tolerance for bullying and treating each other with *kavod* (respect). Continuing in this vein of inclusivity and respect, the language of the interdating standard was changed to "The officers will strive to model healthy Jewish dating choices. These include recognizing the importance of dating within the Jewish community and treating each person with the recognition that they were created *Betzelem Elokim*, in the image of God."

This last point has raised the ire of some who feel interdating should be a hard and fast line that's not crossed. With Jews comprising such a small proportion of the population, the idea that much of the next generation may not be raising Jewish families is a concern. However, in my view, encouraging lifelong ties to the Jewish community is best done by creating positive associations to traditions, not by using negative language.

USYers aren't denying that dating within the faith is an important principle. However, they note that some USYers come from families where only one parent may have grown up in a Jewish home, or who may have at one point had a relationship with a non-Jew. Rather than alienating those teens by treating interdating as a strict taboo, the new language preserves the principle that dating within the faith ensures continuity while acknowledging that it's a sensitive subject. By focusing on respect and creating wonderful memories associated with Shabbat and other aspects of Judaism, USY instils lifelong Jewish values in today's teens.

As a former USYer and ECRUSY staff member, I can appreciate how challenging it is to spread the word about USY and the importance of being involved in the Conservative Jewish community, so I was excited to see USY mentioned in the media. I was confused, however, by the focus on the negative implications of the amended standards. For me, these new amendments represent the opposite.

USY has been a way for me and other young Jews to get involved in our religion, traditions and community, to develop leadership skills and to make wonderful friendships. The amendments to the standards show that high school students want to stay involved in their community and are willing to be *dugmaot* (role models). Jewish values teach us about the importance of a *kehillah*, community, and to respect one another. The amendments demonstrate that these values of respect and inclusivity are alive and well in today's Conservative Jewish youth. That's something to celebrate. ■

Emma Pascoe is a fourth-year student at Queen's University.

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Youth clubs still meet some 70 years later

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Some 70 years plus have passed and youth clubs established at the YMHA (now the JCC) in Toronto in the late 1930s still exist today.

"That is more than friendship. I call it brotherhood," says Ken Borden, a member of one of the clubs, Club Kenton.

Borden, who heads an advertising agency and is a born leader, says it is an unbelievable closeness. "It is a comfort zone, second to none."

Back then, the clubs had Saturday socials and Sunday meetings, put on musical shows, raised money for charity and had interclub sports.

Borden told *The CJN* that when the members of Club Kenton get together now, usually monthly and for each birthday, they often look back at the past and see how things develop and grow.

They plan social events and attend each other's family events – bar mitzvahs, weddings, brit milahs and funerals – and they visit each other in hospitals and attend family shivahs.

"The closeness is still there, only now it's very much love, a caring and wanting to stay together.

"Here we are, all seniors-plus, and still having and sharing fun together with the kids we grew up with. Whatever we had, whatever we did, it worked, and still does."

There was a joint all-clubs reunion in 2002. "And it only took us about 65 years to put it together. We were rivals when we were kids, in sports, socials, school and dating.

"We now do sports, spectators now, and socials, but no more dating, as we are a little tired.

"Our get-togethers are a blast. There's lots of hugging, lots of hand shaking, lots of laughs and above all, the real definition of brotherhood."

Looking back, Borden says when he was growing up in the 1930s and '40s, the war years, Jewish Toronto was a small world, St. Clair Avenue to the north, Lake Ontario to the south, Yonge Street to the east and Dovercourt Road to the west.

"We rarely strayed outside these boundaries. Outside was very uncomfortable. Anti-Semitism was big and visible, and we kept to our own little world where we felt safe."

He explains that in 1944, he and some friends went to hear a Stan Kenton concert at Crystal Beach. "The sound was amazing, so our club changed its name to Club Kenton."

They followed the Stan Kenton concerts and wore their Kenton sweaters, white with a red K, which brought them an introduction to Kenton.

With gratitude, Borden spoke of the benefits and the protection of the YMHA, which was located on Brunswick Avenue at College Street. "It was our home away from home and our shelter from the outside stormy blast of our adversaries."

It is amazing that those clubs are still alive and thriving in Toronto, he says "Many of the members had nicknames, Spider, the Mole, Itch, Wild Bill, Clutch, Jiggs, Shnoz, Racco and many more, and we still joke about those names today."

Borden calls it "a mysterious magnet" that still draws them together.

"It is the richest part of my social life and I wouldn't trade that for all the electronic programs today that separate people." ■

Kenny Borden

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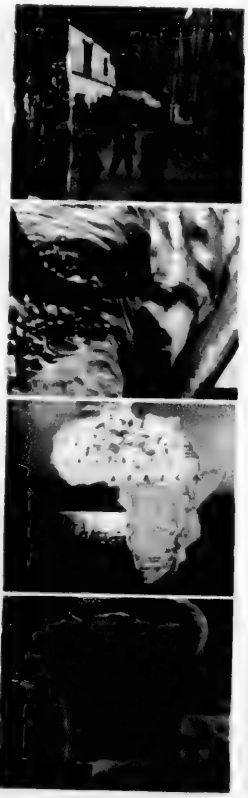

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Meir Medical to honour premier at gala

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The last time supporters of the Meir Medical Center in Israel got together at gala dinners, they raised $2.5 million for the Kfar Saba-based regional hospital.

This time, an estimated 500 guests are expected at a fundraising dinner in October 2015 and the target being set in the campaign is $1 million, said Arie Raif, vice-chair and CEO of Canadian Friends of Meir Medical Center.

The money is slated to go towards the construction of a new orthopedic hospital at the centre, which is affiliated with the Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University (TAU), and which serves about 10 per cent of the Israeli population.

Two prominent Ontarians – Premier Kathleen Wynne and neurosurgeon Dr. Michael Fehlings – will be honoured at the dinner. They have been named recipients of the Meir Medical Center's Medals of Merit awards. Two other recipients will be named in the future, said Raif.

"Wynne has supported us for the last five years, not only as premier but as an MPP," said Raif. "She cares about Israel, she shows support not only in words but in action – in the expansion of trade and the expansion of relations between the province and Israel."

"Prof. Fehlings is a world-renowned neurosurgeon" active in stem cell research, Raif continued. "His research labs are something to be admired."

Fehlings serves as head of the spinal program at the Toronto Western Hospital, which is part of the University Health Network. A professor of neurosurgery at the University of Toronto, Fehlings also holds the Gerry and Tootsie Halbert chair in neural repair and regeneration. In 2014, he was appointed vice-chair of research at the department of surgery at the University of Toronto. He leads a multi-disciplinary team examining the application of stem cells, nano-technology and tissue engineering for central nervous system repair and regeneration.

Raif is hopeful the gala dinner can build the relationship between Meir hospital, TAU's faculty of medicine, and Fehlings. "He's been invited to speak to the Israeli Neurological Society. As a guest speaker he came back impressed with Israeli know-how, progress and research."

"We're trying to connect him to Meir for spinal surgery and other issues. Our possibilities with Prof. Fehlings are endless. We can create a lot of connections," Raif said.

The $1-million fundraising goal for the gala is part of a $100-million budget for Meir Medical's orthopedic wing and emergency department. Half is being contributed by the Israeli government, and the other half is the responsibility of Meir Medical and its support groups worldwide.

The new orthopedic and emergency building will include 99 care stations in its emergency department; nine operating rooms; two orthopedic hospitalization departments; two orthopedic rehabilitation departments; a spinal surgery department; outpatient clinics; a pain treatment clinic; and a rheumatology unit.

Last year's gala raised funds in part for the Children's Hospital and for cardiology equipment. Meir Medical treats nearly 50,000 children annually, from newborns to 18-year-olds. Comparable in size to Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, it's located in central Israel north of Tel Aviv. The 863-bed hospital serves 58,400 inpatients a year and performs 20,000 surgical procedures annually. It's one of the largest emergency hospitals in the country.

Kathleen Wynne

It prides itself in providing excellent service to all, regardless of religion or nationality. Twenty per cent of the hospital's patients and staff are non-Jews.

This has made it attractive to non-Jewish supporters, who give substantially to the facility's Canadian campaign, Raif said.

Overall, supporters realize their contributions make the difference between life and death, particularly in times of conflict.

"During war, the hospitals in Israel are the most important element that have to be protected, that have to be modern," he said. Future campaigns will focus on making the hospital more able to withstand rocket attacks, Raif said. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 8, 2015

Cuba overture could change charitable landscape

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

It may not happen tomorrow or the day after, but some day in the foreseeable future, American Jews will step to the plate and deliver to their co-religionists in Cuba the goods and products that today are provided by Canadian Jews, says Bernie Farber.

Farber, former CEO of the defunct Canadian Jewish Congress, was commenting in the aftermath of the announcement by U.S President Barack Obama that he was easing diplomatic restrictions on Cuba, located about 90 miles south of Florida.

Although the U.S. trade embargo remains in place, Farber is convinced the trend is for an opening of relations with the island nation. And that will make it more likely that U.S. Jewish groups and individuals will step in and do for their Cuban co-religionists what Canadian Jews have been doing for 53 years.

Since 1962, around the same time the United States began to isolate the Communist government in Cuba, Canadian Jews have been shipping kosher food products to assist the tiny Jewish community.

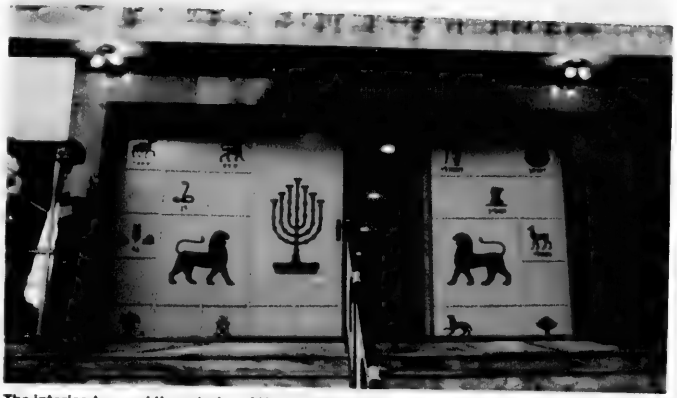
Over the years, Cuban Jews – dubbed "Jubans" by singer Gloria Estefan, who used to perform in the wedding and bar mitzvah circuit in Miami – have received Passover products on an annual basis from Canada. In addition, Canadian Jews ship vital items such as pharmaceuticals, both over the counter and prescription items, as well as jeans, toothpaste, deodorant, bras and other necessities the Communist regime can't produce.

In addition to community-sanctioned effort, operated through Congress while it existed and now by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, individual Jews flying to Cuba sometimes bring suitcases filled with badly needed consumer items.

But it would make more sense, from a logistical perspective and because many of Cuba's 15,000 Jews fled to Florida after the revolution, for that effort to be taken up by American Jews, said Farber, whose son, Max, had his bar mitzvah in Cuba in 2006.

On Dec. 17, Obama pledged to ease the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba and begin the move toward full diplomatic relations. The move is controversial in some quarters in the United States, not least among Cuban expatriates, who argue sanctions are needed to undermine the island's Communist government. In the wake of the U.S. announcement, the Cuban government arrested several human rights activists, they noted.

> *If other communities will do it and do it more efficiently from a logistics and cost standpoint, we will pay heed to that. In the next few months, we'll ascertain to see if that will happen.*
>
> **Steven Shulman**
> **Toronto UJA**
> **campaign director**



The interior, top, and the exterior of Havana's El Patronato synagogue BERNIE FARBER PHOTOS

Proponents of the thaw argue the United States maintains diplomatic and economic relations with many unsavoury regimes.

Farber believes Obama's overture is likely "the first step to the end of the trade embargo."

As restrictions on ties with Cuba diminish, "You could see a strengthening of the [Jewish] community," he said.

The 1,500 Cuban Jews don't have access to a rabbi or teachers, to a shoichet or a cantor. And as far as food aid goes, it makes more sense to ship it from nearby Florida than distant Toronto, he said.

The Canadian Jewish community began to assist Cuban Jews at the request of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). At the time, senior Congress professional Ben Kayfetz raised funds for Cuban aid in Toronto synagogues that were used to buy kosher Passover products, which were shipped "by slow boat to Cuba," Farber said.

Today, about $40,000 in goods are sent annually, including items such as gefilte fish, horseradish, matzah, matzah meal, canned tuna and soup mixes, said Cindy Osheroff, CIJA's logistics co-ordinator for the "Maot Chittin" program.

The goods are purchased in Toronto with funds raised through UJA Federation, then shipped to Halifax and sent by container ship, she said. They are received at the El Patronato synagogue, known also as Gran Sinagoga Bet Shalom, where they're distributed to Jews.

"Cuban Jews are very grateful" for the annual shipment, Osheroff said.

For at least the last 12 years, since she's been involved with the program, additional funds totalling $3,000 have been provided by a New York-based charitable organization for other items she said.

With the opening of U.S. relations, Osheroff suggested "a great idea would be for North American Jewish federations to mount a joint effort" for Cuban Jews.

UJA campaign director Steven Shulman said the funds for Cuban Jews are raised as part of UJA's "global seder to fight hunger" campaign.

It's too early to tell whether the U.S. diplomatic overture will see U.S. organizations stepping in to help, he said.

"If other communities will do it and do it more efficiently from a logistics and cost standpoint, we will pay heed to that," he said. "In the next few months, we'll ascertain to see if that will happen."

The JDC re-entered Cuba in 1991, at the invitation of the local community.

In addition to the annual Canadian aid shipment, the JDC provides pharmaceuticals, which are distributed as well to the island's non-Jewish population, as well as weekly chicken dinners, said JDC spokesperson Michael Geller.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

'We hope that this is a step in the right direction'

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

JDC also supports bar and bat mitzvahs by bringing in rabbis to officiate, he said.

Michael Soberman, vice-president of the Canada Israel Experience, an agency funded by Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA, said Canadian Jews have also played a role in linking Cuban Jews to Israel.

Almost every year since 2003, young Cubans fly to Toronto and join Canadian participants in Birthright, the annual subsidized trip to Israel for young people. Since the program began, some 120 Cubans have taken part, with a large number eventually making aliyah, Soberman said.

The Birthright connection has led to other joint programming, in which young Canadian leaders travel to Cuba to interact with their Cuban contemporaries, he added.

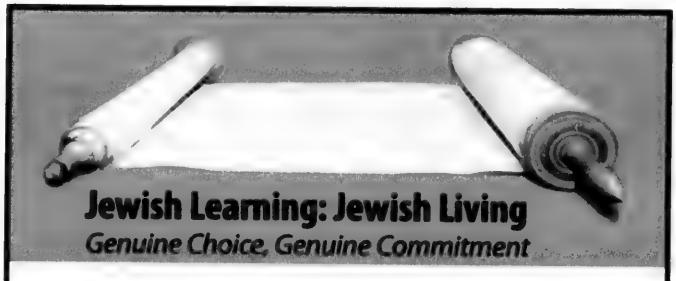
The Canadian-Cuban Jewish connection has support at the state level. As part of Operation Cigar, "the Canadian embassy had facilitated the immigration of Cuban Jews to Israel," Farber said.

American Jewish groups are monitoring the developing situation closely. If the doors to Cuba open, "it will be easier to have back-and-forth contact [that] will surely enable a deeper and more fluid relationship including the presence of its members in global Jewish forums and travel to Israel," said Dina Siegel Vann, director of the American Jewish Committee's (AJC) Belfer Center for Latino and Latin American Affairs.

"[Like] the rest of the Cubans, Jews will be able to benefit from the U.S. plans for increased connectivity and tourism," she said.

"From AJC's perspective, we hope that this is a step in the right direction after 50 years of a policy which did not bring about the changes everybody aspired for. This is a process which ultimately should hopefully lead to increased democratic rule, human rights, freedom, open trade and mutually beneficial relations between Cuba, the United States and the rest of the hemisphere," she stated.

But as for the American Jewish community supplanting the Canadian in their support for Cubans, Soberman said, "It might make some sense for them to partner with their friends and cousins in south Florida. But I don't imagine anything would change imminently... Nothing happens in Cuba quickly. I imagine it will take some time." ■



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 8, 2015

Greenspan remembered for courtroom skills, humour

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Renowned criminal defence lawyer Eddie Greenspan died in his sleep last week while on vacation with his family in Phoenix, Ariz. He was 70.

Greenspan was remembered for his high-profile cases, his advocacy on important constitutional issues, and for a wicked sense of humour that he sometime employed in court. Members of his family, delivering eulogies at his funeral last weekend at Beth Torah Synagogue in Toronto, said he'd always enjoyed comedy and jokes and instructed them to continue that tradition at his funeral.

His daughter, Julianna, honoured his wishes.

"It made him crazy that he couldn't give his own eulogy," she told the 800 people present. "He gave me an order: 'When I die you must be funny, very funny, no sentimental BS.'

"If my father knew the outpouring of press coverage would have been so enormous, he would have faked his death years ago," she quipped.

"Eddie was a hilarious guy. There was absolutely nothing sacred to him," said his close friend George Jonas. "If it gave him the opportunity for a good line – and frankly even when the line wasn't that good – Eddie would go for it in a flash."

One courtroom quote attributed to Greenspan when the prosecution had a weak case was, "I wish I was as thin as the evidence against my client in this case."

Jonas, who wrote *Greenspan: The Case for the Defence*, knew the Toronto lawyer for 40 years.

"The law was everything to him. He often said that he mentioned to his wife that she would be his mistress because he was married to the law. It was obviously a joke, but he was married to the law."

Greenspan played prominent roles in a number of high-profile cases, including those involving wife killer Helmut Buxbaum, businessman and lobbyist Karlheinz Schreiber, media entrepreneur Garth Drabinsky and Saskatchewan farmer Robert Latimer.

"He was also fascinated by show business in a way I never was, even though I was in show business," Jonas said.

For his part, Jonas was interested in legal matters. At one point, Jonas traded his subscription of *Variety* magazine to Greenspan in exchange for his copy of *Dominion Law Reports*, which Greenspan edited.

Eddie Greenspan ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES PHOTO

> *I had no childhood dreams of being a fireman, a policeman, teacher, doctor or candlestick maker or a corporate mogul. I was committed to being not only a lawyer, but a criminal lawyer*

Leo Adler met Greenspan while he was still a law student and Greenspan was a junior lawyer working with Joe Pomerant on the Peter Demeter trial. "It's the case that made him," Adler said.

Jonas co-authored a book on the case, *By Persons Unknown: The Strange Death Of Christine Demeter*, which highlighted Greenspan's contribution to the case, Adler said.

Jonas and Greenspan went on to collaborate on *The Scales of Justice*, a CBC production that dramatized high-profile legal cases, including several on which Adler worked.

Adler played himself in one episode. The taping went on past midnight, after which he joined Jonas and Greenspan for a late night coffee and doughnuts.

"Eddie would then go back to the office. He had a full bedroom set up in his office, since there were times he would go back and work and prepare," Adler said.

Daniel Brodsky articled for Greenspan in the late 1980s, around the time Greenspan's biography was released. Greenspan presented him with a copy of the book, with the inscription, "Don't read the book this year. You won't have time."

"I thought he was kidding," Brodsky said, but "it was no joke. Two or three days later, I was sitting in a doughnut shop downtown at two o'clock in the morning while Eddie rehearsed his jury address to whoever was in the doughnut shop, willing to listen.

"He was intense. There was a reason he got the nickname Fast Eddie. It was because Eddie seemed to be everywhere, doing everything."

As part of his job, Brodsky accompanied Greenspan on a cross-country book tour that coincided with cases Greenspan scheduled in each city. Greenspan would start the day enjoying a shave in a barbershop, while being briefed by Brodsky on cases he had coming up. From there, he'd go to the radio station, talk about the book, and then head to the courthouse before catching a plane to the next destination.

Greenspan was adept at surrounding himself with competent people who provided him with case research and prepared him for court. He was sort of like a conductor leading an orchestra, Brodsky said.

Among those who articled for him were Marc Rosenberg, who currently is a justice on the Ontario Court of Appeal, and fellow Niagara Falls resident and prominent lawyer Alan Gold.

In a 2006 article in *Canadian Business Magazine*, Greenspan outlined his views on the practice of law and the reasons he got into it.

"I had no childhood dreams of being a fireman, a policeman, teacher, doctor or candlestick maker or a corporate mogul. I was committed to being not only a lawyer, but a criminal lawyer," he said.

"The allure, the show business part of criminal law, the great trials, cross-examinations, jury addresses that I had read about in all the books when I was growing up, that made me want to become a criminal lawyer, like Perry Mason – none of them talked about the truth. And the truth is that for every great one hour of cross-examination, you have to spend about 50 hours preparing alone in your office, late at night, when no one else is around and you can think it through, take notes.

"It's completely unglamorous and completely nothing more or less than very hard work. You've got to read everything, think about everything, figure out how you're going to approach a case and then get up and make it look like it's natural, like it just kind of came to you, which, of course, it doesn't if you care about what you're doing."

Adler recalled Greenspan as "a very good cross-examiner. Going back to his sense of humour, he had a very good sense of timing. He was very theatrical."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

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End of an era as Pripstein's camp closes in Quebec

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jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Pripstein's Camp Mishmar, the last of the private, co-ed sleepaway camps in the Laurentians that catered to an anglophone, mainly Jewish, clientele has closed after 74 years.

Majority owner Ronnie Braverman, grandson of founders, Chaim and Pearl Pripstein, said enrolment has been declining at the camp since the Parti Québécois was first elected in 1976 and the anglophone exodus accelerated.

In the 1970s, families also began to stop sending their kids to camp for the whole summer, opting instead to spend part of the season on family vacations, said Braverman, who began working with his grandfather in the business 42 years ago.

He estimates 90 per cent of campers and 70 per cent of staff have been Jewish.

Over its history, Pripstein's, as it is usually known, served more than 7,000 children and counsellors, he said. At its peak in the 1960s, there were an average of 240 campers. That number has dipped to as low as half that number, but has settled around 180 in recent years.

Early registration for the coming season was down to the point where Braverman realized the camp was no longer economically viable.

The demographics are simply not there. Braverman estimates that two-thirds to three-quarters of former campers and counsellors, the most ready source of a new generation of customers, are not living in Montreal anymore, he said.

The camp is located on 200 acres in St. Adolphe d'Howard, about an hour north of Montreal.

"When I first joined my grandfather in the business over 40 years ago, the Laurentians were one of the booming centres of the Canadian camping scene," he said. "There were over a dozen privately operated, co-ed English camps dotting the countryside."

They have all disappeared. Among the best known are Hiawatha, Pembina, Bayview, Panorama and, in more recent years, Pine Valley and Maromac, which also catered to a mainly Jewish clientele. By 2007, Pripstein's was the only one of its kind still operating, Braverman said.

He did try recruiting campers from abroad, and some from the United States, Latin America, Europe, Israel, Asia and, surprisingly, Saudi Arabia, did enrol – but not enough.

"Another hit to the business side was the introduction of the GST and PST sales taxes," he said. "We lost 20 families the first year of the GST, who fled to nearby American camps, which had, and still have, no sales taxes. We were forced to eat the taxes to maintain market share, and this obliterated much of our profit margin."

Pripstein's Camp Mishmar is located on 200 wooded acres in the Laurentians.

Pripstein's also targets middle-class families. The wealthy tend toward prestigious camps in the United States, and those of lower incomes go to community-subsidized camps, he pointed out.

Among the more famous Pripstein's alumni that come to Braverman's mind are singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen, who was a counsellor in 1958; Indigo bookstores head Heather Reisman, who was a camper; former senator Hugh Segal taught photography there; and, from a younger generation, novelist Sarah Mlynowski.

Pripstein's always had a strong sports program and attracted some top-flight staff, including Emerson Thomas, who played professional basketball in Europe, and Corey Pecker, who played professional hockey on that continent. Pecker ran Pripstein's hockey camp. A summer-use ice rink was one of the innovations in which Braverman invested to try to keep the camp going.

Chaim Pripstein immigrated to Montreal from Poland before World War II. He was initially a teacher at the Talmud Torah, but when it could no longer pay salaries during the Depression, he became a pedlar. His itinerary included the rural area around St. Jérôme, north of Montreal. He sometimes stayed overnight at a farmer's house there, and in 1941, he hit on the idea of creating a modest summer-vacation *pension* for Montreal families in one of the farmer's buildings, buying the food from him, Braverman related. Over time, it became solely a children's camp.

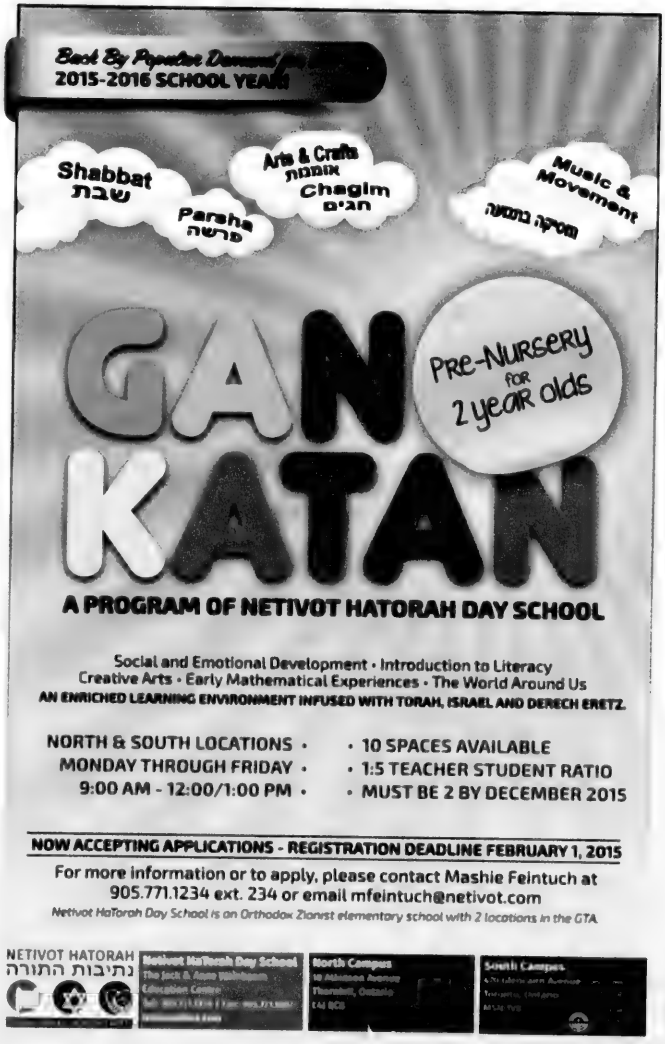
When the North River on which it was located became polluted, Pripstein bought land on the camp's current site further north, which has been added to over the years. The name Mishmar is derived from the Hebrew for standing on guard.

In the early years, the camp only served kosher meat, Braverman said, but Pripstein's never had a hechsher. Over the years, that evolved into "kosher-style," but rituals such as lighting Shabbat candles were maintained.

Since announcing the closure last month, Braverman said he has received "hundreds upon hundreds of heartfelt, nostalgic emails, phone calls, texts and Facebook posts from around the world, from campers, counsellors and parents.

"It's nice to see we made an impact on so many people's lives."

Braverman has made arrangements with Camp Walden in Palmer Rapids, Ont., about four hours from Montreal to accept Pripstein's campers and much of its staff. Owned by Sol Birenbaum and Howie Grossinger, Camp Walden is much larger, but can offer a similar camp experience and the owners are "friendly and caring people," Braverman said. ■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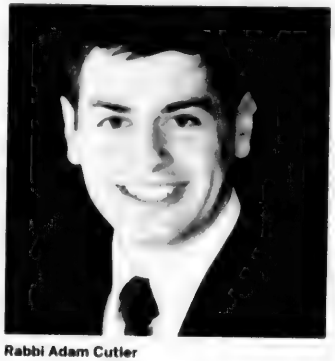
THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 8, 2015

Lessons from the interdating ruling: A *CJN* conversation

During Shabbat services on Jan. 3 at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto, the synagogue's spiritual leader Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl and his associate, Rabbi Adam Cutler, addressed amendments to the standards of behaviour expected of some international and regional officers of United Synagogue Youth (USY). Ahead of the discussion, both rabbis shared their thoughts with *The CJN*.



Rabbi Adam Cutler

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl: Why did the USY amendment get such attention?

Rabbi Cutler: To begin, it's important to understand what was changed: previously the 100 or so individuals affected by the standards of conduct were expected to "refrain from relationships which can be construed as interdating." The new language specifies that these officers "will strive to model healthy Jewish dating choices. These include recognizing the importance of dating within the Jewish community and treating each person with the recognition that they were created *Betzelem Elokim* (in the image of God)."

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl: I thought the former language was a red line that clearly prohibited interfaith dating. The new language seems less definitive.

Rabbi Cutler: For those who liked the old wording, a generous reading of the amendment would result in no practical change. Interdating was and continues to be forbidden to those in certain leadership positions.

However, to those who want to parse the words like a page of Talmud, one could see the old language as more clear and definitive ("expected," "will refrain"), while the new is aspirational ("strive to," "recognizing the importance of"). Based on my understanding of the word choices, the intent of the authors and several conversations with USY leaders, a subtle practical shift has, in fact, taken place.

There was a time when a USY leader who interdated would immediately be expected to resign; however, in recent years the extent to which this happened is negligible, as the old language created a culture wherein the very few USY leaders who interdated simply hid their romantic relationships. The new language, it is hoped, will open up space for conversation.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl: You are right. Over the years, the language of most secular educators has shifted from "don't do X" to "it is good to do Y." So has the style of most rabbis and Jewish educators. We want to encourage desired activity rather than to emphasize what people shouldn't do.

Rabbi Cutler: These high schoolers are much more sensitive to the growing nature of religiously blended families and families in which one parent converted to Judaism. They reasonably felt the need to devise expectations that welcomed active, committed young Jews into leadership positions even when one of their parents is not Jewish or was not Jewish at the time when their parents started dating.

If anything, our synagogues could learn from these teenagers about how to create a welcoming community without surrendering values we hold dear. USY is way ahead of the curve when it comes to what type of religious and ethical behaviour we expect of our leadership.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl: I think that the impetus for the interest in this story is the renewed debate in North America about the future of Jewish life here. The Pew Report last October painted a challenging picture of what people view as important to Jewish identity. In-marriage was down and intermarriage was up. I am among those who are not sanguine about our future. We have to articulate more clearly what Judaism is, why it is important and why people should marry and continue Jewish life.

This weekend was the yahrzeit of my teacher, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. In one of his last public remarks, he spoke about the future: "Young people are waiting, craving, searching for spiritual meaning. And our leadership is unable to respond, to guide, to illumine. With Zion as evidence and inspiration, as witness and example, a renewal of our people should come about."

We have to make it happen.

Rabbi Cutler: What does this debate say to you about the changing worldview and home life of today's young Conservative Jews? Is inclusion an ultimate value? Or is it counterbalanced by behavioural expectations?

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl: Bridges are important, but there also have to be borders. For years, I have spoken about a three-part approach to interfaith dating and marriage. We have to teach the value of marrying within "the tribe," emphasizing the importance of continuity of our covenant with God, cultural behaviour and religious belief. Just before his death, Rabbi Heschel asked rhetorically, "Who is a Jew?" He responded to his own question: "A person who knows how to recall and to keep alive what is holy in our people's past, and to cherish the promise and the vision of redemption in the days to come."

Second, we should encourage non-Jews in love with Jews to consider conversion to Judaism. We have a tradition of great spiritual depth and moral grandeur. Often the Jew-by-choice motivates the Jewish partner and his or her family to grow. It has certainly brought more Jews of colour into our community, enriching us with their ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Finally, when there is no conversion, we should create welcoming spaces in our synagogues to encourage interfaith families to raise their children as Jews. Even as we seek inclusion, there have to be standards.

Rabbi Cutler: What about the future?

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl: Conservative Judaism provides an historically authentic approach to belief, behaviour and belonging. We have a balanced understanding of how our received traditions engage and interact with the larger world around us. Our communities are often very engaged in Jewish social ethics, but less knowledgeable or observant of the specifically ritual elements of Jewish life.

More than the debate about dating, we have to ask ourselves what will build a Jewish future. I look at the young people who are involved in USY and other youth program as the future leaders of our community.

You will be around longer than I. What is your hope for the future?

Rabbi Cutler: My hope is that our organizations are able to inspire Jews to live committed Jewish lives. I hope that such inspiration is predicated on the understanding that Judaism provides meaning to one's life.

As Jewish leaders, we must be able to convey, not that Jews should be Jewish in order that there be more Jews, but that Jews should be Jewish because Judaism has something substantive to add to the lives of its adherents and the world at large. Additionally, I want our organizations to reclaim the idea of mitzvah, not as a good deed, but as a sacred obligation. It is through the lived experience of commitment to community, to ritual and to God that one comes to see the power of Judaism. ■

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INTERNATIONAL

Blocked at UN, Abbas seeks to join international court

TIMES OF ISRAEL AND CJN STAFF
JERUSALEM

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas signed on to the International Criminal Court (ICC) last week, one day after the UN Security Council rejected a resolution on Palestinian statehood.

The Palestinians fell one vote short of the minimum nine "yes" votes required for adoption by the 15-member council.

The move to join the ICC was made to "internationalize this conflict," according to Palestinian official Mohammed Shtayyeh.

If permitted to join the court, Palestinians would be able to file claims against individuals in the Israeli military and political leadership for alleged war crimes on Palestinian territory. In the request to join the ICC, Abbas asked the Hague-based court to investigate Israel retroactively for alleged war crimes starting from June 13, 2014 – the day after three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped and murdered by a Hamas cell in the West Bank, an unnamed NGO worker told *Ha'aretz*.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said Israeli settlement construction and expansion would also be the subject of complaints to the ICC.

Canada criticized the Palestinians for attempting to join the ICC, while applauding the decision of the Security Council to reject the Palestinian bid for statehood.

"The decision by the Palestinian Authority (PA) to seek to unilaterally accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, among other international bodies, is a concerning and dangerous development," said Foreign Minister John Baird.

"Such a provocative decision only furthers the divide between Palestinians and Israelis, and will carry unfortunate consequences.

"The path chosen can be reversed, and instead, the Palestinian Authority can recommit to a negotiated solution. We believe this is the only way to bring about a just and lasting peace. Israelis and Palestinians deserve nothing less," Baird stated.

Though not currently a member of the Security Council, Canada had urged those with votes to reject the proposal for Palestinian statehood.

"The resolution that was submitted to the Security Council on Dec. 29 is just another attempt to circumvent negotiations and place preconditions on future discussions," Baird said in a news release.

"Canada therefore calls upon members of the Security Council to reject this resolution.

"We have long rejected unilateral action on either side, as we believe it is ultimately unhelpful to the cause of peace," he added.

France, China and Russia were among the countries on the Security Council that supported the text setting a 12-month deadline for negotiations on a final peace deal with Israel and an imposed full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and east Jerusalem by the end of 2017. East Jerusalem was to become the Palestinian capital, and security arrangements were to include "a third-party presence."

Argentina, Chad, Chile, Jordan and Luxembourg also voted for the resolution. Australia and the United States voted against. The United Kingdom, Lithuania, South Korea and Rwanda abstained.

Until shortly before the vote, Security Council diplomats had expected the resolution to pass, prompting a U.S. veto. But Nigeria, which had been expected to vote "yes," abstained at the last minute.

Nigeria's ambassador, U. Joy Ogwu, said the ultimate path to peace lies "in a negotiated solution."

Israel called PA conduct at the United Nations a "march of folly" and its effort to win UN support for a peace deal within a year a "provocation."

In Washington, meanwhile, political leaders were considering steps to defund the PA, which receives $400 million a year from U.S. taxpayers.

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen called on the Obama administration "to show Abu Mazen (Abbas) and the PA that there will be consequences for their irresponsible behaviour and continued efforts to undermine the peace process.

"Congress must do everything in its power to block funds to the PA and to any UN entity that recognizes a non-existent State of Palestine to make it clear to [Abbas] that there will be consequences to his schemes at the United Nations and other international organizations like the International Criminal Court," she stated.

Aaron David Miller, a former presidential advisor and a distinguished scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, said PA funding will be increasingly at risk in the Republican-controlled Congress that will be sworn in later this month.

"I think the odds of defunding are higher than they ever were before," he said. "A whole new reality has been created, and I suspect that they are going to close any loopholes that may exist regarding the funding. The world in Washington is about to change."

The State Department did not respond to inquiries as to whether it believes Abbas' reported move would trigger defunding.

Jeff Rathke, director of the department's Office of Press Relations, spared few words in condemning Abbas' application to the ICC. He described the move as "an escalatory step that will not achieve any of the outcomes most Palestinians have long hoped to see for their people," and as a "counterproductive" action that "does nothing to further the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a sovereign and independent state."

Earlier, U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power said: "We voted against this resolution [on statehood] because... peace must come from hard compromises that occur at the negotiating table."

The resolution was "deeply unbalanced" and didn't take into account Israel's security concerns. "This text addresses the concerns of just one side," Power said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement that the PA was "seeking to impose on us a diktat that would undermine Israel's security, put its future in peril. Israel will oppose conditions that endanger our future."

Referring to the ICC application, Netanyahu said, "The one who needs to fear the ICC is the Palestinian Authority, which has a unity government with Hamas, a terror organization like [ISIS], which commits war crimes."

Netanyahu called Israel's soldiers "the most moral army in the world" and said the country would take unspecified "retaliatory steps." ■

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his cabinet meeting in Jerusalem on Jan. 4. Israel called the PA conduct at the UN a "march of folly" and its effort to win UN support for a peace deal within a year a "provocation."
MARC ISRAEL SELLEM/THE JERUSALEM POST/ISRAEL SUN

OPINION

Israeli election is a referendum on Netanyahu

Gerald Steinberg

Israel is often called a hyper-democracy, and the description is well deserved. Two years after the last election, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition suddenly collapsed. We're going to the polls again on March 17, and Israelis have been quickly bombarded by a whirlwind of new alliances, parties, candidates, speeches, jingles and slogans – all promising to solve our problems and improve our lives.

The main battle is for prime minister, where Netanyahu faces some surprisingly serious competition. Although he generally received high marks for his handling of the recent war with Hamas, his poll results have declined steadily ever since. This can largely be attributed to a failure to solve economic problems, particularly the huge gap between highly compensated managers and the poorly paid rank-and-file, and the shortage of affordable housing in the cities. Various policy responses have moved slowly through the machinery of government, and to most Israelis, it appears that despite all the talk of reform, nothing significant is changing.

Indeed, on a wide range of issues, the coalition was dysfunctional, and when Netanyahu announced the decision to go to the polls, he referred repeatedly to a "crisis of governance," which he blamed on his partners – specifically Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and Finance Minister Yair Lapid, who both head their own parties. Left unsaid but casting a major shadow was the disruptive influence of two other party leaders in the coalition – Avigdor Liberman and Naftali Bennett – who often attacked Netanyahu from the right.

The final straw was a proposal to strengthen Israel's legal status as a Jewish state, which engendered intense opposition from the left, and from critics abroad with a highly simplistic view of complex issues. Given all of Israel's challenges, this one could have been put off until a consensus had been formed. Instead, Netanyahu pushed the process in a clumsy manner, leading government ministers and the media to focus for weeks on this ideological topic.

Netanyahu's leadership skills have also been questioned by Israelis in relation to the ongoing conflict with the United States, which makes many people nervous. Although many assign considerable blame to U.S. President Barack Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry and problematic advisers such as Martin Indyk, there's a sense the government should have been less confrontational and more proactive in introducing and exploring peace plans.

For these reasons and a wider sense that Netanyahu is exhausted after six years managing Israel's crises and complexities, the upcoming election is likely to focus more on leadership than policy. Highlighting this, Labor party head Isaac Herzog forged an alliance with Livni as an alternative to Netanyahu. In parallel, Liberman and Bennett are also being presented as potential national leaders.

Thus, the election can be viewed as a referendum on Netanyahu rather than a choice between different ideologies and policy prescriptions for Israel's challenges, both domestically and internationally. And it's far too early to count Netanyahu out. On the contrary, he's still considered to be the best available leader, particularly given his experience responding to threats to Israel's vital interests.

And even if Netanyahu were to be defeated, the commentators who expect this to bring about major changes in talks with the Palestinians are likely to be disappointed. Polls and other indicators show most Israelis would welcome a stable peace agreement, but don't believe Palestinian leaders will make the necessary compromises. The perception is that the goal of destroying Israel remains central and talk of a two-state solution is a façade. Given this reality, no government is likely to take the risks demanded by the Palestinians and supported by America and Europe.

Instead, the next government, whether led by Netanyahu or someone else, is likely to start by focusing on critical economic issues, where there's a consensus on what needs to be done. In Israel, as in other democracies, leaders set directions and formulate policies, but they can only be successful if they're backed by the public. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

Israel wants U.S. to stop funding PA

REBECCA SHIMONI STOIL
AND **TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF**
JERUSALEM

Israel wants the U.S. Congress to stop funding the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government froze 500 million shekels ($127 million US) in Palestinian tax revenues collected on Ramallah's behalf, all in response to the Palestinian Authority filing a request to join the International Criminal Court last week.

An Israeli official said Sunday that Jerusalem will turn to pro-Israel Congress members to ensure that a law banning funds to the Palestinian Authority be enforced if it should turn to the ICC, *Ha'aretz* reported. The Palestinians stand to lose some $400 million in annual U.S. aid.

The stop-gap funding bill passed by Congress and signed by President Barack Obama last month contains language that stipulates that no State Department economic support funding may be given to the PA if "the Palestinians initiate an International Criminal Court judicially authorized investigation, or actively support such an investigation, that subjects Israeli nationals to an investigation for alleged crimes against Palestinians."

Earlier Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threatened a strong response to the Palestinian application to join the ICC, saying the move represented the opening salvo of a further confrontation with Israel.

Speaking to his cabinet hours after Israel announced financial sanctions in response to the Palestinian move, Netanyahu vowed Israel would take action and not let IDF soldiers be prosecuted abroad.

"The Palestinian Authority has chosen confrontation with Israel and we will not sit idly by," Netanyahu said at his office in Jerusalem. "We will not allow IDF soldiers and commanders to be hauled before the International Criminal Court in the Hague."

The Palestinians' ICC manoeuvre may tip the scales in Washington, where there is already bipartisan frustration with PA President Mahmoud Abbas' decision to put a Palestinian statehood resolution before the United Nations Security Council last week, and, after the resolution was defeated, to sign on to the ICC the next day.

Even if Abbas' ICC gambit does not play out – and the Palestinians' route ahead at the ICC is strewn with legal obstacles – it's viewed by many leaders of the incoming Republican-controlled Congress as the latest justification to re-examine the PA's American funding.

Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have had staffers looking into whether there is any legal basis for penalizing the United Nations and its affiliated institutions, as well as the Palestinian Authority itself, for either the ICC move or the failed UN Security Council resolution. Those checks seemed to come up largely empty-handed, but the PA move to initiate war crimes investigations against Israel may catalyse further efforts.

Since the formation of the Fatah-and Hamas-backed Palestinian national unity government last spring, calls in Congress to defund the PA have become increasingly common.

In recent months, even before the November congressional elections, Republican and Democrat members of Congress called repeatedly for a re-examination – or even freeze – of funding to the Palestinian Authority.

Washington is a key PA funder and budgetary legislation traditionally places a series of conditions on the continuation of funding.

The "continuing resolution" passed in December by Congress in lieu of a budget repeats prior year language that no economic assistance may be provided to the PA if the Palestinians obtain the same standing as member states or full membership as a state in the United Nations or any specialized agency.

If the Palestinians obtain member state status at the UN or any specialized agency, the legislation stipulates the PLO office in Washington will be closed for at least three months. The office can be re-opened after those three months, provided the Palestinians engage in direct and meaningful talks with Israel.

The ICC is not a UN specialized agency and the ICC-related language is contained in a separate clause. Unlike other defunding provisions included in the funding bill, the ICC clause does not include a waiver by which defunding can be avoided due to American national security interests. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Allegations are 'completely false,' Dershowitz claims

JTA
WASHINGTON

Alan Dershowitz firmly denied allegations that he engaged in sexual activity with a minor employed by a client.

Dershowitz, a Harvard law professor emeritus, declared "totally, unequivocally and completely false" allegations that he had sex with the former staffer for investor Jeffrey Epstein.

Dershowitz was named in a lawsuit charging that federal prosecutors in Florida broke the law by granting Epstein a plea deal to avoid a federal prosecution, *Politico* reported Dec. 31.

According to a court filing quoted by *Politico*, Epstein forced the woman, referred to as Jane Doe #3, to have sex with Dershowitz, among other men.

"Epstein required Jane Doe #3 to have sexual relations with Dershowitz on numerous occasions while she was a minor, not only in Florida but also on private planes, in New York, New Mexico and the U.S. Virgin Islands," the filing claimed.

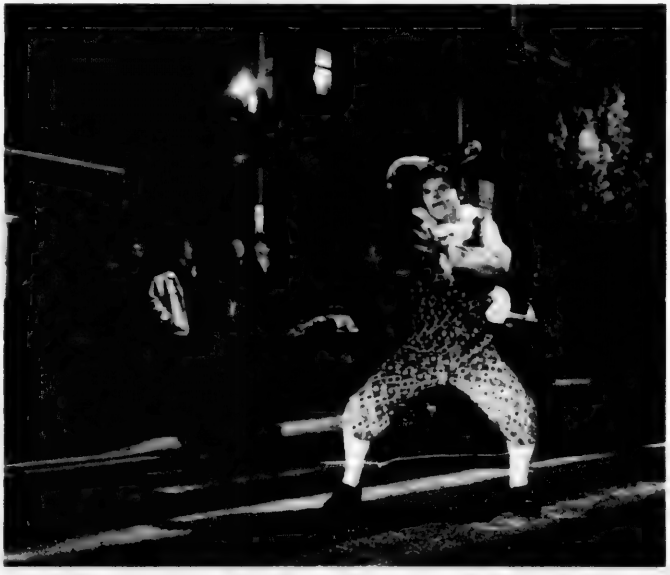
Dershowitz, who helped defend Epstein against prostitution charges, told *Politico* that he was not in any of the places at the times cited in the filing, save for one occasion when he visited Epstein's private island with his family.

Dershowitz told *Politico* he planned to seek the disbarment of the two lawyers representing the former staffer.

"I'm planning to file disbarment charges against the two lawyers who signed this petition without even checking the manifests of airplanes or travel itineraries, et cetera," he said.

As a result of the plea deal, Epstein served 13 months for state prostitution charges but avoided a federal prosecution. ■

SeeJN | Clowning around



FLASH90 PHOTO

Street performers, musicians and artwork featured at a cultural event on Aza Street in Jerusalem on Dec. 30.

Jewish Life

Playwright aims to start talk about medical ethics and compassion

KATHRYN KATES

Waiting Room is the latest theatrical offering by playwright, author and actor Diane Flacks. The powerful drama examines medical diagnosis, prognosis and uncertainty, and runs from Jan. 14 to Feb. 15 at Tarragon Theatre's Mainspace.

For Flacks it's a personal story, although not autobiographical. Her youngest son, Jonny, now eight, spent much of his life at The Hospital for Sick Children until he was four.

"It is a rare club that you end up belonging to if you are a hospital veteran," says Flacks, who along with her spouse, Janis Purdy, also has a son Eli, 12.

"By being in that place and meeting the people we met, I felt like I had a lot of stories to tell and a lot of experience balancing on a precipice of life and death. I had luckily never experienced this until that point."

She says many people who go through something difficult go to therapy, whereas artistic people end up acting, writing or creating something.

"What the patient in this story has is not remotely connected to what Jonny had as a condition, but I was really fascinated with the struggle that a couple goes through in a hospital," she says.

"I was also, at the same time, reading a lot about brain science, so that's why I focused the story on a doctor and on the brain, and the irony that a doctor who treats people with brain conditions develops a brain disease. I thought that would be an interesting dramatic struggle to put him in and to put his patients in."

Flacks approached Tarragon's artistic director, Richard Rose, with her idea about the collision of human beings with medical realities, as well as the medical system and its relevance to all of us. Rose commissioned her to write it.

Flacks, who has written or co-written a dozen plays to date, teamed up with director Richard Greenblatt on *Waiting Room*. The two have worked on seven projects before as either co-actors or co-writers. This is their second time as writer and director. "I am really grateful to Richard because he is so respectful of the writing process and has so much to offer."

She hopes *Waiting Room* will start conversations about end-of-life care and what we expect from our doctors and nurses. She also hopes that audiences will ask and wonder about medical compassion and ethics and how they would cope.

The cast of *Waiting Room* includes Ari Cohen, Michelle Monteith, Jordan Pettle, Warona Setshwaelo, Jane Spidell and Jenny Young. Flacks says she is in awe of these actors and their commitment to the play.

She decided not to perform in the play herself. "Sometimes if you know you are going to play a character, you kind of write that for you. I wanted to write characters that would be challenging and, in my mind, beyond what my capacities are as an actress, so that it would be really challenging for anyone.

"From my perspective, I wanted to be on the outside and be able to see problems, as it is my responsibility as a writer to take that job on directly and fix them."

Flacks says being Jewish influences every part of her art. She went to the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, and says the kind of rigorous academics that were required there are part of everything she does today.

Her past credits include critically acclaimed solo shows *Myth Me*, *By a Thread*, *Random Acts* and *Bear With Me*. She has written and performed in theatres in Canada and the United States. She has also written for and appeared on numerous Canadian TV series including *The Kids in the Hall*, for which she was nominated for a writing Emmy.

She is Nightwood Theatre's 2014 playwright-in-residence and is working on a new play about women and religion called *Unholy*. Currently, she can be heard as CBC Radio's national parenting columnist. Her book *Bear With Me: What They Don't Tell You About Pregnancy and New Motherhood* was published by McClelland & Stewart. On the acting front, she is working with Katie Ford on a theatre piece called *Bits and Pieces*, which she will perform this spring. ■

Tickets can be purchased through Patron Services at 416-531-1827 or online at: www.tarragontheatre.com.

An unremarkable life filled with unusual events

JOSEPH SERGE
jserge@thecjn.ca

It's a shame that in the preface to *Coming Ashore*, author Catherine Gildiner tells the reader that this, the third volume of her memoirs, will be her last.

As you finish the book, you want to shout back, "Just when it was getting interesting!"

This, actually, would be unfair. It was interesting from the get-go, which is why saying goodbye to the sassy, sharp-tongued Cathy McClure is so difficult.

It's hard to explain the allure of McClure, now Gildiner. Why would the first 20-some years in the life of a successful but otherwise unremarkable Toronto psychologist warrant three books? And more importantly why would they be critically acclaimed bestsellers?

The best answer is that Gildiner is an artful storyteller. It's not that her childhood and youth were especially noteworthy, but she did have interesting experiences, and it's these episodes that she cultivates to the fullest.

For instance, in her first book, *Too Close to the Falls*, which focuses on her childhood years, she mentions coming across a half-naked Marilyn Monroe while delivering pharmaceuticals from her father's shop in New York State

In *Coming Ashore*, which picks up her memoirs from the age of 20 or so in the late 1960s, she comes across a youthful Bill Clinton and hippie-icon Jimi Hendrix.

Coming Ashore starts at Oxford University, the prestigious English school she attends on a scholarship just after the events of the second book, *After the Falls*, which focuses on her turbulent teenage years.

One evening, with her college dorm mates (all men except for another American expat, Margaret-Ann), she decides to take a trip to London, which in the late '60s, was rivalled only by San Francisco for its hip, counter-culture lifestyle.

At a small club to see Eric Burdon and the Animals, they happen to see "a thin black man in a large black felt hat with a feather in it" jump onstage holding a guitar and playing *Foxy Lady*. That man is Jimi Hendrix, who while huge in America, is only just making it big in England.

It doesn't end there. Several months later, her roommate Margaret-Ann, a somewhat pious, and overbearing young woman, confesses to her that she has cancer, and wants Cathy's help in losing her virginity before she dies. And she wants it to be with Jimi Hendrix.

The amazing thing is, after finding out his routine after gigs, they are able to pull the feat off. (OK, knowing the Hendrix legend, maybe it's not so amazing, after all!)

One day, Cathy gets talked into participating in one of the riverboat races that elite English colleges are particularly renowned for.

At one point in the race, Cathy's boat gets "bumped," and they have to pull aside and let the other boat behind them pass. But a man watching "with curly hair and a scraggly beard" who's just a few feet away on the bank cups his hands and yells in a southern American drawl, "There are no officials here, keep going."

She meets with and talks to this young American "with the Allen Ginsberg beard" after the race. She later learns he is at another college and is planning a big anti-Vietnam war rally. His name is Bill Clinton.

Gildiner has a wicked sense of humour at times, but she can also be a bit preachy.

Several times, she gets into discussions with her upper-class English dorm mates about the "stultifying" class system, and you feel like yelling, "Oy, she's such an annoying American."

This oppressive class structure is one of the reasons she leaves Oxford, and soon, after a brief tenure as a teacher at an inner city school in Cleveland, she winds up doing a PhD on Samuel Coleridge at the University of Toronto.

After a short spell at Rochdale College, Toronto's notorious downtown student co-op, she meets Michael, and leaves Rochdale to move in with him.

One day, he drives her to his parents' apartment at Bathurst and Wilson in Toronto. It's the first time in her life she is in a Jewish neighbourhood. "Nearly all the men we passed were wearing small skullcaps with bobby pins holding them on... Then we passed men who looked like they were extras in *Fiddler on the Roof*... These men had long curls on the sides of their faces as though they had set one piece of hair in a pin curl and it had unfurled."

Coming Ashore
By Catherine Gildiner
ECW Press

As she makes disparaging remarks abut the men and the women in wigs, Michael finally tells her that his parents are from Poland and lived though the war. "We lived with my grandparents, who looked exactly like these people."

Cathy, a Catholic girl from New York State, is confused. It's then she realizes that her Jewish girlfriends growing up in suburban America were different from these first-generation immigrants, descendants of Holocaust survivors from eastern Europe. Her Jewish friends had Christmas trees, she tells him.

"I would never have a Christmas tree," he tells her.

Things don't go so well at his parents' home either. Later, she hears Michael's friend tell him that his mother is "sitting shivah now that you're dating a shiksa." Looking up the words in a Yiddish dictionary, she understands that essentially Michael's friend has told him, "You are going out with a detested thing, and your mother will mourn your death."

Of interest to us is that shortly after this, she gets invited to his aunt's for Passover. "No one else was there," Gildiner writes, "except for one couple sitting in the corner of this cavernous room. The man was reading *The Canadian Jewish News*, and the woman was sitting primly, clutching her purse on her lap."

Alas, out of respect for the privacy of those still living, she decided to end her memoirs at that stage. So we'll never read about her conversion to Judaism and marriage to Michael Gildiner.

Which is unfortunate, because no doubt Gildiner would have spun a wonderful tale about it – and who knows who she would have run into at her wedding? ■

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

KOFFLER HOSTS EVENING WITH MAUS CARTOONIST ART SPIEGELMAN

Art Spiegelman, the legendary American artist-illustrator who won the Pulitzer Prize for his Holocaust-themed comic book *Maus*, is speaking on "What the %@&*! Happened to Comics?" His talk provides a chronological tour of the evolution of comics. The man who "almost singlehandedly brought comics out of the toy closet and onto the bookshelves" asserts that "comics echo the way the brain works" because people think in iconographic images and bursts of language, not paragraphs of text.

The creator of both *Maus* and *Maus II*, Spiegelman appears at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, 406 Bloor St. W. General admission $39, students $29. Monday, Jan. 26, 7 p.m. koffler arts.org. His visit coincides with *CO-MIX*, a retrospective of Spiegelman's work currently on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

• • •

Bernice Eisenstein at the ROM: Undoubtedly influenced by Spiegelman, Toronto-based artist-illustrator **Bernice Eisenstein** is author of the acclaimed graphic memoir *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* and co-author of the accordion book *Correspondences with Anne Michaels*. Her exhibition *Genizot: Repositories of Memory* offers paintings, drawings and found and created objects relating to the theme of memory, what is hidden and found, kept and stored. At the Royal Ontario Museum until Feb. 8.

• • •

Yiddish Film: Friends of Yiddish presents *Der Purimshpiler* (*The Jester*), a film starring **Miriam Kressyn** and **Zygmund Turkow**. This 90-minute Yiddish romantic comedy tells the story of a drifter who wanders from shtetl to shtetl, finding brief happiness when he falls in love with a shoemaker's daughter in a small Galician town. Subtitled, introduced by film critic **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. $5, members free. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. (between Sheppard and Finch). Sunday, Jan. 11, 2 p.m. RSVP, 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca

• • •

Teatron Presents *Delimax*: Harvey Ostroff's play *Delimax* focuses on Max Farber, Holocaust survivor and owner of a Montreal delicatessen, who, on the evening of the biggest ice storm in years, teaches his stranded French-Canadian waitress and her ultra-nationalistic boyfriend the true meaning of oppression. This Teatron production is directed by **Ari Weisberg** and features **Ron Boyd**, **Madeline Leon**, **Allan Price**, **Aris Tyros** and **Gloria Valentine**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., Jan. 7 to 18. teatrontheatre.com, 416-781-5527

Art Spiegelman
ENNO KAPITZA AGENTUR FOCUS PHOTO

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Arts in Brief

• **Shlomo Schwartzberg** presents a four-part series of lectures on "The Image of the Jew in Film & Television: Realities & Fantasies," examining such films and TV shows as *The Pawnbroker*, *Schindler's List*, *Borat*, *The Social Network*, *Hill Street Blues*, *The Big Bang Theory* and *The Good Wife*. Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W. Series $48, members $24. Tuesdays in January, 3 to 5 p.m. 416-225-2112.

• UJA presents "Working On A Dream," a concert featuring the **River Street Band** and **Jesse Gold**, replicating the vibrant spirit and passion of **Bruce Springsteen**. $30 cover. The Opera House, 735 Queen St. E. Jan. 24, 8:30 p.m. jgonik@ujafed.org

• The Art Gallery of Ontario presents *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross, 1940-1944*. Opens Jan. 31, runs to June 14. ■

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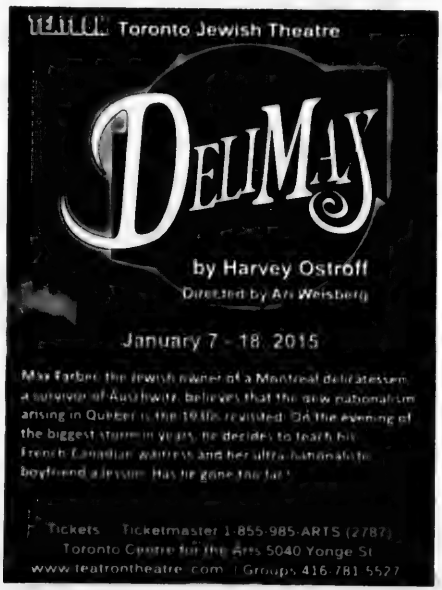
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by Harvey Ostroff
Directed by Ari Weisberg
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Max Farber, the Jewish owner of a Montreal delicatessen, a survivor of Auschwitz, believes that the new nationalism arising in Quebec is the 1930s revisited. On the evening of the biggest storm in years, he decides to teach his French-Canadian waitress and her ultra-nationalistic boyfriend a lesson. Has he gone too far?
Tickets: Ticketmaster 1-855-985-ARTS (2787)
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AUTHORS & POETS

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS CJN

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original short stories or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 2, 2015. Not all submissions can be published, and not all those selected will appear in both Toronto and Montreal editions. We look for originality. Please don't send more than three entries. We cannot correspond with submitters.

Deadline for submissions is Feb. 27, 2015 at 3 p.m.

E-mail submissions to:

cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com

We can only accept email submissions. We prefer Word documents.

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Hunan, China renowned for its natural beauty

BARBARA KINGSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In China's province of Hunan, food consumption is akin to flame eating, especially for those of us who didn't grow up with peppers in our mouths. But in this part of China, that extra-spicy food is considered more delicious than the food of other Chinese provinces. Since the chefs are keen to please foreigners, it is usual for them to ask if you want to lessen the bite of this fiery food, but still keep the taste.

Renowned for natural beauty that can't be duplicated anywhere else in the world, Hunan province, located in the south-central part of mainland China, has mountains on the east, west and south and the Yangtze River in the north. With a population of just over 65 million, its written history goes back to 350 BCE. Changsha, the capital, reputed to be well over 400 years old, is a sophisticated, busy city.

However, if you mention Hongjiang on the Yuan River, the reaction is somewhat dubious and gets the curiosity of all tourists. It was known decades ago for the plethora of brothels and opium dens where sailors and businessmen happened to pass through because of its busy port. Now, there are tours through the houses of ill repute, which show some vestige of that past. The small city is cleaned up, even somewhat classy, and has become a tourist stop with a view of the former lifestyle. There are also some musical performances presented for visitors.

Each destination holds a different surprise. The ancient city of Phoenix, known in Chinese as Fenghuang, meaning longevity and good omens, is my favourite, and like a gift, is filled with unimaginable beauty. Think green, since the mountains and fields are as green as possible. The Tuo Jiang River reflects the colour, and this, in combination with the blue skies, makes it seem like a fine painting. The city was once a thriving centre of Miao culture.

Today, the Miao are a minority, whom the People's Republic of China accept, and they have settled here. They can't be missed with their traditional colourful clothing.

The old city of Phoenix is like a small town that has not been modernized, with houses that sit on stilts overlooking the river. The worn cobblestone streets have few cars, and the wider streets lead to small lanes. Early morning is the time the locals do their shopping to avoid the crush of visitors. The larger streets with their terrific shops and very well made and often trendy one-of-a-kind designs, are full by midday. It's also a friendly place, as the locals wave and greet foreigners from their windows and balconies in the old buildings.

Zhangjiajie National Forest is the main attraction of this province. It has about 3,000 sculptural rocks that rise into the sky, each different but equally splendid. The tallest, Tianzi Mountain, is 4,140 feet. Little wonder that this is called the "Monarch of the Peak Valley."

The unique area is so picturesque that it's difficult to believe that nature, not a sculptor, can take credit for the beauty. Looking up, I can't see the tops, since there's a haze covering the high peaks. This wondrous site is even more exciting when the sun starts to lower and casts a golden hue on the many truly awesome huge sandstone pillars. This is nature at its best, and it would be difficult to find this extraordinary sight anywhere else.

The good news is that there are cable cars to take you to the top, where you can get a close look at this special view. To come down, as with almost every site in China, there is always a long queue, but it is so speedy it take only a few minutes before you're quickly ushered off.

Perhaps the one eyesore here is the large building that's now a Chinese favourite, McDonald's. Some condiments are Asian, but this McDonald's menu could have been anywhere in the world. It has become a favourite, and is much enjoyed by the Chinese, even though it was once considered an expensive treat.

Cable car to the top of the mountain (top). The river in Phoenix with traditional houses on stilts

Our guide said when he was young, the special gift on his birthday was going to McDonald's. But now with the great economy, its pricing fits well into the usual cost of a good Chinese meal. Just guessing by the throngs of people inside, at the table outside, and those sitting on the steps, it is probably the busiest McDonald's in the world. The nation has taken to burgers and chips. I, on the other hand, looked forward to the great Chinese offerings. So what if my mouth burned for a short time? It was delicious. I realize, in retrospect, that I didn't have one bad meal, and I think the choices of fine restaurants are due to the efficient Chinese tourism office in Toronto, our hosts.

The main problem with the location of this McDonald's is that although there are sinks for hand washing, if you are in need of a bathroom, you have to "take 20 steps down (more like 30), walk several metres (I'd say at least 50), then turn left, then at a lane turn right." For such a large establishment, it wouldn't occur to any western eatery not to have bathrooms on the premises.

And tourists should know that most of the facilities are only squatting stalls, so it's necessary to take tissues and do some squatting exercise before heading here.

Everything in China is huge. I would cast my vote and say the largest stone monument of Mao Zedong is at Orange Island Park. It's mega-mammoth and set among artfully planted colourful flowers overlooking a small lake. And why Orange Island? Apparently, there is a bounty of oranges and clementines on the trees here. Happily, we were able to see much of the lovely park with what we would call a golf cart.

I wasn't expecting Shangong to be so sophisticated and a top university city with an ancient history. More than 40,000 students attend the university, which dates back to 950 CE. Some of the buildings have been renovated, while others were recently built but have been kept to the original style. The faculties include medicine, law and social history, and many other disciplines offered in any fine university. The only drawback for tourists is the overpriced gift shop, which does have wonderful original but pricey paintings. I would have loved to have one of the modern canvases.

And finally, history buffs take notice. Although Zhijang is in nearby Hubei province, it isn't a tourist destination. It's a historic military site where the formal surrender of Japan to China took place after World War II.

So see Beijing, go to Singapore, but don't miss the intriguing province of Hunan. ■

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What's New

JAN. 8 - JAN. 15

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Jan. 8

NOT YOUR USUAL KLEZMER
Jonno Lightstone and **Brian Katz** perform a concert-lecture, "Not your usual klezmer," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

Saturday, Jan. 10

MAIMONIDES: TWO PERSPECTIVES
Rabbi Daniel Korobkin discusses Maimonides with **Albert Dov Friedberg** and **Prof. James Diamond,** 8 p.m. at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto.

YOUTH HAVDALAH AND PARTY
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a youth Havdalah and movie party, 5:45 p.m. Email agol@shaarshalom.ca

RABBI SAMSON HIRSCH
Rabbi Zev Eleff discusses "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: Ancestor of Modern Orthodoxy?" 7:30 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva.

BRINGING TORAH TO LIFE
Rachel Urowitz explores themes in Jewish history related to the parshah, 8:45 a.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue.

SHABBAT UNPLUGGED
Beth David Synagogue holds Shabbat Unplugged, 2-6 p.m. with board games, basketball, lectures and musical *Havdalah.* Register at www.bethdavid.com

TABLE TENNIS
Maccabi Canada is offering a table tennis session for youths age 8 to 16. Classes start today, with other sessions offered Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contact **Michele** at michele@maccabicanada.com or 416-398-0515, ext. 204.

Sunday, Jan. 11

YIDDISH CLASSES
Improve your Yiddish language skills for conversation, reading and writing by joining a Yiddish class for adults. All levels offered. Sundays, 10 a.m.-noon, starts today, Beth David Synagogue. Call **Ed,** 416-635-2883, ext. 5189, or www.committeeforyiddish.com. $150 for 10 classes.

Something sweet

Zachary Winkler and his sister, Maya, present a cheque for $12,793 from their eighth annual Do Something Sweet event to Connie Bleecker in support of the Hospital for Sick Children. Every year, the children hold a fundraiser in Thornhill, with cotton candy, games and special guests, to raise money for the hospital.

MEDICAL HALACHAH
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Treating diabetes on Shabbat," 8:45 a.m. at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto congregation. Sponsored by Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov. www.torontotorah.com

SUNDAY SPROUTS
Beth Tikvah Synagogue offers a range of activities, including arts and crafts, sports, story and music time for children aged 1 to 7, starting today till June, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Call 416-221-3433 or www.bethtikvahtoronto.org

DER PURIMSHPILER
Friends of Yiddish shows the film *Der Purimshpiler (The Jester)* 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Film introduced by **Shlomo Schwartzberg.** RSVP yiddish18@yahoo.ca or **Sandy,** 416-458-1440.

WOMEN'S TALMUD CLASS
Mekorot offers a Talmud class for women with **Rabbi Noah Sonenberg,** Jan. 11-May 31, 8-9:30 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. Register at info@mekorot.ca.

Monday, Jan. 12

MINI PROGRAMS
Temple Sinai offers programs for children 12 months to 5 years, including cooking and science. Morning, lunchtime and afternoon classes available. Call 416-487-3281 or www.templesinai.net.

DEATH AND RELIGIOUS MARTYRDOM
Mekorot offers a course on "Dying in the name of God: Judaism's Views on Death and Religious Martyrdom," with **Jim Diamond.** Runs Jan. 12-Feb. 2, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Register at info@mekorot.ca.

Tuesday, Jan. 13

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Quality Balls: The David Steinberg Story,* with introduction by **Larry Ankiewicz.** 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

ISRAELI STAMP CLUB
Israeli Stamp Club discusses "A history of besieged settlements through philately," 7 p.m., Antibes Community Centre, 140 Antibes Dr.

Wednesday, Jan. 14

REEL & SPIEL
Beth Emeth Synagogue shows the film *School Ties,* with commentary by **Rabbi Leslie Lipson,** 7 p.m., $5.

SHMITTAH
Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky discusses "The practical shmittah," 8 p.m., Bnai Torah Congregation.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Jan. 22 is Jan. 12. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP

JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

MACCABI CANADA

Maccabi Canada is seeking male basketball players born in 1997 or later to compete at the Maccabi Games in Berlin (July 2015) and Santiago, Chile (December 2015). Contact the coaches at vlad@kovalevsky.com or andre.serero@gmail.com. For more information, visit www.maccabicanada.com

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN

The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- Parenting in the age of technology: Media personality **Joe Rich** hosts a workshop on parenting children and teens in a digital age. Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Mind-body connection for women: A 7-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Jan. 28, 1 p.m. or Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Lebovic JCC.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 5-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Starts Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play Pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC. Paul Hyman** discusses brain fitness. Beat the winter blues with fun and physical exercises to improve memory and energy and to reduce falls. Jan. 15, Jan. 22, 1:30 p.m. $4 per workshop. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, Jan.14; Manicures and facials, Jan. 8; Barber/hairdresser, Jan. 22, 10 a.m. Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Jan. 13, **Myriam Shechter** discusses "Mistaken identities and glorious music: Strauss' fiery *The Gypsy Baron*," 10 a.m. Jan. 15, lecture on "How to make the most out of your retirement living," 1:30 p.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabad-markham.org
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- If you love Yiddish and good conversation, join the Yiddish group. Starts Jan. 19, 1:30 p.m.
- Intermediate mah-jong starts Jan. 21, 10:30 a.m.
- Learn to play bridge, starts Jan. 19, 10 a.m.
- Tai Chi starts Jan. 12, 10 a.m.
- **Leon Soriano** teaches "Acrylic painting," starting Jan. 13, 1:45 p.m.
- Ceramics classes during the day and evening start the week of Jan. 8.
- Yoga Cares is a program for teens and adults with an intellectual disability. Jan. 6-March 10, 7 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

- Registration deadline for Hebrew Institute is Jan. 9. Various levels, open to everyone. Contact anniem@mnjcc.org or ext. 388.
- Teen Time: A program for kids in grades 7-8, co-presented by Camp Gesher and Habonim Dror, Jan. 11, Feb. 8, March 15, 1-3:30 p.m. Free. Email, Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a weekly group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Subscribe to the Jewish Film Society. Eight films shown between January and December 2015. joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m., second term starts Jan. 20.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: the films of Alfred Hitchcock," Mondays, Jan. 12- Feb. 9, 1 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society shows the Israeli film *Cupcakes*, Jan. 18, 4 and 7 p.m. Tickets $15/$10. Box office opens one hour before screening time. Ext. 606.
- The paintings of **Aba Bayefsky** are in the gallery until Jan. 26.
- **Adam Nayman** discusses two movies. Jan. 19, *Zodiac*, Jan. 26, *The Master*, 7 p.m. Ext. 606.
- Support group for adult children of Holocaust survivors meets Jan. 19. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi** 416-785-2500, ext. 2271.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in social innovation, community-building and entrepreneurship. Apply now for winter. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Enjoy a glass fusing workshop creating a challah tray,with **Marcela Rosemberg,** Jan. 20, 7 p.m.
- Daytime and evening mah-jong classes start Jan. 13.
- Daytime and evening ceramic classes for all levels start Jan. 7.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Fundamentals of drawing and painting," starting Jan. 14,10 a.m.
- PJ Plus is a parent and tot program for children ages 18 months to 3 years, starting Jan. 21.
- Adult art (ages 25-45)with **Melysa Gorlicky** starts Jan. 5, 8 p.m.
- Book club discusses *The Little Bride* by **Anna Solomon,** Jan. 27, 7 p.m.
- Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m. ■

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Chanukah the whole year through

David Levine

With the New Year upon us, most of us have put away our Chanukah decorations – and with them, the spirit of the holiday season – not to return until next November, when the radio starts to warn us not to shout, cry or pout.

But Chanukah is more than just a holiday – for one man, the lessons of Chanukah last the whole year. Meet Judah McCabe.

"The Maccabee victory over Hellenism is the most important spiritual moment of the Jewish calendar," says McCabe. "And that's my mission – shining a light to vanquish the darkness the whole year round."

Hellenism – the spread of Greek culture that places value on personal comfort, and luxurious housing, clothing or food – was soundly defeated by the Maccabees approximately 2,100 years ago and has yet to reappear in the Jewish community.

McCabe (born Judah Melmstein) says he was inspired by "the true message of the Maccabees" – community, devotion, and fuel scarcity – to change his name and devote his life to keeping his community free of Hellenistic influence.

In accordance with what he calls "Maccabean principles," McCabe lives in a single, windowless room beneath a 24-hour CHEEP-O™ convenience store (where he refuses to shop, citing "the obscenity of convenience"). His meagre kitchen contains only bread, salt and a grapefruit-sized wad of dried mud ("in case I start to enjoy the bread too much," he explains).

"Comfort is decadent and, therefore, a sin," says McCabe. "That fact changed my life and allowed me to really connect with the Maccabee spirit."

Each day, McCabe strives to enact his principals through good deeds in his community. "People love to talk about their community work," McCabe told me, "but a Maccabee doesn't talk. He acts."

After much convincing, McCabe allowed me to tag along as he spent an afternoon shining the light of Chanukah.

Our afternoon began with a walking tour of several upscale restaurants, where McCabe politely but firmly reminded patrons of the evils of material indulgence and the fate of the Hellenists in Jerusalem. "I think they heard me out," McCabe told me afterward, "especially when I threatened their families. Who knows? Maybe this will motivate them to do *tshuvah*."

Next, I follow McCabe to a local shopping mall, to continue his one-on-one youth counselling project.

"It's simple," says McCabe, crouching down outside an entrance. "This place is a temple to Hellenism. Anyone walking out with a bag is a Hellenist, so I make sure they know they're unwanted in this town unless they renounce their ways."

Finally, we proceeded to the Jewish community centre parking lot, where McCabe spent several hours keying cars, occasionally stopping to slash the more expensive tires.

"These heretics worship gods of chrome and leather," mused McCabe, as he finished carving the word "sinner" across the hood of a Lincoln Navigator while humming *Dreidl Dreidl Dreidl*. "The pursuit of resale value is vanity. Trust in public transit and you will find redemption."

Community response to McCabe's campaign of purification has been mixed. Many community leaders were glad to have a "spokesperson" who would "stand up for the neighbourhood," while others were concerned about zealots in their community.

McCabe is quick to correct the doubters. "Judah McCabe is not a zealot," he says, suddenly in the third person, "Judah McCabe is a regular person who acts zealously. It's not the same thing at all!"

And, just like Santa's endless joy, Judah's zeal isn't just a seasonal affair.

"My message applies to every day of the calendar: you, too, can be a Maccabee! Bring Chanukah to life the whole year round! Reject materialism and luxury or face the military consequences that your neighbours think you deserve." ■

Family Moments

Happy fifth birthday to our son, Jonah. You bring us so much joy and laughter. Love, Mommy, Daddy and Arie

Happy 90th birthday to Ida Stroll Fishman. Lots of love from Claudia, Michael, Johanna, Noah, Jacqueline, Elijah; Jack, Jane, Owen; Marli, Jonathan and Kendyl.

Happy 99th birthday to our very special and wise father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Ralph Etigson. A hearty mazel tov and continued good health!

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to oblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

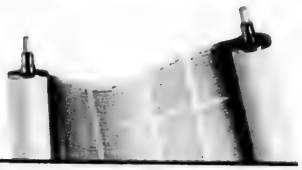
מזל טוב

SeeJN | New wheels for those on wheels

The Reena Foundation recently purchased a new wheelchair-accessible van to provide people with better access to social, educational and work programs, medical appointments and other activities. The third annual Striking for Reena golf event hosted this summer by builder-developer Tribute Communities made the new addition to Reena's fleet possible. It was purchased as part of Reena Foundation's annual van replacement campaign. From left are Herschel, Jackie (Reena staff), Jamilah, Max, Steven Libfeld of Tribute Communities, Steve, Michelle, Evelyn (Reena staff) and Reena Foundation president Gary Sim.

Parshah

Shmot | Exodus 1:1 - 6:1



Rabbi Aaron Katchen compares the many stories in the Torah to a Chekhov play
Rabbi Michal Shekel offers a reminder that choice exists, even in extreme conditions
Rabbi Howard Morrison discovers the seeds of contemporary anti-Semitism in Pharoah

Aaron Katchen

And Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the Nile." (Exodus 1:22).

I had a Torah teacher who compared many stories in Torah to a Chekhov play – you don't bring out the gun in the first act unless it comes back in the third. That same teacher also reminded us that we must leave space for every question the Torah raises and not rush to answer or justify the solution.

I raise these two points because as a campus rabbi, I encourage students to ask questions, to struggle with the text and develop a personal relationship with their history and story. Students often present me with challenges regarding troubling texts. I do my best to honour and hear their questions. Often the questions are better than the answers I can provide. Many times a resolution is achieved by revisiting the context of the verses.

Students have often raised questions regarding the plague of the firstborn (Exodus 12:29).

The Talmud (Sotah 12b) comments on the introductory verse (Ex. 1:22) by stating: "And Pharaoh commanded all his people." Rabbi Yossi son of Rabbi Hanina said that he caused the same decree upon his own people. Rabbi Yossi also said that Pharoah made three decrees: first, "If it be a son, you shall kill him," then "every son that is born you shall cast into the river." Finally, he caused the same decree upon his own people.

The Talmud reminds us that the plague of the firstborn was not arbitrary, but rather put into motion by Pharaoh. Our verse is the first act, where Pharaoh brings out the gun by decreeing that all Jewish baby boys must be killed. The consequence of that action, in the third act, is the plague. This coupling shows that all actions have consequences. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Michal Shekel

There is a scene in the 1984 film *Moscow on the Hudson* where Robin Williams, playing a Russian musician who, having defected to America, finds himself overwhelmed by the selection of coffee available at the supermarket. All he can do is stand there and joyfully repeat the word "coffee."

We associate freedom with choice: the lack of constraint facilitates accessibility, be it the availability of more consumer products or the liberty to act in different ways.

Though slavery is the ultimate constraint, Shmot shows us that choice exists, even in extreme conditions. One powerful example is provided by the midwives, who are ordered by Pharaoh to kill the Israelites' baby boys. "The midwives, fearing God, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them – they let the boys live." (Shmot 1:17) The Hebrew verb *vatechayena* is understood by both Rashi and Ibn Ezra to mean "they made the boys live." The midwives went out of their way to ensure these babies' survival. Rashi explains that Shifra and Puah provided food, while Ibn Ezra states that they did whatever was necessary to keep the boys alive.

A second example is that of the unnamed man whom tradition understands to be Amram, Moses' father. "A certain man of the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman." (2:1) Ramban, focusing on the verb "went," sees the man's action as a deliberate one: he consciously ignores the danger inherent in Pharaoh's decree.

Victor Frankl wrote in *Man's Search for Meaning* that "everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." Our ancestors' choices were "the cry of the Israelites" (Shmot 3:9) that drew God's attention, ultimately resulting in redemption. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and the rabbi at Or Hadash Synagogue, Newmarket, Ont.

Howard Morrison

One of the earliest examples of anti-Semitism appears with Pharaoh and his followers. In this parshah, one sees aggression against the children of Israel. It's hard to believe that this new Pharaoh did not know the righteous acts of Joseph, but Pharaoh links the growth of the Israelite people to their becoming a threat.

This ideological propaganda leads to acts of physical torment as Pharaoh sets taskmasters over our ancestors and imposes forced harsh labour. Enslavement and oppression continue for a couple of hundred years.

The seeds of contemporary anti-Semitism sown from our earliest days have continued to the horrific murders of four rabbis and a Druze officer Nov. 18 in Jerusalem.

Every chapter of hatred against the Jewish People has been predicated on physical violence and ideological propaganda. In Parshat Shmot, Pharaoh successfully uses twisted language to inspire genocide against Israel.

We continue to mourn the losses of four Jews, all of them rabbis, who were davening the *Amidah* when they were brutally slain, garbed in tallit and tfillin.

Prior to the Exodus, we learn the origins of tfillin. We bind them on our hand and over our eyes to remind us that we serve God with our actions and beliefs. The physical and the ideological must be true and honest.

A few weeks ago, we witnessed not only the physical act of terror but also the verbal. Jew haters everywhere spread vicious lies, but so does media propaganda in North America. A Canadian periodical reported the events of Nov. 18 as follows: "Israeli police kill two Arabs after apparent synagogue attack." Notice how the language turns the victim into the aggressor and the aggressor into the victim.

Parshat Shmot reminds us to be vigilant against physical and verbal terror. I will always remember what took place Nov. 18 when I don my tallit and tfillin. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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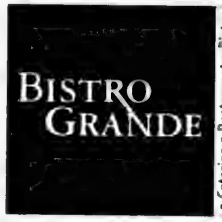

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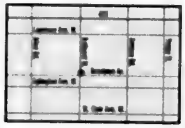

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Some tips for a perfect pasta meal

SUE EPSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

To some, cooking pasta is the easiest thing in the world to cook. To others it's a culinary disaster... overcooked, undercooked, tasteless, stuck together mush.

It needn't be that way. First of all, most of cooking is just being there. That is, letting the telephone ring through to voice mail and simply keeping your focus on the task at hand. And by being there –that is, tending the pasta – you'll be able to do the only test available to judge its doneness: taste it.

This tip alone will improve your pasta-cooking skills, but the following steps will guarantee a perfect dish of pasta every time.

•All pasta is not created equal. Choose a brand with a solid reputation rather than off-brands.

• Use a pot that's large enough to accommodate the pasta without crowding. For one pound of pasta, an eight-quart pot is good; a 10-quart pot is better. Pasta needs room to move freely as it cooks. At a minimum, use nothing smaller than a six-quart pot.

• Use plenty of water. For one pound of pasta, you should use at least six quarts of water.

• Add salt to the water – about 1 tablespoon per gallon. Salt adds flavour to the pasta, which helps create a well-seasoned dish. Often, a perfectly seasoned sauce will still taste like it needs "something" because the pasta is unseasoned.

• Bring the water to a full, rolling boil before adding the pasta. One of the prime causes for pasta sticking together is that the water had not yet come to a full boil. When you add pasta to water that has not yet reached the boiling point, it releases natural starches, which act like glue. Since the pasta is simply sitting in the water at the time, the strands stick together.

• Bring the water back to the boil as quickly as possible after adding the pasta. In the case of pasta strands, like spaghetti or linguine, stir the pasta until it has wilted and become submerged in the cooking water, then cover the pot until the water returns to the boil. When the water has boiled, though, uncover the pot, and finish cooking uncovered.

• Stir the pasta two or three times throughout the cooking process. Pasta cooks in eight to ten minutes. The brief time you spend attending to it will reap huge rewards at the dinner table.

• Never add olive oil or any other oil to the pasta cooking water. The oil coats the pasta, and prevents the sauce from adhering to it when you've put the entire dish together.

• Cook the pasta to the 'al dente' state. The only way to judge this is by tasting. Manufacturer's cooking times are just guidelines. Begin tasting the pasta about two minutes before the manufacturer says it should be done. Also, there will be a small amount of carryover cooking between the time you remove the pasta from the stove, drain in the sink, and combine with the sauce.

• Never rinse pasta. When you rinse pasta, you're washing away most of the starches and nutrients that you were seeking to enjoy in the first place.

So be there. Be attentive. Taste, and learn when pasta has cooked to the consistency that you like. Follow these 10 little steps, and you'll develop a reputation as a miracle worker with pasta. And with the myriad of sauces available, you will have expanded your cooking repertoire immeasurably.

Baked Lemon Spaghetti

- ❑ 1 (8 oz.) package spaghetti
- ❑ 1/3 cup unsalted butter
- ❑ 1 (8 oz.) carton sour cream
- ❑ 1 tsp. finely grated lemon peel
- ❑ 3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ❑ 3 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- ❑ 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste

Cook spaghetti according to package directions until al dente. Drain and place spaghetti in a greased 1.5-quart casserole dish. Melt butter in medium saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat, and stir in sour cream, lemon peel, and lemon juice. Mix until smooth. Pour mixture over spaghetti in casserole dish.

Mix well bake in a preheated 400-degree oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until heated through. Remove from oven, and add grated parmesan cheese and parsley. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately. (Makes 8 servings)

Greenspan was a role model for young lawyers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Greenspan put his powers of persuasion to use as a vocal opponent of the death penalty. In 1986, when there was talk of making it a free vote in parliament, he put his practice on hold for several months and travelled the country to lobby against it.

"As a lawyer and a citizen, I can't thank him enough," said Adler. "People don't realize how hit and miss court can be... I believe Eddie played a huge role in making sure it was defeated."

In recent years, Greenspan became more and more concerned about the rise of anti-Semitism in polite society, Jonas said. "He took it seriously when it was embraced by well-educated, accomplished, successful people."

"Over the past two years, Eddie became a beacon of strength for Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center," said Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of the centre. "He readily agreed to speak at our conference on anti-Semitism in June, and most recently, he co-chaired our State of the Union luncheon.

"In fact," Benlolo said, "we had a wonderful lunch meeting just a few weeks ago where Eddie was deeply concerned for the rising tide of anti-Semitism, particularly on campuses. We developed a specific course of action that he planned on addressing over the winter break. He had so much more to give in this regard and his loss for our community is profound."

Greenspan grew up in Niagara Falls. Last July, he and his brother, Brian, returned to their hometown to be presented with the keys to the city by Mayor Jim Diodati.

The *Niagara Falls Review*, citing his teachers, said Greenspan was known to be bright, but they complained he wasn't taking their classes seriously. He was known, however, for his skill in public speaking.

His father, Joe, was a scrap metal dealer who aspired to be a lawyer, but was forced by circumstances to give it up to pursue the family business.

Although their father could not pursue his ambition, Eddie and Brian became prominent lawyers, as did Eddie's daughter, Julianna. His sister, Rosann, serves as executive director of the Center for the Study of Law and Society at University of California at Berkeley.

"All his life, his father groomed his children, especially Eddie, his eldest son, to fulfil the dream he had to be a litigator, and Eddie happily fulfilled his father's dream," Jonas said.

He also served as a role model for a generation of lawyers inspired by his work and his ability to steer public policy by his advocacy against capital punishment, Brodsky said.

"We saw it could happen. We saw how one person could make a difference. It was tremendously inspiring," Brodsky added. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 8, 2015

Laszlo Mezei: Depicting the desolation of Auschwitz

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca

To mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) is presenting the educational exhibition *Anne Frank – A History for Today* from Jan. 8 to 28. Organized by Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, this exhibition has been shown in more than 60 countries around the world.

Concurrently, a dozen haunting black and white photographs of the Auschwitz-Birkenau site taken last year by renowned Hungarian-born Montreal photographer Laszlo Mezei are also on view.

The subject is in stark contrast to the portraits of important people and celebrities Laszlo – as he is known professionally – has taken over the decades. They have included hundreds of titans of industry, from Conrad Black to Paul Desmarais Sr., and politicians from Pierre Elliott Trudeau to David Ben-Gurion, as well as personalities in the arts, sports and entertainment worlds. Oprah Winfrey sat for him, as did Canada's most renowned portraitist Yousuf Karsh.

But the Auschwitz project has deep personal meaning for Laszlo, who immigrated to Montreal in 1956. The Holocaust scarred his family, as it did hundreds of thousands of others in Hungary, and had a profound effect on his early life.

Laszlo Mezei

Teenagers visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau site. LASZLO PHOTO

You are internationally renowned for your stunning portraits of the rich, the famous and the powerful. Why did you decide to turn your lens on Auschwitz, the very antithesis of the beauty and vitality you normally capture?

I had been thinking for years about doing a photo essay at Auschwitz in memory of those who perished there. After a lifelong career of, as you say, producing portraits of beauty and vitality, I went because I wanted to contribute, in my own way, to the important and endless fight against forgetfulness. It's a fight not just against forgetfulness, but against the deniers – those who insist the Holocaust never happened and whose fondest wish really is to bring about a second Holocaust. The world can build museum after museum, and construct memorial after memorial, but the deniers will go on denying, and their denial will find willing ears. That's why individuals like me, using what means we have, should never, *ever*, stop reminding the world of what went on at Auschwitz.

In what way were you and your family affected by the Holocaust? Do you have a personal memory of that time?

In 1943, I was four years old when a group of thugs with the Arrow Cross – Hungary's equivalent of the Nazi party – took away my father to a slave labour camp. We never saw or heard from my father again, and we never learned how he perished. My mother, sister and myself were saved from the Holocaust by Christian friends. Until the end of the war, we lived with them in the countryside, on their farm.

How emotionally draining has this project been for you? Was there a point where you thought you couldn't keep going?

I was at Auschwitz-Birkenau for the better part of three days. You don't get hardened to the atrocity. The realization of the meaning of the place, the incredible inhumanity of it, only strikes you deeper. You could easily fall apart, and falling apart would be right and proper. I nearly lost my composure a number of times. But I had to stay focused in order to achieve my goal. Most people will never visit Auschwitz. Let them know it, then, through exhibitions like this, which offer a vision of what the Holocaust meant.

How were the arrangements made? Did the Auschwitz authorities give you immediate and unfettered access, or did it take some negotiation?

I was not restricted in any way. Arrangements were made for me by a Polish photographer, a friend of mine in Warsaw. The uncomplicated access that the Polish authorities provide is a tremendously positive thing. They now supervise visitors only to the extent of preventing theft or vandalism.

How many shots did you take? Why black and white?

I took almost a thousand shots. And to best show the drab awfulness of Auschwitz, the sense of desolation one feels there, the sadness and revulsion of the memories it compels, I felt the photos had to be in black and white.

How was the connection with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts made? Did it agree to exhibit your photos before you went to Poland, or afterward? Have you previously exhibited at the museum?

I had never previously exhibited with the museum. After my trip to Auschwitz, I sent digital copies of my best two dozen photographs to every member of the museum's board. I suggested that these photos might comprise a suitable means of marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the most infamous of the Nazi death camps. I am extremely proud that the museum has chosen to display my work in association with the Anne Frank exhibit.

The travelling Anne Frank exhibition is primarily aimed at young people. How will your Auschwitz images complement that exhibit and add to the discussion on tolerance that its organizers hope to encourage?

What my photographs are saying, and I hope they are shouting it loudly and clearly, is: 'Look where intolerance leads. Look at the filth, horror and hell which hatred creates.' I would think that makes for a suitable addition to the Anne Frank story – a warning to young people, but also an encouragement to make a better world than the one they too often read about in the history books.

What is the future of your Auschwitz series after the exhibition closes? Will they be shown or published elsewhere?

At present, we have no post-museum plans. My hope, of course, is that the photographs will be adopted by an institution or corporation, and preserved for the very reasons I took the photos – to help perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust, and help ensure that "Never again!" does not fade into a hollow slogan. ■

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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A saint in the age of demons

Backstory

EROL ARAF

Pope Francis' recent visit to Turkey coincided with the 70th anniversary of one of the most daring rescue operations of World War II, conceived by Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, the Vatican's ambassador to Turkey, who would become Pope John XXIII and would be canonized in 2014.

Roncalli's "Operation Baptism" was as dangerous as it was simple: it entailed the issuance of false baptism certificates to hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews at the time when Adolf Eichmann was deporting 430,000 souls from Budapest.

Roncalli worked with Rabbi Isaac Herzog, the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, and Ira Hirschmann, special envoy from the American Refugee Board, with the full support and participation of the Turkish authorities. They met in the church of St. Anthony of Padua in Istanbul to launch the operation in 1944.

"Roncalli listened intently as I outlined the desperate plight of Jews in Hungary," Hirschmann later recalled. "Then he pulled his chair up closer and quietly asked, 'Do you have any contact with people in Hungary who will co-operate?'"

Author Joseph D'Hippolito's article *Pope John XXIII and the Jews*, published by the Raul Wallenberg Foundation, mentions that Roncalli had heard reports of Hungarian nuns distributing baptismal certificates to Jews, mostly children. Nazi authorities in Hungary regarded these documents as authentic proof of Aryan descent and permitted the bearers to leave Hungary.

"Roncalli planned to reinforce and expand the operation – regardless of whether Jews were actually baptized. Hirschmann readily agreed," D'Hippolito wrote.

Roncalli used diplomatic couriers, papal representatives and the Sisters of Our Lady of Zion to transport and issue baptismal certificates, immigration certificates and visas – many of them forged – to Hungarian Jews. "Operation Baptism" exceeded the wildest expectations of all those involved in the rescue effort, and indeed, when the Russians liberated Budapest in 1945, it became apparent that more than 100,000 had been saved.

According to Roncalli's biographer, Thomas Cahill, the future pope, was first alerted to the fate of the Jews in occupied Poland by a party of Jewish refugees he met in Istanbul on Sept. 5, 1940. He helped them on the way to the Holy Land, and from that time, stood ready to facilitate the escape of Jews in whatever way he could, with clothes, money, documents and a quiet sense of common humanity that never left him. Indeed, whatever was in the heart of the reining pope in 1940, Angelo Roncalli was in no doubt about what his conscience was telling him.

"We are dealing with one of the great mysteries in the history of humanity," Roncalli wrote to a concerned nun in Bucharest. "Poor children of Israel. Daily I hear their groans around me. They are relatives and fellow countrymen of Jesus."

His accomplishments include the delivery of "immigration certificates" to Palestine through the Nunciature diplomatic courier, intervention before King Boris of Bulgaria in favour of Bulgarian Jews, helping Jewish refugees from Transnistria, using his influence to save Jews from deportation in Romania and Croatia, communicating with Nazi authorities in Greece about the fate of Jews in that country, rendering succour to Jewish refugees from France and Germany, co-ordinating rescue efforts with Raymond Courvoisier, Ankara director of the Red Cross, and using his moral authority with Hitler's ambassador to Ankara, Franz von Papen. His efforts resulted in the clandestine saving of countless Jews throughout Europe.

When Pope John XXIII passed away in 1963, thousands whom he had saved, as well as Jews, Christians and Muslims with whom he had worked, paid him the silent tribute of their tears.

He was truly a saint in the age of demons. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

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Sarah Gold	Dec 20/14	11 Townsgate Drive
Jenny Bernstein	Dec 21/14	605 Finch Ave. W.
Goldie Lobel	Dec 20/14	234-412 Rocesvalles Ave.
David Robins	Dec 22/14	96 Wyndale Drive
Leonid Krasner	Dec 23/14	10 Torresdale Ave.
Richard Lichtman	Dec 24/14	11 Invermay Avenue
Bessie Bobrow	Dec 24/14	2900 Yonge Street
David Slatt	Dec 25/14	8 Mogul Drive
Edward Greenspan	Dec 24/14	43 Kimbark Blvd.
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Tobe, Jennie	Dec. 17, 2014	4 Hagey St
Laski, Sol	Dec. 17, 2014	19 Seincliffe Rd
Gottesman, Helen	Dec. 17, 2014	866 Sheppard Ave W
Allal, Denise	Dec. 17, 2014	668 Roselawn Ave
Shnaider, Adam	Dec. 17, 2014	1925 Steeles Ave E
Kay, Sylvia	Dec. 18, 2014	484 Steeles Ave W
Shmidt, Lev	Dec. 19, 2014	Private
Krybus, Manny	Dec. 20, 2014	392 York Hill Blvd
Woolf, Marion	Dec. 20, 2014	70 Bernard Ave
Gordon, Max	Dec. 22, 2014	484 Steeles Ave W
Lunansky, Luva	Dec. 21, 2014	5935 Bathurst St
Lebovits, Eleonore	Dec. 22, 2014	573 Glengrove Ave W
Schwartz, Frank	Dec. 22, 2014	159 Dalemount Ave
Karmiol, Fela	Dec. 22, 2014	3560 Bathurst St
Fishbein, Grigory	Dec. 22, 2014	Private
Smith, Henry	Dec. 22, 2014	14 Dorchester Dr
Kadoch, Lila	Dec. 22, 2014	69 Reiner Rd.
Matus, Greta	Dec. 23, 2014	361 Roselawn Ave
Sokolowski, Vera	Dec. 23, 2014	35 Canyon Ave
Rostas, Elizabeth	Dec. 23, 2014	135 Antibes Dr
Veg, Helena	Dec. 23, 2014	205 Cummer Ave
Rabinovitch, Hyman	Dec. 23, 2014	484 Steeles Ave W
Kleiman, Guta	Dec. 23, 2014	170 Red Maple Rd
Kouperman, Berta	Dec. 24, 2014	7825 Bayview Ave
Mirkin, Lev	Dec. 24, 2014	Private
Bernstein, Sarah	Dec. 24, 2014	2 Covington Rd
Abraham, Abraham	Dec. 25, 2014	1131 Steeles Ave W

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PAGES 6, 8, 12, 14, 31, 33, 34

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:43 p.m.	5:50 p.m.
Montreal	4:20 p.m.	5:29 p.m.
Toronto	4:49 p.m.	5:56 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:39 p.m.	5:53 p.m.
Calgary	4:41 p.m.	5:57 p.m.
Vancouver	4:25 p.m.	5:38 p.m.

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End of a matzah era, and Western Wall gender bender

Streit's to leave the Lower East Side

Streit's said it will close its 90-year-old matzah factory on New York's Lower East Side. Aron Streit, Inc., a family-owned firm, said it will leave its Rivington Street facility after the Passover baking season in April. "The economics just finally caught up with us," said owner Alan Adler. "It was very sad, a very hard decision to make." Adler is the great-grandson of Aron Streit, who started a bakery at a nearby location before opening the current factory in 1925. Streit's makes about 40 per cent of the matzah consumed in the United States. It will move its offices to its other facility in New Jersey that bakes macaroons and other products. It hopes to get $25 million for the six-storey building.

Iconic brand won't be in NYC anymore.

Transgender woman barred from Kotel

A transgender woman was denied access to both the women's and men's sections of the Western Wall last week. Kay Long, who designs gowns and costumes, visited the Kotel Jan. 5 with a friend from Madrid. Long was turned away from the women's section by an Orthodox woman patrolling the site who said she's not a woman, and she was barred from the men's section because she doesn't look like a man. "All that's left now is to take a picture and say a prayer from afar with the hope that it will be answered," she wrote on Facebook, under a photo of her outside the Western Wall plaza with the Kotel in the background. "Because God is everywhere and loves us all." She posted later that she hadn't intended to pray there and didn't want to make a scene.

A new Hollywood trend?

Actress Cameron Diaz married Benji Madden, guitarist for the punk band Good Charlotte, at her Beverly Hills home Jan. 5 in a Jewish ceremony, despite the fact neither appears to be Jewish. The wedding featured a crushed glass, chants of "mazel tov" and even a traditional yichud ritual, during which the couple was secluded after their vows. But unlike other celebrities who have dabbled in Kabbalah or converted, neither Diaz nor Madden appears to have done either. Speculation abounds about their reasons, but apparently a l'chaim is in order. ■

Gematria

3

The number of consecutive life sentences given to Hussam Kawasme, ringleader of the terror cell that killed three Israeli teens last summer.

1.5 Million

The number of visitors in 2014 to the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum, a record.

Quotable

I won't change what I do. To do any less would be to dishonour the memories of the 12 victims.

— ***National Post*** **cartoonist Gary Clement on the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre.** **See page 14.**

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Internet columnist Mark Mietkiewicz talks Jews and football, North American-style.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

The politics of conversion

The two articles on the nature of conversion in Toronto and elsewhere ("The politics of conversion," Dec. 18) only begin to scratch the surface in dealing with some of the issues around conversion. And those issues, in turn, connect with the perennial question of "Who is a Jew?"

We may pride ourselves here in Canada on having a pluralistic society, but let's not kid ourselves: to the Orthodox rabbinate, and many Orthodox Jews, the other forms of Judaism are not legitimate, not acceptable, not good enough.

You can call that political, or you can identify it as ideologically based. But it is a fact that the genealogy of our people is interwoven with that of many non-Jewish wives and mothers, some of whom were known heroines.

The "politics of conversion" is not just about the autocratic or unfair practices of some converting rabbis. It is about the whole question of who is a Jew and the question of who gets to make that decision or set that policy.

The current situation, in which a few ideologues play God and set the rules for everyone, is bad for the long-term health of the Jewish People.

Michael Diamond
Toronto

Israel and the Diaspora

I strongly disagree with Simon Adler's article ("Diaspora Jews shouldn't try to influence the Israeli election," Dec. 25).

Diaspora Jews should absolutely get involved in the Israeli election. They need us.

First, getting an outsider's perspective is helpful. Sometimes you can't see the forest for the trees, and getting an outsider's view is sometimes enlightening.

Second, Israel can't survive without Diaspora Jewry, because of the political, moral and financial support given by the Diaspora.

If Israel expects such support, it also must take into consideration the Diaspora's views if it wishes to continue to get support.

The election is one of the most important in Israel's history. Diaspora Jews need to have their voices heard.

Peter Farkas
Toronto

Counting heads

Your statistic in Gematria (Jan.8) that in 2016 Palestinians will equal the number of Jewish Israelis in Israel and the West Bank, is wildly confusing.

Is the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) now calling every Israeli Arab a "Palestinian" and including them in their overall population stats? That's the only way that the number of "Palestinians" could equal the number of Israeli Jews by 2016.

If that's the case, the PCBS and the Palestinian Authority should ask themselves how many of those "Palestinians" will move to the wonderful new Palestinian state they are trying to create. My guess is none.

Israeli Arabs value the freedom and stability the State of Israel offers too much to fall for that foolishness.

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

The impossibility of peace

In his letter criticizing Yossi Klein Halevi's belief regarding the "impossibility" of reaching an acceptable peace deal with the Palestinians, Bernard Katz ("The impossibility of peace," Jan. 8), touts the "2002 Arab Peace Initiative endorsed by every Arab state" as refuting the impossible. But since that so-called peace plan upholds the right of Palestinian "refugees," who at this stage of the game amount to around five million people, to "return" to their "rightful" homes and thereby put an end to Israel as a Jewish state, it is clear why the Arabs would endorse the Saudi king's ideas.

It is also clear that the plan would not result in the sort of peace that Israel could or would accept, which is to say a peace that allows for its continued existence.

And let's not forget that, for most Arabs, the reality of a sovereign Jewish nation is anathema on religious grounds.

As such, *pace* Bernard Katz, King Abdullah and the Arab League, true peace will remain an "impossibility" for the foreseeable future and long thereafter.

Mindy G. Alter
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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RABBI-2-RABBI

What makes a Jewish leader?

It takes chutzpah to step into the role, but for those who anchor their leadership in Jewish values, it's never about them. It's about the task at hand.

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Fishman: Jewish leadership can mean two things: leadership by people who are Jewish, and leading in a way that reflects Jewish values. I am particularly interested in the latter – leaders who are able to extract from classic Jewish texts themes that can point toward what it means to lead in a way that is deeply Jewish.

Perhaps most fundamental of all is the theme of vision. The biblical character of Moses comes to mind. Moses cannot begin his mission before he has a sense of what he is being called upon to do. Encountering the burning bush was more than a mystical or prophetic moment for Moses – it was a vision of what the goals and objectives in his life were to be.

Before a leader can bring others "over there," he or she has to know where "there" is.

Rabbi Splansky: Apparently, it isn't so unusual for a thorn bush to catch fire in the desert. But Moses stopped to watch because he was curious. Why wasn't the fire consuming the bush? A Jewish leader is naturally curious.

Moses was a shepherd by profession, but he wondered about the physics of that burning bush. He wondered about greater freedom for a people he barely knew, but sensed he was somehow a part of. He wondered about a place called Israel, which he had only seen in his daydreams. Moses' curiosity carried him in the direction of Pharoah's palace.

A Jewish leader is driven by the need to find out.

Rabbi Fishman: And yet, Moses is doubtful. He claims the Jewish People will not believe him and doubts that the people will accept him as their leader, the one who will take them to freedom. God responds harshly to this and strikes Moses with a punishment that hints he has spoken badly about others.

The principle is that once a vision has been acquired, the role of the leader is to have faith in others. In addition to seeing the destination, a leader has to believe that the community is able to be a part of the journey.

Rabbi Splansky: The finest mark of a Jewish leader is loving loyalty, not blind loyalty. When we built the golden calf, God suggested to Moses: "I see that this is a stiff-necked people. Now let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation." (Exodus 32:9-10)

But Moses did not take the bait. Even in the heat of his anger, he did not abandon his people. Instead, he defended them.

A Jewish leader stands by the people – stands with them and for them, and draws out the best in them.

Rabbi Fishman: Moses, in an act of despair, cries out to God: "the burden is too heavy… if this is how you are going to treat me, please kill me" (Numbers 11). This is Moses at the depth of despair.

And yet even within the bleak moments, a trace of inspiration can be found. When there is no one around to do what needs to be done, a Jewish leader will innately sense that this is why they are here, and that this is their moment.

Rabbi Splansky: A Jewish leader knows who she is and who she isn't; what he can do and what he cannot. She knows what she knows, what she has yet to learn, and also that there are things about God's world she will never know.

It takes chutzpah to step into a leadership role, but for those who anchor their leadership in Jewish values, it's never "about me." It's about the task, the need, the mitzvah at hand. A Jew steps into leadership because he feels duty-bound to offer up his best efforts in order to make God's world more whole. A Jew recognizes her talents are God-given, that his time on earth is God-given.

At first, it may seem chutzpadik to step into leadership, but when we see our potential for impact as a gift, a challenge, an opportunity and an expectation from the Divine, it's chutzpadik to say no. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Bargain hunting

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Women in Brantford, Ont., look for good deals in 1952 at the first Hadassah bazaar.

SeeJN | Supporting the Rothman family

THE MEDIA LINE/DUDI SAAD PHOTO

Jewish Agency for Israel chairman Natan Sharansky, right, presents a cheque for $108,000 to Stephen Rothman, brother of Howie Rothman, the Canadian-Israeli man who was left severely injured in hospital after a horrific terror attack on a Jerusalem shul in November. The Howie Rothman and Family Victim of Terror Assistance Fund was set up by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to aid with his medical bills and other expenses.

From Yoni's Desk

Why Netanyahu had to be in Paris

According to reports, French government authorities asked Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to attend Sunday's unity rally in Paris, for fear his presence would be "divisive." He did not accede to the request, and for good reason. The leader of the Jewish state needed to be there to serve as a reminder that all Jews have a responsibility to stand united. In the wake of Friday's terror attack that left four Jewish Parisians dead, to do anything less would have been truly divisive.

The killings at Hyper Cacher emphasized, once again, the dangers facing Jews in France and across Europe. Mass emigration has never seemed more possible, though French and European authorities have been quick to speak in support of their Jewish communities, led by French Prime Minister Manuel Valls. "If 100,000 Jews leave," he said, "France will no longer be France." But if French Jews are to feel safe again, words won't be enough.

In order to ensure the safety of their Jewish communities, European leaders will have to act strongly, and quickly, against Muslim radicals who teach that killing Jews, and cartoonists, is a virtuous thing. Mainstream Muslim leaders should be asked to do their part, too – not as some sort of blame by association, but because their religion is also under threat. And Europe's Jewish leaders must proclaim that they will not be scared away, nor will they accept that anti-Semitism is the new normal, if they choose to stay.

That's a tall order, but perhaps this incident will be the final straw, the true impetus for real change, the moment when Europe decides to take a stand. Or maybe not – we've held out the same hope before, after all. We hoped things would change after Toulouse, when four Jews, three of them children, were shot at a Jewish school. And we hoped just a few months ago after four people were killed outside the Jewish Museum of Belgium in Brussels. We even hoped in July, when Parisian Jews were forced to barricade themselves inside a synagogue to avoid an anti-Semitic mob. A couple million people rallying for unity is a nice gesture, no doubt. But to truly effect change, it must be just the beginning.

That's why Netanyahu had to be in Paris on Sunday – not for the photo-op with world leaders, not even to remind the Jews of France they have a home waiting for them in Israel should they need it, but to serve as a symbol for Jewish unity and strength. His presence signalled that Jews all over the world are paying close attention, that we intend to stand up against anti-Semitism in all its forms, and that we expect everyone else who believes in human rights and democracy do the same.

As Jews around the world watched the attack in Paris unfold, all we could really do was hope and pray everything would somehow be OK, even if we knew deep down there was no way it could be. Let it be the last time we feel that way, because we are not powerless. We have a voice. That's why we proclaim: "Je suis Juif." ■ — YONI

Feature

Why the mainstream media ignore Palestinian casualties in Syria

Khaled Abu Toameh

More than 2,500 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the conflict in Syria three years ago, according to a report published recently by the Working Group for Palestinians in Syria. It revealed that 2,596 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the conflict in that country in 2011.

But this information has hardly found its way into mainstream media in the West. Even Arab media outlets have almost entirely ignored the report about Palestinian casualties in Syria. The reason for this apathy, of course, is clear. The Palestinians in Syria were killed by Arabs and not as a result of the conflict with Israel.

Journalists covering the Middle East do not believe that this is an important story because of the absence of any Israeli role in the killings. Arabs slaughtering, executing and torturing Palestinians is not sensational enough to grab a headline in a major Western or Arab newspaper. That is why most Middle East correspondents have chosen to turn a blind eye to the report.

According to the report, the victims include 157 women who were killed in the fighting between Bashar Assad's army and various opposition groups in Syria. It also said that 268 Palestinians were killed by snipers, while another 84 were summarily executed. Another 984 Palestinians were killed when their homes and neighbourhoods were shelled by the Syrian army and the opposition groups.

The report also reminded the international community that the Palestinian Yarmouk refugee camp near Damascus has been under siege by the Syrian army for close to 600 days. Approximately 160 residents of the camp have died as a result of the siege, the report said, and recently Muslim terrorists executed six Palestinians from Yarmouk camp after finding them guilty of "blasphemy."

Palestinians in Gaza take part in a rally to show solidarity with Palestinian refugees in Syria's main refugee camp Yarmouk a year ago. The camp has been under siege by the Syrian army for almost two years. ABED RAHIM KHATIB / FLASH90 PHOTO

A senior PLO official in Syria, Anwar Abdel Hadi, said that the Palestinians were executed by the Al-Qaeda-affiliated An-Nusra terror group.

Abdel Hadi said that only 15,000 Palestinians remain in the refugee camp, which until three years ago was home to some 175,000 people.

Another report published recently revealed that 264 Palestinians have died as a result of torture in Syrian government prisons over the past few years.

The most recent deaths in Syrian prisons occurred last month, when three more Palestinians died after being tortured. The three were identified as Bila Zari, Mohamed Omar and Mohamed Masriyeh.

These Palestinians were arrested by the Syrian authorities on suspicion of helping anti-Assad forces in different parts of the country.

The stories of the Palestinians tortured to death in an Arab prison have also failed to win the attention of the Western media. Had any one of them died in an Israeli prison or in a confrontation with Israeli soldiers, his story and photo would have appeared on the front page of many newspapers and magazines in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

By contrast, when a top Fatah official, Ziad Abu Ein, recently died of a heart attack after an altercation with Israeli soldiers in the West Bank, his story immediately caught the attention of the international media and human rights organizations. Many foreign journalists covering the Middle East covered the story of Abu Ein from every possible angle and conducted interviews with his family members and friends.

But the Palestinians who are being killed and tortured to death in Syria and other Arab countries have never received the same attention from the same journalists and human rights activists. Nor have the EU and UN, which called for an investigation into the death of Abu Ein, deemed it necessary to tackle the plight of the Palestinians in Syria.

And who has heard of the case of Zaki Hobby, a 17-year-old Palestinian who was shot and killed in early January by Egyptian border guards? The Palestinian teenager was killed because he came too close to the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Witnesses said he was shot in the back and died instantly.

Once again, Hobby's story has hardly received any coverage because Israel was not involved in that incident. Had he been shot by Israeli soldiers on the other side of the border, the EU and UN would have called for an international commission of inquiry.

That Palestinians are being killed by Arabs does not seem to bother even the Palestinian Authority, whose leaders are busy these days threatening to file "war crimes" charges against Israel with the International Criminal Court. As far as the Palestinian Authority is concerned – and the media, the EU, the UN and human rights groups – the only "war crimes" are being committed by Israelis, and not by Arabs who are killing, torturing and displacing tens of thousands of Palestinians. And all this is happening while the international community and media continue to display an obsession only with everything connected to Israel. ■

Khaled Abu Toameh, an Arab Muslim, is a veteran award-winning journalist who has been covering Palestinian affairs for nearly three decades. Story originally published by the Gatestone Institute.

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Commentary

How we fight back

Gil Troy

Last week, Islamofascists turned Paris, the city of love, into a city of blood. In a video seen repeatedly after their *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, the terrorists murdered a policeman, who was already hit, already waving his hands in surrender. Ahmed Merabet, a cop who was a fellow Muslim, asked, "Are you going to kill me?" And the terrorists did – showing what kind of people they are.

Last week they made it clear: yes, they are going to kill you if you are a police officer, just doing your job; they are going to kill you if you are a satirist, expressing your freedom to be outrageous and provocative and even wrong sometimes; and, yes, they are going to kill you if you are a Jew shopping for Shabbat.

These killers had much broader targets, of course. Once again, the Islamo-killers of 9/11 and 7/7 and Ottawa and Jerusalem and Bali and Madrid showed that they are going to kill you if you disagree with them, if you love freedom, if you refuse to join their sick Holy War against democracy and liberty.

We must stop kidding ourselves that if we only appease them, if we just meet their demands, they will somehow stop. As long as we live and love and prosper and thrive in the West, they will fight us.

Of course, the more we live and love and prosper and thrive – and fight – the closer we come to defeating them, understanding that total victory is the only acceptable possible outcome against these totalitarian fascists, just as it was the only acceptable outcome against the fascists of the 1930s and 1940s.

We must target the terrorists, their handlers, financiers, trainers and mentors. They must be hunted down and punished, using the full power of western democracies fighting an existential war of self-defence. These killers displayed their training and conditioning – training in the skilled, disciplined way they went about slaughtering fellow human beings, and conditioning, in the cold, dehumanization of others required for armed people to shoot unarmed writers, shoppers and police officers. These acts don't emerge naturally from poverty or discrimination, or even, "occupation." The Islamo-fascism we face is calculated, cultivated, conditioned and peculiar to Islamist civilization and ideology.

World leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and PA President Mahmoud Abbas rally against terrorism in Paris last Sunday.
ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

We must denounce Islamofascist ideology without inhibition. The fight against Islamoterrorism is a form of ideological warfare requiring moral clarity. Pretending that Islamism has nothing to do with Islam insults our intelligence, just as any resulting bigotry toward individual Muslim violates our ideals. We celebrate the martyred Muslim police office Ahmed Merabet. We honour Lassana Bathily, the Muslim clerk at the Hyper Cacher grocery store who ushered customers into a safe space in the basement. And, unlike our opponents, we treat every individual with dignity.

But those acts of respect – which come naturally to us – must not stop us from confronting Islamist ideology, and demanding that our non-Islamofascist Muslim brothers and sisters take responsibility for their co-religionists' acts. They must take back Islam from the Islamists.

We need to hear of imams using their mosques to preach tolerance and respect, not terrorism and revenge. We need to hear of curriculum reform in schools throughout the Muslim world, including in Canada, purging medieval teachings that demonize the infidel, the Jew, the Zionist, the American, the Canadian, the Christian, the westerner. We need to hear of Muslims walking out on preachers who are too extreme, boycotting schools inculcating evil, rather than supporting hate-mongers, indulging them and covering for them. We need to hear of crackdowns on the flow of money and ideology from fundamentalist centres in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere that encourage hatred, then hide that hatred behind false charges of "Islamophobia." We need to hear of Muslim moderates mobilizing and putting these Islamic fundamentalists on the defensive – ideologically, intellectually, socially, politically and militarily.

Meanwhile, we westerners must free ourselves from what cultural theorist David Harris calls our culture of guilt vis-a-vis their culture of blame. We should embrace what Daniel Patrick Moynihan called our imperfect democracies over their absolute dictatorships. We should stop perfuming Islamo-fascism with our shame regarding western shortcomings. For too long, attacks on Western racism, imperialism and colonialism, along with attacks on Israeli actions regarding the Palestinians, have been used to rationalize terrorism. Let's be clear: terrorizing innocents is unacceptable, whatever your perceived injustice.

And we should reinforce our words with actions. When terrorists kill to punish cartoonists, the CBC, the Montreal *Gazette*, the *New York Times* and all other media outlets must publish their work. We all then should forward the cartoons on social media, even if we find them tasteless, offensive, bigoted or wrong-headed. Our actions must show that freedom for the thought we hate is a defining principle of the western freedom that is under attack, and that we are defending what we believe in by proactively practising it publicly.

In the random roulette wheel of modern life, terrorists murdered 17 good people in Paris. We will win if hundreds of millions of us take the threat personally and fight back passionately, showing Islamofascists that every time they kill, they recruit millions more opponents rather than intimidating any of us. ■

Gil Troy is a CJN columnist and professor of history at McGill University.

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USY interdating decision was a mistake

Rabbi Jarrod Grover

By amending its policy on interdating among its leaders, the youth arm of the Conservative movement, United Synagogue Youth (USY), has given us yet another example of a Conservative Judaism veering dramatically away from Jewish tradition.

In the giant centuries-old corpus of Jewish law, there is perhaps no clearer prohibition than that of marrying outside of the Jewish faith. From biblical times through the rabbinic period and in all of the Jewish legal codes, endogamy has been a universally recognized foundational pillar of Judaism. If the purpose of dating is to find a partner suitable for marriage, then the extension of this principle to dating life would seem clear and obvious, and similarly beyond dispute.

Not every Jewish organization or movement chooses to abide by Jewish law, and certainly not every individual. But Conservative Judaism affirms the binding nature of Jewish law over its rabbis and institutions. Though its interpretations sometimes differ from Orthodox legal opinions, the authority of Jewish law is a shared value. Why, then, would USY be apologizing for holding to religious standards, and in fact abandoning a major standard prohibiting its youth leaders from dating non-Jews?

According to the stakeholders, it seems the former language (which upheld the ban) sounded too negative, too exclusive, too judgmental. Many young people were involved in relationships with non-Jews, and others had parents of mixed religious traditions. For them, the absolute clarity of the code of conduct sounded offensive and outdated. It prevented many potential teens from rising to positions of leadership. The language was, therefore, softened and no one should be surprised by the media firestorm that resulted. Indeed, the Jewish world was rightly aghast. The 2013 Pew survey of American Jews proved beyond a doubt that marrying a Jewish spouse is the most important factor for the survival of Jews and of Judaism. USY should be using all of its efforts to advance and promote Jewish friendships, relationships, and even marriages. This is why so many parents encourage their children to get involved in USY in the first place.

We should not dispute the importance of creating welcoming institutions. We have a responsibility in our day to reach out to the growing number of Jews who are disconnected from their community. But the suggestion that Judaism must accommodate and sanction people's decisions and lifestyles, no matter what they are, is preposterous. We must welcome every sinner, but not any sin. It's a difficult tension to sustain in the short term. Yet, people ultimately end up losing respect for organizations that sacrifice their own integrity for convenience and appeal.

I am reminded of a classmate of mine at the Jewish Theological Seminary who became a more committed Jew because he respected USY's leadership standards. He was very involved in USY and wanted badly to serve in leadership positions he was not eligible for because neither he nor his family were observant. He understood the importance of the standards and respected them as fundamentally in consonance with Jewish teaching. He ended up not only changing his Jewish practice, but also influencing his whole family. They all became much more engaged and observant, and he is now one of the leading young rabbis in the Conservative movement. Indeed, high standards can also inspire.

We pray daily in the morning service that God should open our eyes and enlighten us in His Torah. The words are an expression of our humility and a reminder that we are a faith with great and difficult demands. This same prayer's ending is even more critical. Though we admit our weak understanding, we nonetheless proclaim "we shall never be ashamed, and never afraid, now and forevermore." This prayer speaks to those who seek to compromise, apologize for and soften Judaism for the sake of popular approval. Perhaps these folks should be reminded to practise what they pray. ■

Rabbi Jarrod Grover is spiritual leader of Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto.

Palestinian Authority appropriates Christmas story

Mordechai Ben-Dat

Truth is the foundation of justice.

This notion will not astound anyone raised in a democratic society protected by the rule of law. Disputes between parties, as between states, can only be fairly adjudicated with at least a minimal mutual agreement regarding the facts. Absent truth, there are no facts, only prevarication or propaganda. Absent truth, there can be no justice.

It therefore offends conscience and even respectful discourse when Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas pleads for justice from the western world, as he did last month, by claiming that Jesus was a Palestinian.

"We celebrate the birth of Jesus, *a Palestinian messenger* of love, justice and peace, which has guided millions from the moment that his message came out from a small grotto in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. His message resonates among all of those who are seeking justice and among *our people who have been the guardians of the holy sites for generations*. It resonates in our prayers for our people in Gaza," Abbas said in his annual Christmas holiday message. (My emphasis.)

Nor was Abbas the only PA official to propagate this message. Rather, he was part of an orchestrated campaign claiming Palestinian lineage for Jesus. A cadre of key PA officials, including the supreme sharia (Islamic law) judge and adviser to Abbas on religious and Islamic affairs, the governor of Ramallah, and the chief PA security spokesperson all repeated the same misinformation.

Indeed, piling one falsehood upon another into a tower of lies, the PA saturated the West Bank with "All I Want for Christmas is Justice" as their propaganda message.

Alongside their zeal to strip the Jewish People of any historic claim to the Land of Israel, the Palestinian leaders are also prepared to strip the Christians of any historic or faith-based claim to Jesus. The PA mutilates the words and messages of the Christian Bible into unrecognizable form.

According to the Gospels, Jesus lived in Judea. He was a Judean. He was ridiculed by the Romans who crucified him as "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Judeans".

The name "Palestine" was the creation of the Roman Emperor Hadrian in 135 CE, some 100 years after Jesus lived. To punish the Judeans after the failed Bar Kochba revolt, Hadrian replaced the name "Provincia Judea" with "Provincia Palaestina." In his venomous desire to destroy all traces of Judean nationalism, Hadrian even changed the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina. Judeans were killed, dispersed or sent away as slaves.

Abbas' claim that his people "have been the guardians of the holy sites for generations" is equally hollow. Father Gabriel Nadaf, the spiritual leader of the Aramean Christian community based in Jerusalem, tells a more a truthful tale about how Palestinian leaders have, or rather have not, safeguarded Christian holy sites.

Writing in the Israeli journal *Meida* last month, urging the world to "stand alongside Israel," Father Nadaf stated: "Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, had a clear Christian majority. Since 1995, when Israel handed the city to the Palestinian Authority, Christians have been leaving in droves. Today, Christians are only 15 per cent of the population. Some say it's even less. Elsewhere in Palestinian-run areas, Christians are also leaving, and in Hamas-run Gaza, the situation is even worse."

The truth is that most Middle East Muslim regimes are inhospitable to their Christian minorities. Father Nadaf again tells the tale: "The Middle East is effectively being cleansed of Christians. In the beginning of the 20th century, Christians constituted some 20 per cent of the population in the region. Today, it's four per cent and falling."

Our sages teach that truth and justice must be bound together to establish a structure of peace. It is discouraging that the leaders of the PA seem to take an opposite view. It seems that the truth is whatever they say it is. The consequences for justice, let alone peace, are grave indeed. ■

Blessed be today, for the future is uncertain

Rabbi Jay Kelman

In his classic work *The Black Swan*, Nassim Nicholas Taleb notes that we must expect the unexpected. As he notes, almost all great discoveries and historic events – such as the Internet, the personal computer, World War I, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the September 2001 attacks – were totally unexpected. They can be explained, often with great insight, using hindsight only. Our ability to predict the future is pretty close to zero. Taleb first discussed his theory in relation to the financial markets, where black swans are all too common and the use of probability theory to contain risk usually ends in failure. One need look no further than the financial crisis of 2008, from which we have not fully recovered.

Who, even six months ago, could have imagined that the price of oil would drop by more than 50 per cent. Besides potentially saving Canadians $12 billion in 2015 (based on last week's prices), this drop has the potential, and has already begun, to have major geopolitical fallout. The price of oil is an issue of great interest to Jews, since the falling price is having a major negative impact on Iran. (And may the price continue to drop further and further!)

While stock markets, and people in general, hate uncertainty, there's little we can do to avoid it. Likely since the dawn of human existence, man has tried his best to defeat uncertainty, and we've done a reasonably good job. Advances in science, medicine, communications and all else have allowed us to conquer much, though not all, of nature. But we, by definition, have had much less success at conquering human nature. We are an unpredictable lot, prone to rash behaviour and ignoring the long-term consequences of our actions, even if we're well aware of them. Is it any wonder life is so unpredictable?

Despite man's desire for predictability, there's much to be gained from uncertainty. First and foremost, it should foster a connection to the Divine. Man is in need of help, and we're meant to look toward heaven for that help. There are few places where uncertainty reigns as supreme as in the Land of Israel. This is no coincidence. God, the Torah tells us, specifically chose the Land of Israel for the Jewish People because of its lack of rain. This, the Torah hoped, would cause man to realize that it is God who is the ultimate provider of man's blessings.

That the recent economic surprises are having a psychological impact can be seen in a recent poll showing an 11 per cent decrease in Canadians who feel confident they'll reach their financial goals in 2015. Perhaps most worrisome is that the drop is greatest among those 65 and older, with only 60 per cent being confident they'll reach their financial goals – versus 81 per cent in 2014.

As is so often the case, our perceptions of the economy turn into self-fulfilling prophecies. Those who aren't confident about the future often act in ways that help ensure our economic fears will materialize. There's no doubt the economic recovery would greatly pick up speed if corporations spend some of the approximately $2 trillion they have sitting in cash (or the equivalent) on their balance sheets. (Apple alone has about $165 billion in cash. To put that in perspective, the government of Canada spent $276 billion in 2013.) Having little confidence in what the future may hold, they're most hesitant to do so.

The Talmud records that when the great sage Shammai would find a nice piece of meat, he would put it aside for Shabbat. Hillel on the other hand had a different attitude: "Bless God each and every day." We must strive to both enjoy life each and every day, and plan with uncertainty for the future. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

A great adventure

Norma Baumel Joseph

When I was in my last year of college, my parents and in-laws tried to convince me to become a teacher. I refused. I wanted to go to graduate school in anthropology, thinking that would lead me to a more adventurous career. How foolish I was. I did not think about the great teachers I had learned from. Rather, I succumbed to stereotypical thinking about a profession that's always on the cutting edge, one that is always exploring the new frontier!

Eventually I did become a teacher, and I have never felt more fulfilled. I have learned that there is no greater adventure than the one that takes place in a classroom. Working with students is a way of exploring new worlds. The mountains we climb together far out-scale any known geographic heights. Engaging the human mind, opening up new avenues of discovery, sharing the road of learning are among the greatest undertakings human beings can be exposed to. After almost 50 years, I cannot imagine a more exciting life. I feel privileged to have experienced so many years of teaching and learning, and am somewhat ashamed of my initial reluctance.

The exchange of ideas is, of course, stimulating, and we have wonderful sayings in Hebrew about the wisdom learned from teachers and students. But I think the greatest adventure is not about accumulating knowledge as data. Rather, it is about learning how to think – excitement comes from challenging habits of the mind. When we embrace new modes of judgment and discernment, whole worlds open up. It's as if we are on a space shuttle of discovery.

But it is very hard to convince some people of these basics. Today, I feel that we are on a chartered course to demolish our educational structures. People in power talk about class size and pupil-teacher ratios as though we are on a factory line selling a product, not dealing with the human mind. According to some recent studies in Canada, in some university classrooms there are over 1,000 students and the full-time faculty size is being reduced. That is unconscionable.

Students need time with their teachers and professors. They need one-on-one time to discuss and discover. They should not be squished into a classroom. This thing called education is not about facts and figures. It's not about stuffing someone's head like stuffing a turkey. Education is much more subtle. It is about opening up a window so that a nuanced view can be established. It is enabling a dialogue so that multiple voices can be heard. It is about translating the present into future possibilities. You cannot do that without small discussion groups and seminars. You cannot possibly call it an education without full-time faculty spending quality time with students.

Treating our schools, especially our universities, as factories is selling our future short. It is not a path toward excellence, as some of the rhetoric of administrators would have us believe. It makes a difference if there are 1,000 or 20 students in a class. It makes a difference if the students talk with a professor or a teaching assistant. Teaching assistants and aides or interns are very important in course structures. They are means by which we train future professionals and they help manage larger classes. But they cannot and should not replace the full-time teacher or professor. Students should be encouraged to spend time with and discuss issues with their profs. That's what an education inaugurates.

We have had a great record of social benefits and networks building a strong educational system. Now much of that is in danger because of budget cuts and narrow-minded thinking. It is time for the people to voice our concerns so that our children won't suffer the consequences.

Education is a wonderful adventure, perhaps the greatest adventure we can afford. Open up the world with the right tools and structures. Let's give our children small classrooms and great professors. ■

Canadians rally for French Jews after attacks

JANICE ARNOLD
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Montrealers rally in front of City Hall on Jan. 7.

"Tonight, I am Charlie. I am Jewish," Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre declared at a community vigil for the 17 victims of terrorist attacks in Paris last week, held at Montreal's Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation on the evening of Jan. 11.

That expression of solidarity with the four Jewish hostages who were killed in a kosher supermarket was also repeated by French Consul General Bruno Clerc and Aurelia Le Tareau, spokesperson for the Collectif Je Suis Charlie Montreal, which organized a march through downtown by an estimated 25,000 people earlier in the day.

The synagogue vigil, organized by Federation CJA, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and the Montreal Board of Rabbis, was attended by more than 500 people, under heavy security by both Montreal police and private guards.

The event was a commemoration of the victims, a show of solidarity with France, and an eloquent statement that terrorism must not prevail over democratic freedoms.

As Rabbi Reuben Poupko, who chaired the event, said, the tragedy in Paris is a reminder that Jews once again have been targeted and that the French Jewish community is living in fear. The four supermarket customers were murdered because they were Jews and were not random victims, he emphasized.

"It is obscene that in 2015, in a great capital of Europe, a city of enlightenment and culture... Jewish people, who have been there for generations and number half a million, are afraid...

"Our adversaries," he continued, "must learn that strength means to listen to others ridicule your most precious beliefs and react with silence. That is the price of freedom.

"Those who come to our countries should know that the prosperity and peace they find is not coincidental. It is a product of our values."

Federation president Susan Laxer said what happened in France makes it clear that the fight against terrorism is one for all who cherish democratic values.

Clerc and Le Tareau, a French citizen, both reiterated that it's unacceptable Jews feel unsafe in France and that anti-Semitism cannot be tolerated. They agreed that the Hyper Cacher shoppers were taken hostage and "assassinated" (Le Tareau's word) because they were Jewish.

"Without the Jews, France would no longer be France," said Clerc.

Israeli Consul General Ziv Nevo Kulman, along with Rabbi Poupko, attended the massive solidarity march during the day, which started at Place des Arts and ended in front of the French consulate on McGill College Avenue.

Nevo Kulman said the world must take action quickly against the "hatred and fanaticism" that is spreading globally. "In order to fight terrorism, we have to strike at the roots, at these groups' sources of funding, at countries that give them support."

Coderre called for action on a local level and said he plans to convene a meeting of religious leaders in Montreal.

"We are all going to work together to protect our freedom... Those values are universal and everybody has a duty to protect them. We're all part of the solution," he said.

D'Arcy McGee MNA David Birnbaum, a parliamentary secretary to Philippe Couillard, said the premier is in solidarity with the Jewish community in "unconditionally upholding freedom and security."

Although what *Charlie Hebdo* published was "provocative, and often distasteful and outrageous," its staff should not have feared for their lives, Birnbaum said.

It is "unspeakable stupidity," not only "evil cowardice," Birnbaum said, to think ideals can be killed.

CONTINUED ON FROM PAGE 33

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GUEST VOICE

I won't change how I draw my cartoons

GARY CLEMENT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I have earned my living for the last 16 years drawing editorial cartoons for the *National Post*. I wake up every day, go through my morning routines, scan the news online, send a sketch or two to my editor, and then file my cartoon. Not particularly exciting stuff, and definitely not anything that could even vaguely be considered life-threatening. Until this week, that is.

I awoke Jan. 7, like everyone else in this part of the world, to the hard news from Paris, and I suspect my first reaction – a mixture of horror, shock and revulsion –was similar to everyone else's. My second reaction, one shared, I'm quite sure, by political cartoonists around the world, was an awareness that my job that day demanded an appropriate response in cartoon form.

But before I could get to that, I had to field a number of media interviews and found myself being asked the same questions repeatedly: Will you change the way you do things? Will you start to self-censor more rigorously? Will your editor and publisher exercise greater caution when it comes to publishing your cartoons?

I couldn't immediately answer any of those questions with any certainty. But I stated then – and still believe – that I will continue to work as I have always done and leave it to others to edit or censor. I also understand that my editor and publisher, like editors and publishers around the world, are facing a new reality in which they must carefully weigh the benefits of publishing potentially inflammatory material against the danger of imperiling the lives of their staffs. I do not envy them this task.

But I had other thoughts on my mind that day as well.

Over the years, I have struggled with the nagging suspicion that political cartoons don't matter quite as much as they used to. We are, after all, competing in a world where endless varieties of political satire exist across an array of media platforms. Add to that the notion that the aura of the political cartoons is increasingly old fashioned, as rapidly declining as print media itself.

The carnage at *Charlie Hebdo* overturned that old suspicion. The paper's cartoonists and editors were murdered for doing, more or less, the same thing that I do. The ideas and images that flowed from the pens of my fellow artists had sufficient power. They were considered dangerous enough to provoke an outburst of unprecedented violence.

I was going to end that paragraph with "senseless violence." But it wasn't senseless at all, at least not to the gunmen. They knew exactly what they were doing. They knew what they wanted to accomplish. Their goal was to intimidate anyone who wished to express opinions freely and openly on any matter they choose. Their aim was to shut down dissent and criticism, to silence, permanently, any idea not in agreement with their own ideas. They did not only seek vengeance, they sought to spread fear and terror. They wanted people like me to stop doing what I do.

> *They did not only seek vengeance, they sought to spread fear and terror. They wanted people like me to stop doing what I do.*

Deciding to cartoon professionally has never struck me as an act of heroism. It's not a feat of bravery. The toughest thing I've ever had to face is an angry letter to the editor and maybe a couple of cancelled subscriptions. I didn't know any of the *Charlie Hebdo* artists personally and had only a passing acquaintance with their work, but I feel certain none of them got into cartooning to become heroes either. It was just what they did. It was their calling. And they most certainly did not deserve to die for it.

That's why I won't change what I do. To do any less would be to dishonour the memories of the 12 victims of unreasoning fanaticism. ■

Gary Clement is the National Post's editorial cartoonist.

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Seated: L to R:
Al Green, Gerald Goldenberg, Leo Goldhar, Harry Gorman, Wendy Eisen, Lionel Schipper, Julia Koschitzky, Noel Zeldin
2nd row from the bottom: L to R:
Ariella Rohringer, Sherry Firestone, Lisa Draper, Fran Sonshine, Mel Wolfond, Larry Tanenbaum, Ronnie Appleby, Gerry Halbert, Allan Silber
3rd row from the bottom: L to R:
Morris Zbar (UJA President & CEO), Ken Tanenbaum, Steve Ain, Sarena Koschitzky, Allan Offman, Carol Kassel, Henry Wolfond, Bruce Leboff, Lesley Offman, Ron Frisch
Top row: L to R:
David Matlow, Warren Kimel, Jeffrey Rosenthal, David Koschitzky, Neil Nisker, Paul Morton, David Engel, David Goldstein, Laurie Fein, Ted Sokolsky (past UJA President & CEO)

Missing from photo:
Barbara Bank, Brent Belzberg, Lawrence Bloomberg, Michael Bregman, Andrea Cohen, Eddie Creed, Stephen Diamond, Bernard Ghert, Charles Gold, Marty Goldberg, Joel Greisman, Jack Gwartz, Robert Harlang, Debbie Kimel, Murray Koffler, Ralph Halbert, Robert Masters, Gilbert Palter, Morris Perlis, Don Rafelman, Jack Rose, Judy Scheininger, Isadore Sharp, Gerald Shear, Gerald Sheff, Honey Sherman, Schuyler (Skippy) Sigel, Howard Sokolowski, Ed Sonshine, Richard Venn, Fred Waks, Chuck Winograd

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Facebook won't remove page promoting 'Jewish ritual murder'

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

When it comes to manifestations of anti-Semitism, Bernie Farber has seen it all. But the former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, and before that its director of community relations, was shocked to find an anti-Semitic blood libel rooted in medieval prejudice featured prominently on a 21st century technology.

Almost as bad, said Farber, is that Facebook, the social networking platform, has refused to do anything about it.

Despite his complaint, Facebook refuses to remove a page that labels itself, "Jewish ritual murder community."

Decorated with Christian iconography, the page carries the accusation that, "Jews admit ritual consumption of Muslim and Christian children's blood to gain success in life."

The site includes images of newspaper articles, photographs and other items that purport to show that Jews feast on gentile blood.

Farber believes the posting violates Facebook's own criteria for maintaining community standards. In fact, in a section labelled "hate speech" that is part of "Facebook Community Standards," the social networking site states, "Facebook does not permit hate speech."

"While we encourage you to challenge ideas, institutions, events, and practices, we do not permit individuals or groups to attack others based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or medical condition."

Accusations of Jewish ritual murders fall squarely in that definition, said Farber. For centuries, that sort of allegation "led to pogroms… and led the way to the Holocaust."

"Jewish ritual murder is the epitome of not upholding community standards. It's sickening."

Nevertheless, when he complained to Facebook online, he was told in a written response, "We reviewed the page you reported for harassment and found it doesn't violate our community standards."

In an email response to a *CJN* inquiry, a Facebook spokesperson stated, "We aim to find the right balance between giving people a place to express themselves and promoting a welcoming and safe environment for our diverse, global community. Not all disagreeable or disturbing content violates our community standards. For this reason, we offer people who use Facebook the ability to customize and control what they see by un-following, blocking and hiding the posts, people, pages and applications they don't want to see."

A Jan. 8 screenshot of the 'Jewish ritual murder' Facebook page

"I thought it would be easy to explain why this page would come down," Farber said. On an unrelated occasion, in October 2014, Facebook removed the photo of a woman breastfeeding a baby on the grounds it violated its policy on nudity, but it wouldn't take down blatant anti-Semitic material. (Facebook eventually republished the photos after a public backlash.)

"Facebook ought to be ashamed of itself."

Farber said he doesn't know where the page is hosted, but he is asking York Regional Police to investigate the host for violating Canada's anti-hate laws.

Making the incident even more disturbing, he said, was that the page had received 792 "likes." ■

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Ivey students revive Israel trip for non-Jews

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

When Daniel Taylor and three friends – all students at the University of Western Ontario's Ivey Business School – approached the school's program office to inquire about the Israel reading week trip that had run in years past, they were told it wasn't happening this year.

Nobody wanted to do the work of organizing and fundraising for the trip, geared to exposing non-Jewish students to Israel's rich business environment.

"We just figured, this is something we could do," said Taylor, 21, explaining they felt passionate about showing non-Jews a lively and innovative aspect of Israel they wouldn't otherwise experience.

He, along with fellow fourth-year students Daniel Khazzam, 23, and Josh Greenbaum, 21, and third-year student Mike Zagdanski, also 21, spent last summer fundraising – no small undertaking, since the few private donors who had carried the trip's cost during its four prior years (it didn't run last year) had largely moved on to other projects.

"It's become more of a grassroots effort than ever before," Taylor said. "It's gone from three or four donors in the past to, this year, 40-plus private donors."

The eight-day trip, which will take place during reading week next month, costs about $100,000 total. To make it affordable for the 24 participants registered, each of whom will pay $1,900, Taylor and his friends had to raise around $42,000.

With the exception of the organizers and two additional Jewish students, none of the attendees are Jewish, something Taylor stresses is "the whole point."

By familiarizing people of varying backgrounds, many of whom have no prior knowledge of Israel, with Israeli companies and the country's extensive startup scene, Taylor said, "we'll show them Israel isn't just what they see in the papers, that there's another side of it that is, obviously, wonderful."

"The big goal," he added, "is for these students to eventually go on to lead companies and look back upon Israel positively – maybe even integrate it into their businesses."

The itinerary, which Taylor said borrows from previous years but also incorporates new elements based on the organizers' interests and connections, is dense and far-reaching. Students will travel around the country and meet with a variety of businesses, from large firms to small-scale entrepreneurs and, Taylor said, "small venture capitalist guys you've never heard of."

From left, Josh Greenbaum, Daniel Khazzam and Daniel Taylor are three of the four organizers.

They will, for example, travel to the Golan to visit the Israeli-built, international irrigation company Netafim, as well as Google and Facebook offices in Tel Aviv, the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and the Israeli branch of U.S. financial services firm Morgan Stanley.

Participants will also hear a range of speakers, including the chair of the political science department at Hebrew University, a former government official from Israel's Labor party and the founder of a Palestinian human rights group.

Students will be accompanied by Ivey professor Amos Nadler and will receive university credit for the week, assuming they complete written assignments throughout and a final paper upon their return.

For those going on the trip, the 2009 book *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, is required reading.

Taylor emphasized the week is "no vacation," and that given the high demand, he and fellow organizers were able to be "very selective" when it came to choosing "high-calibre, high-achieving participants for the trip… most of whom have fantastic jobs lined up for when they're done school."

He added, "We want those who attend to be involved in future decision-making [in the business world] and to, down the road, look upon Israel with favourable eyes." ■

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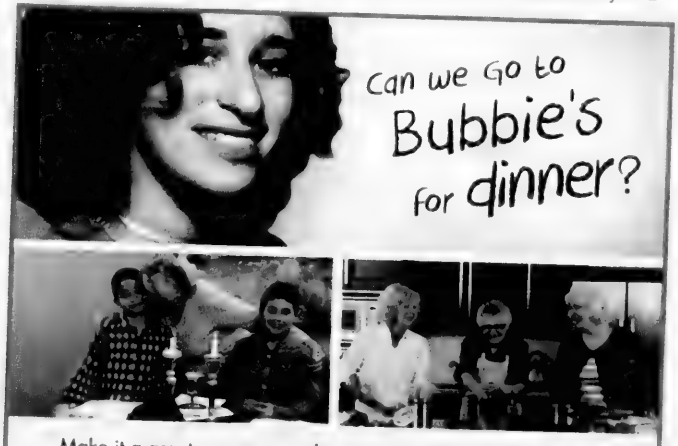

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GUEST VOICE

Remembering our friend 'Yitz' Kurtz

Our minyan will never be the same

DAVID KOSCHITZKY AND JACK SAMUEL

Yitzchak Kurtz and his wife Debbie

We lost a good friend on Jan. 3. It was a lopsided friendship in a sense, as there is no doubt we derived much more from our relationship than he did. Yitzchak (Isaac) Kurtz was a gentle, soft-spoken man. Though he stood 6 feet 6 inches tall, his stature was not measured in physical terms, but rather by the example he set. And using that scale, he towered over all of us.

Most of you reading this probably never met Yitz Kurtz. Allow us to try and explain why he meant so much to so many. To us, Yitz represented everything one could ever aspire to be. If one verse could sum up his life, it would be Psalms Chapter 1, Verse 2: "But his desire is the law of the Lord and he meditates on this law day and night."

Yitz epitomized modern Orthodox Judaism, though he himself never liked labels. He made God's Torah his Torah, and it was his life. But Yitz never confined himself to the "four amot" of Torah (about six feet, the personal space limit for each person). He instead took the Torah with him throughout his journey through life.

Like his father, Yitz was an engineer. He specialized in biomedical engineering, designing medical machine interfaces that helped improve quality of life for those with physical disabilities. He was innovative, dedicated and highly respected by his peers.

Yitz was also a *talmid chacham* (wise or knowledgeable student). He did not have a photographic memory – his memory was even better than that. He could comprehend a halachic issue in a three-dimensional way, understanding it so well that he knew exactly what was written, not only because he remembered it, but because it had to be written that way to make sense.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Yitz was that his sheer brilliance – in science, in technology, in all manner of secular knowledge and certainly in Torah scholarship – was surpassed only by his humility. The last thing Yitz ever wanted was the "glory" that should come with such genius. He was smarter and more knowledgeable than nearly anyone he spoke with, but he always made you feel that your opinion was special, and to be valued. How he did that, with such patience and grace, is beyond our understanding.

Yitz was a fifth-generation Toronto Jew. One of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in Toronto, on Jones Avenue (near Danforth and Pape), is full of Kurtz family members. And Yitz continued the family tradition of overseeing its upkeep. Yitz was also a community man. It wasn't only that he supported the community, it wasn't only that he led the community. He continually made the community better.

For the last five months, Yitz was unable to attend the minyan that he had helped create, build and lead. No problem. The minyan came to Yitz. Volunteers made a weekly or holiday minyan at his home. And those of us who attended the regular minyan made sure to visit him afterward. We did this not only because it was the right thing to do, but because we yearned for our community, which meant we yearned for Yitz.

One cannot talk about Yitz without mentioning his wife, Debbie. Some couples supplement each other – Yitz and Debbie complemented each other. Name the characteristic and they were the complete opposite of each other. But boy did they make it work. No one left a visit to Yitz Kurtz without commenting on how Debbie made Yitz laugh, how she was rock solid and how she made everyone feel better about the situation.

And now Yitz is gone.

Every synagogue has a *ner tamid*, a continuous light. For our community, that light has been flickering since Yitz passed two Shabbats ago. We will continue, but we will never be the same.

Yitz was only 54. He will be missed terribly. We are, however, so much richer for having had even this shortened period of his influence in our lives. ■

David Koschitzky and Jack Samuel are members of the Or Chaim Minyan in Toronto where the late Yitz Kurtz davened.

Founder of '50s-era grocery stamps dies

RON STANG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, WINDSOR, ONT

Doreen Bricker

One of the creators of southwestern Ontario's version of legendary grocery store stamps – and a major contributor to Windsor's Jewish community – has died.

Doreen Bricker, 87, died Jan. 2 of cardiac arrest.

"She'd just been recently diagnosed with cancer," daughter Sandi Malowitz said. "She was being treated, and we were very hopeful, as was she, that she would have a lot more time to be together."

Doreen and first husband William Silver founded the S & M Premium Company in the mid-1950s, a loyalty program that quickly became a hit with Windsor-area shoppers at one of the city's formerly largest grocery chains, N & D Supermarkets.

"It was being done in the United States," son Ron Silver said. "S & H Green Stamps were very popular there."

Doreen and William started the company and contracted with N & D as well as several other retailers, including an independent grocery store and various gas stations.

"They would buy the stamps from S & M and then they would distribute them to their customers," Silver said. "When they bought $30 worth of groceries, they would get X amount of stamps, and then they would put them in their little book, and then they would come to the S & M store and redeem them."

Originally the supermarkets themselves had showrooms containing a variety of S & M redeemable products, from blenders to cookware, luggage to patio furniture.

"You could get your Timex watch and alarm clocks and all kinds of things," Malowitz said.

The couple then set up an independent store in an adjoining shopping plaza.

N & D was a legendary chain for which some Windsorites still wax nostalgic. S & M stamps' success was directly attributable to the chain's popularity.

"Those grocery stores had the big percentage of the Windsor market for many, many years," Silver said.

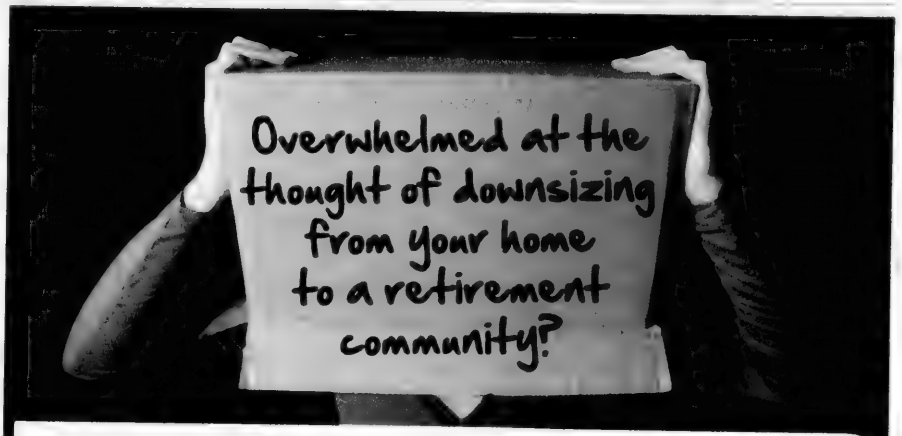
The couple loved retail. Doreen handled the books and served customers up front, but eventually started buying at trade shows.

S & M also published a catalogue containing pictures of the myriad consumer items that could be obtained using the stamps.

Doreen was born in Windsor and the family attended Congregation Beth El.

Malowitz said both her parents were founding members of the Reform temple and volunteered widely both there and at the Windsor Jewish Community Centre. Malowitz herself just retired after working 33 years at the centre.

"Both of them had a big influence on us," Malowitz said. This included "the importance of family and celebrating holidays," she said. "Both my brother's family and I were always together. My parents really instilled that in a very wonderful and loving way." ■



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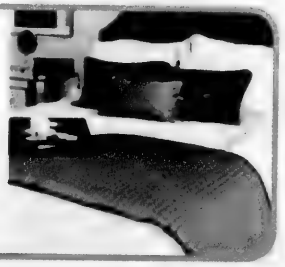

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 15, 2015

De Corneille pioneered Jewish, Christian reconciliation

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Roland de Corneille was an Anglican priest and member of Parliament for Eglinton-Lawrence in Toronto for three terms from 1979 to 1988, but he is perhaps best known in the Jewish community for his advocacy of Jewish Christian reconciliation and his role in launching the Canada-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group.

De Corneille passed away in Toronto on Dec. 30. He was 87.

Born in Switzerland, de Corneille grew up in France and moved to the United States, where he studied at the General Theological Seminary. He later moved to Canada, where he graduated from the University of Toronto's Trinity College in 1953 as an ordained Anglican priest.

In the early 1960s, he headed an Anglican missionary program aimed at converting Jews, but in 1966 he wrote the book *Christians and Jews: The Tragic Past and the Hopeful Future*.

He is credited with being among the first to urge churches of various denominations to change their attitude toward Jews. He launched interfaith discussions in the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of the Anglican Church of Canada.

In 1971, he was appointed national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, where he worked until 1979.

"He was among the pioneers" in bringing Jews and Christians together, said Bernie Farber, former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress. "His biggest issue was anti-Semitism, and he felt somewhat guilty as a Christian for anti-Semitism. He basically devoted his life to eradicating [it]."

Victor Goldbloom, chair of Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal, did not know de Corneille well, but recalled that his reputation was as an advocate for better understanding between Christians and Jews.

"He was one of the early leaders," Goldbloom said. "He was a vocal person who made himself heard at a time when Christian-Jewish dialogue was in its early days and didn't always have much depth. It was sort of a feel-good understanding, and as time went by, it had deeper significance and began addressing historical issues, historical anti-Semitism and Christian attitudes to Jews and Judaism.

"He was a pioneer. It was well before the Second Vatican Council and he was a contributor to Christian-Jewish dialogue in Canada," said Goldbloom, past president of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

"The concept of bringing Jews and Christians to sit down and talk about common issues was his," Farber said.

"Both the Christian and Jewish communities owe a debt of gratitude to Roland de Corneille for his steadfastness in speaking out against anti-Semitism at a time when not a lot of people were doing it."

His role in the parliamentary support group "was another way to express his desire to have Jews and Christians walk down the same path of reconciliation," Farber said.

"He was widely respected." ■

Roland de Corneille

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE, #2013.8.2 PHOTO

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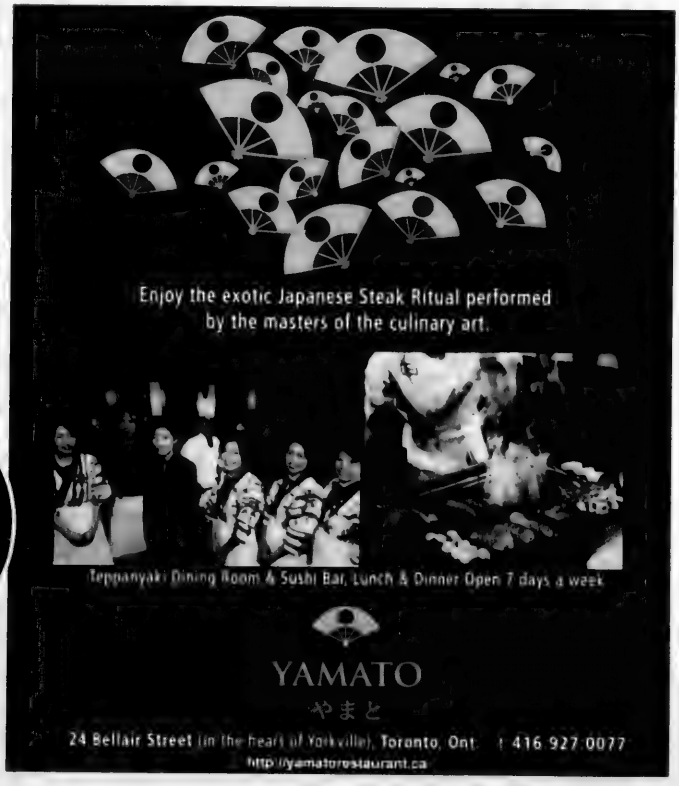

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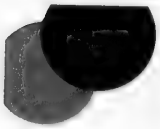

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NEW WAVE TRAVEL

First kosher restaurant in decades opens in Winnipeg

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

Maxim Berent says you don't have to be Jewish to enjoy the pleasures of BerMax Caffe + Bistro – Winnipeg's first kosher gourmet restaurant, which opened for business just before Chanukah in south Winnipeg.

"About 80 per cent of our customers aren't Jewish," says the young designer and entrepreneur. "People come for the food, the Italian ambience (the chairs are from Italy and Rome street scenes dominate the walls) and our Illy coffee. We are the only designated Illy café in western Canada."

(Illy espresso coffee, Berent explains, is kept in airtight containers until it is served so that the coffee is always fresh.)

The 50-seat milchik BerMax Caffe menu includes soups made from scratch, crepes, sandwiches, unique salads, pizzas and pastas, bakery products prepared in-house, and a variety of yogurts and beverages. Berent says many of the food ingredients are from Israel – as is the Italian chef – and most of the equipment was brought in from Italy.

The standout chandelier, he adds, was made in Montreal by an Orthodox Jewish artisan who has also made chandeliers for top hotels in Las Vegas.

It has been several decades since Winnipeg last had a standalone kosher restaurant. The Bathurst Street Deli – which closed a more than a decade ago – was independently owned (and under Chabad supervision, as is BerMax Caffe) but was part of a larger kosher grocery store.

The only other kosher eat-out options here are Shmoozer's Restaurant – a cafeteria inside the Asper Campus – and the fixed lunches at the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre, a senior's drop-in centre in North Winnipeg.

Although Berent and his family have only been in Winnipeg for 10 years – they came from Russia by way of Israel – the personable Berent has had an outsized influence on his new home.

Berent was 15 when he arrived here, and, you might say, he hit the ground running.

The then-new Gray Academy student's graphic arts ability was quickly recognized, and he found himself in great demand from Jewish organizations designing posters, flyers and calendars.

He graduated from Gray Academy, Winnipeg's Jewish community day school, in 2008 and entered the faculty of architecture at the University of Manitoba. But despite his workload in architecture, Berent still found time to help out a professor in the faculty of fine arts, work in his family's millwork manufacturing business (BerMax), and serve as president of Hillel and co-ordinator of a newly formed branch of the Jewish Business Network at U of M.

Currently enrolled in a four-year interior architectural design program in San Francisco, he still found time to design and help (with his father) supervise the construction of the BerMax Caffe. (Construction began in July.)

The Caffe concept, Berent says, grew out of the family's plan to open a residential design showroom at the location. (The main BerMax plant, specializing in commercial millwork design and manufacture, is located just north of Winnipeg.)

"It seemed like a good idea to open a restaurant next door to both serve our residential design customers and also show off our work," Berent says, noting that all the countertops and cupboards are BerMax-designed and manufactured.

The family decided to open a Chabad-supervised establishment because of their ongoing relationship with Chabad here. Berent notes that BerMax built the large Aron Kodesh for the three-year-old Chabad Centre, which is just a few blocks away from the restaurant.

Maxim Berent MYRON LOVE PHOTO

Currently, BerMax Caffe is open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays and Sunday.

"We close early Friday for Shabbat," Berent says. "We are planning to extend our hours of operation soon and, next winter, we will open on Saturday evenings after Shabbat."

He is also considering opening more BerMax Caffes in Winnipeg and elsewhere. ■

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DIVORCE AND ADULTERY

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

It makes no difference what causes the split. I can't count the number of times a new client will come to me with the details of their spouse's infidelity. "I came home one day and he/she was with my best friend. What was that? I could never forgive him/her." Surprisingly, Canadian law no longer rewards catching your spouse in flagrante delicto. You don't get extra spousal support, better rights to your kids, such as custody or more access. You also don't get a a bigger slice of the property split. Some may recall one instance in BC a few years back where a Judge awarded woman compensation for severe mental suffering because of her husband's adulterous behavior. That was an oddball case. Generally such an analysis does not apply because of an amendment to Canada's Divorce Act that conduct during marriage cannot play any role in calculating spousal support.

Normally, a spouse must wait one year from the date of separation to obtain a divorce order. So the only "benefit" is that under the Act a spouse who claims for a divorce based on adultery is that he/she is entitled to a divorce without waiting out the year. However, this benefit has little practical benefit. Most people who are the victims of adultery are hardly in an emotional place where they are ready to remarry right away. It usually takes at least a year for many people to readjust and socially reintegrate after being the victim of an adulterous affair in any event. However, for the adulterer, it's a great benefit, since if his spouse does decide to sue for divorce under a year then the spouse who indulges in adultery can remarry his or her lover much earlier than expected. I would imagine that this is hardly the result that was anticipated when these amendments were enacted.

Adultery usually traumatizes but the reaction will vary. You can only bend a tree so far. Some try marriage counselling. Others leave the marriage immediately. And then there are those so dependent, so trapped by their economic circumstances or fearful on how divorce will affect their kids, that they internalize their hurt and look the other way. If you find it hard to believe that someone can actually live this way, try to fill the shoes of the person who has to advise him/her to get help. Some spouses live this nightmare for years before breaking loose.

If you know of anyone quietly suffering, be a good friend. It is a very lonely experience. The law simply no longer gives any remedy.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit

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IDF chief of staff visits colleagues on 'farewell tour'

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Tom Lawson and Benny Gantz DND PHOTO

For three days last week, Israeli Lt.-Gen. Benny Gantz was in Toronto and Ottawa as part of what Canada's Department of National Defence (DND) dubbed his "farewell tour."

Gantz, chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), met his Canadian counterpart, Gen. Tom Lawson, as well as other senior military and defence department officials and held "high-level discussions on military and security issues."

Then it was on to Washington, where Gantz again made the rounds, meeting senior military and defence officials.

It's a measure of the high regard and close relations between the two countries that Gantz visited Canada, said Col. Adam Susman, the defence attaché of Israel to Canada. Gantz is set to retire from his role atop the IDF, and Canada was on his short list of countries to visit, Susman said.

Susman, who assumed his post in mid-summer for three years, accompanied Gantz on his travels in Canada. The relationship between the Canadian and Israeli militaries is friendly and respectful, he said.

Canadians clearly see it the same way. "Israel is Canada's closest ally in the Middle East, and our two countries enjoy strong military relations on a variety of fronts," Lawson said. "This bond has been strengthened under Gen. Gantz's watch, and reinforced by today's meeting. It has been a pleasure working with Gen. Gantz during his tenure as chief of the general staff, and I wish him success in his future endeavours."

Although he wasn't available for an interview with *The CJN*, Gantz expressed his deep appreciation to his Canadian colleague for the Canadian involvement in the changes in the Middle East and specifically for the Canadian efforts to combat the Islamic State. According to the DND, Gantz suggested further intensification of military co-operation between Canada and Israel.

Gantz's visit comes in the aftermath of the January 2014 Strategic Partnership Memorandum of Understanding, which committed the two countries to develop their bilateral relationship, including defence and security.

"Canada and Israel enjoy close military relations at all levels, including co-operation in the areas of counter-terrorism, training, search and rescue, intelligence, command and control and new technologies," DND stated in a news release.

"The DND and Canadian Armed Forces have deepened our ongoing interactions and continue to share best practices with the Israeli Special Operations through training visits, exchanges and participation in exercises.

"Canada's defence relationship with Israel has brought us considerable operational benefit through the exchange and purchase of Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles and counter-improvised explosive device equipment," DND stated.

A key part of Susman's job is to facilitate those exchanges and foster the relationship between the Canadian military and Israeli defence industries.

"The relationship between Canada and Israel is very good," he said. "The two prime ministers are very close, and things are going on between the ministry of defence and the military. There is quite a lot of co-operation between the countries and the militaries."

Susman said his appointment as military attaché reflects the friendly relationship between the two countries and reciprocates Canada's posting of a full-time defence attaché in Tel Aviv.

"It shows we mean business. We're serious in upgrading our relationship," he said.

Susman arrived in Canada right around the time Israel launched Operation Protective Edge, the IDF campaign to end Hamas rocket attacks from Gaza.

"Every few days, I gave [Canadian officers] a briefing if they wanted, and they wanted," he said.

That helped inform Canadian soldiers about the difficulties of "underground warfare," a reference to terror tunnels uncovered by the IDF. "Israel is a place where we have many lessons learned regarding urban warfare and underground warfare, and Canada can take Israel's lessons learned."

Susman also referenced the Islamic terrorist attacks this fall in Quebec and Ottawa, noting that Israel has had plenty of experience with domestic attacks and has knowledge it could relate to Canadian security personnel.

Susman is still getting used to life in Canada. He's travelled to military bases across the country, including the West Coast, and he marvels at Ottawa's snowy minus 26-degree weather as if there's something special about it. ■

82-year-old child survivor finally celebrates bar mitzvah

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Max Iland holds aloft a Torah scroll at his bar mitzvah ceremony at Masada, as Eli Rubenstein, left, who officiated, looks on.

Though he's 82 and from a traditional Jewish family, Max Iland never had a bar mitzvah – until last year.

A child survivor of the Holocaust, Iland was in hiding with Belgian farmers when the time to read his portion came and went. Then, after the war, with his mother, Itka, and little brother, Kopel, dead, it was not something that was at the top of his agenda, or that of his father, Avram, who survived.

But in May 2014, with hundreds of youngsters participating in the March of the Living (MoL) looking on, Iland said the blessings and read his Torah portion in a moving ceremony at the top of Masada, in Israel.

Then again last month, back in his hometown of Sault Ste. Marie, Iland read another portion before family and friends at the Beth Jacob Synagogue.

For Iland, each bar mitzvah ceremony carried special meaning, both for himself and as an act of loving kindness – chesed – for Kopel.

Iland still gets choked up and puts a conversation on pause when he thinks about his brother, who was only three when he and their parents were deported to Auschwitz.

"My brother has been part of me ever since the war," said Iland, in a telephone interview from his home outside Sault Ste. Marie. "I know he didn't have a bar mitzvah. I thought he should have a bar mitzvah. I thought I'd do it for him and for myself. At Masada, the bar mitzvah was for my brother. In Sault Ste. Marie, it was for me."

At Masada, he was surrounded by young people eager to share in the life cycle event with the man they had come to respect.

Eli Rubenstein, spiritual leader of Habonim Congregation and of the MoL, officiated at both services.

The youngsters participating in MoL were in awe of Iland, said Rubenstein. And even in his hometown, many non-Jews attended the bar mitzvah, paying respect to one of the city's beloved school teachers, he added.

If Iland's bar mitzvah story is atypical of others of his generation, his postwar life is likewise unique.

After being hidden in attics, basements and haylofts by Paul and Lena Pirotte, he was reunited with his father.

They moved back to the Liege area of Belgium. Iland trained to be a tailor, but after serving two years as a commando in the Belgian armed forces, he moved to Canada, where the wide open spaces beckoned.

After working in construction in Montreal for one year and then on a tobacco farm near Tilsonburg, Ont., Iland moved to a logging camp near Sault Ste. Marie. He worked for 15 years as a logger. "It was the kind of life that I liked," he said.

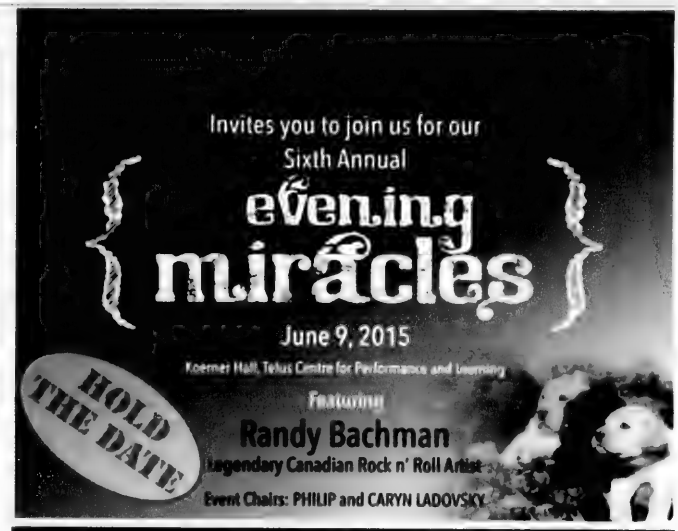
He eventually enrolled in Trent University as a mature student, earning a teaching certificate. He went to work in the Soo as a high school special education teacher. He held that job for 25 years until he retired.

His love of the outdoors never waned. He still canoes, cross-country skis and chops his own firewood.

He heats his home outside of town with a wood furnace that he personally feeds several times a day, with wood he has prepared from his 70-acre plot of land. It takes 25 cords of wood each winter to heat his home, he said. (A cord is a pile four feet high, eight feet long, generally with an average piece length of 16 inches.)

For years, while enjoying the outdoor life of northern Ontario, Iland had not talked much about his wartime experiences. But as he got older, he wanted to return to Europe to see the place where his family had been killed.

He's been on the March of the Living twice. He enjoys talking to the kids, who he said are finding it hard to deal with the difficulties of being Jewish. Part of his self-imposed mission was to build up their confidence in dealing with bullies and reinforce their pride in being Jewish, he said. ■



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 15, 2015

Daiter's market to shut its doors April 2

EST. 1907
DAITER'S
Fresh Market

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Daiter's Fresh Market, a family-owned business in Toronto, will close its doors for the last time on April 2 after more than 50 years at the same location.

Joel and Stephen Daiter, the brothers who operate the Bathurst Street landmark, announced that they have agreed to lease the premises first acquired by their father, Ron, and mother, Rene, in 1964. A children's clothing store will take its place, along with four rental units on the second floor where the restaurant's kitchens are currently located.

They had announced in October 2013 that they were prepared to sell the premises and eventually wind up the business, but in late 2014, they decided it would be best to retain ownership and rent out the space.

It's time to let go, the brothers said wistfully, as they reminisced about the store they began working in as kids.

The deli has always been a good business, but as they close in on 60 years of age – Joel is 59, Stephen is 55 – they said it's time for a change. They're no longer willing to put in the long hours and time away from their families that running a hands-on retail operation demands. And their children, witnessing first hand the kind of grind that's needed to make the business flourish, are not interested in maintaining the family legacy, they said.

The family business was originally started by their grandfather, Harry, in the late 1930s with a line of dairy products. In 1959, Ron moved the business north to Bathurst Street, a few buildings over from its current location, where Tov-Li is now situated. In 1964, they acquired the current premises, which was at the time a lumber store.

For the brothers, shuttering the shop is not a simple decision. The store was more than a business, it was like a Cheers, where people came not just to purchase the cheeses, salads, herring, lox and baked goods for which it became famous, but to shmooze and exchange news.

They grew up in the store and knew generations of customers by name. In some cases, four generations of the same family shopped in the store.

Customers were treated like family. In the few hours spent by *The CJN* at the store, the Daiters were greeted by a saddened clientele sorry to see the shop go. Tears and embraces were exchanged by the merchants and customers.

"I don't know what I'm going to do now," said Nikki Halpern, a longtime customer. "My earliest memory is coming here and your dad giving us pressed cottage cheese. I had to be three or four years old and I've been coming here ever since. I still get the cheese for noodle pudding, and the blintzes."

"You're closing? Where am I going to get my cottage cheese?" asked Marvin, a Filipino who is known to the shopkeepers in the neighbourhood as Moshe. "It's the best cottage cheese in the entire world, not just Toronto."

Marvin, a personal assistant for a neighbourhood resident, said he's been shopping at Daiter's for eight years. The person he replaced shopped there for 22 years.

Margaret Yanicki makes the trek to Daiter's a couple of times a month from her home in the High Park area. Sometimes she shops for a friend who lives on Queen Street. Daiter's caters to her low-sodium diet with cheeses that are fresh and tasty, she said.

Stephen, left, and Joel Daiter are seen with their mother, Rene

"I get really fresh food. I'm going to miss the latkes. You can't find these kind of latkes," she said.

Yanicki, who hails originally from Saskatchewan, was in the store to shop for Ukrainian Christmas. In addition to the latkes, she also loves the borscht and the hamantashen.

"I'm just going to sit outside the store and cry," she said.

There were tears aplenty from the Daiters as well.

When the rental deal closed on Dec. 31, "it was very exciting, scary and surreal," Joel said.

"This is our lives," he added. "Anyone in a retail business knows it's not just a job. It's your life."

"I find, and Joel also, that it's bittersweet," Stephen said. "I'm not going to miss the hours [12 or 13 a day] and the physical work. But we're definitely going to miss our clientele."

After the store closes, just before Passover, the Daiters will take a rest. They plan to take the summer off and spend time with their families. After that, the future is unclear. There are investments to manage and perhaps new opportunities to pursue.

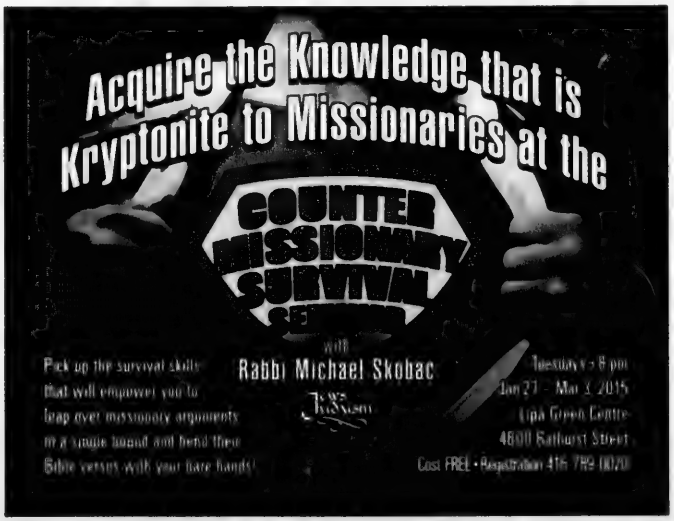
But it won't be in a retail setting like the deli.

Joel said he regrets that his father, Ron, who suffers from dementia, is not able to grasp what is happening. But his mom, Rene, who also worked in the store, gives the boys her blessing.

"It's time my kids had a break," she said. "They're living their father's life and it's time they had a break. Life changes. The old days are finished."

Customers can be heartened by the fact that the store's fresh products – its shmaltz herring, lox, salads and such – will be available right up to closing.

After that, you're on your own. ■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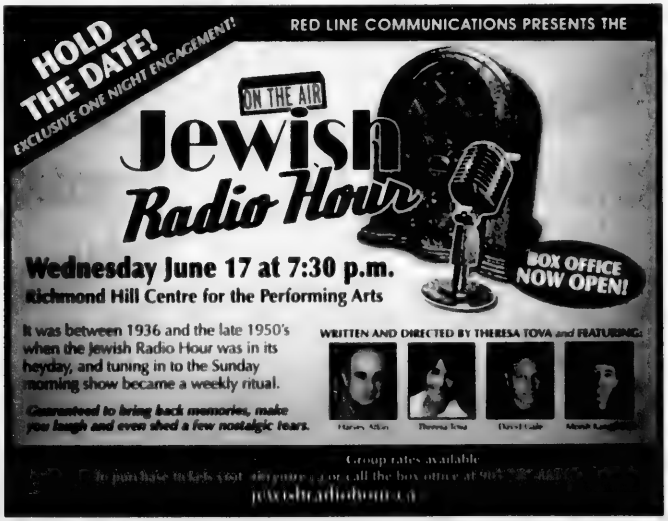
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INTERNATIONAL

Victims remembered at Grand Synagogue memorial

JTA
PARIS

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks at Paris's Grand Synagogue ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Hundreds gathered with the leaders of France and Israel to remember the victims of an attack at a kosher supermarket near Paris.

French President Francois Hollande and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu joined several hundred members of the Jewish community at the memorial on Sunday night at the Grand Synagogue of Paris, also known as the Synagogue de la Victoire. Hollande did not deliver remarks at the synagogue.

The sister of attack victim Yoav Hattab, one of four Jews killed in an attack last week at the Hyper Cacher market, urged those gathered at the memorial to light four extra candles each Shabbat "so they may remain etched in our hearts." The sister, who asked not to be named, also played a recording of Hattab singing the *Modeh Ani* prayer.

Netanyahu called on Europe and the rest of the world to support Israel's fight against terror as supporters chanted his "Bibi" and "Israel will live, Israel will overcome."

"Like the civilized world stands united with France, so it needs to stand with Israel in its fight against the same enemy exactly: radical Islam," Netanyahu said.

"It's a short distance between the fatwa against [novelist] Salman Rushdie, to the murder of [film director] Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands, to the attacks on Jews in Israel, to the murders at *Charlie Hebdo* and the Hyper Cacher," he added.

The gathering Sunday evening was organized by the Consistoire, the body responsible for religious services for the French Jewish community. It was held immediately after a march in which hundreds of thousands walked through the heart of Paris in support of democratic values.

The march was originally scheduled as an act of public protest following the slaying of 12 people on Jan. 7 by Islamist terrorists at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, a weekly which published many items lampooning Islam.

But organizers later expanded it to commemorate the victims of attacks at the supermarket and a police officer slain in Paris on Jan. 8 and Jan. 9.

Netanyahu commended the "remarkable bravery of French law enforcement" during the terrorist attacks and praised the actions of a Muslim employee of the kosher supermarket who helped several Jews escape into the refrigeration room without the shooter's knowledge. He also reiterated his call to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

"We need to acknowledge that we are facing a global network of radical Islam of hate. I believe this threat will grow when Europe sees the return of thousands of terrorists from the killing fields of the Middle East, the danger will be graver and it will become a grave threat to humanity if radical Islam gets nuclear weapons," Netanyahu said. "So we need to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons. We need to support each other in this fateful struggle against radical Islamic fanatics wherever they are."

Cherif and Said Kouachi, brothers in their 30s, perpetrated the attack at *Charlie Hebdo*. They were killed Friday when police overtook the printing shop where they were holed up north of Paris. That same day, Amedy Coulibaly, an associate with whom the brothers had been recruited as jihadists to fight in Syria, took more than 20 people hostage at Hyper Cacher and killed four. Coulibaly was killed when police stormed the shop.

According to some reports, Coulibaly had maps of Jewish schools in his car on Jan. 8, a day before the attack on Hyper Cacher, when he killed a police officer south of the city center.

French Chief Rabbi Haim Korsia said the march Sunday shows the French Jewish community "is not as isolated as we thought. For months we have been asking where is France? Today we saw France, and the France we saw was a spitting image of biblical descriptions of Jerusalem, where brothers unite."

The synagogue rally also featured the singing of Israel's national anthem, *Hatikvah*. ■

French Jews feel huge amount of fear

CNAAN LIPHSHIZ
AND **URIEL HEILMAN**
JTA, PARIS

The two sieges that transfixed the world last Friday epitomize the problem Islamic radicalism poses in the heart of Europe: it's a danger to civilized society generally, but especially to Jews.

Now it's time for authorities to wake up to the problem and confront it, French Jewish leaders said after the hostage crisis at the Hyper Cacher kosher supermarket at Porte de Vincennes in Paris' 12th arrondissement that claimed the lives of four people.

"France is still under threat by those targeting it," French President Francois Hollande said in an address Friday. "Unity is our best weapon. Unity to show our determination to fight against all that may divide us and first and foremost to be implacable when it comes to racism and anti-Semitism. Because today, in that kosher shop, it was a terrifying anti-Semitic act that was committed."

Several thousand people gathered outside the kosher market for a vigil Saturday evening to commemorate the four victims of the attack.

Among the dead were Yoav Hattab, a 21-year-old son of a Tunisian rabbi who now lives in Paris. He recently returned from a Birthright trip. The other victims were Yohan Cohen, 22; Philippe Braham, 45, and François-Michel Saada, 55.

The Jan. 7 attack at *Charlie Hebdo*, a satirical newspaper that drew admirers and detractors for its provocative cartoons, was described by many in France as a national shock akin to 9/11. Tens of thousands of protesters gathered in Paris to memorialize the dead and express their support for press freedom.

Last week's attacks came on the heels of a long period of increased anti-Semitic attacks in France that grew worse during last summer's war in Gaza. Since then, synagogues have been set ablaze, Jews have been attacked and Jewish institutions have been threatened. In 2014, a record number of French Jews, some 7,000 people, left for Israel – many citing fears for their future in France.

In a statement, Simone Rodan-Benazquen, director of the American Jewish Committee's Paris office, citing a number of recent violent anti-Semitic attacks in France, said: "We have warned that the menace of rising anti-Semitism threatens French society at large. The *Charlie Hebdo* massacre makes clear that the war against France's democratic values is in high gear."

Despite assurances the government is committed to fighting anti-Semitism, French Jews are facing the Islamic jihadists alone, said Chlomik Zenouda, vice-president of National Bureau for Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism. "Thousands showed up to protest the *Charlie Hebdo* killings. That's nice. But they gathered at a square where just a few months ago public officials stood idly as around them calls were heard to slaughter the Jews. No one came out to protest that – no one but the Jews," said Zenouda, referring to inflammatory rhetoric at Gaza war protests held last summer at Place de la Republique.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

OPINION

The sad state of Israel's African 'infiltrators'

Yair Lootsteen

Jewish values – particularly *ve'ahavta lere'echa kamocha* (love your fellow as you love yourself) – and basic morality have taken me deep into the Negev desert to Holot, the "open" prison for African asylum seekers, on several recent occasions.

According to Israeli government statistics, at the end of 2014, there were nearly 46,500 African "infiltrators" residing in Israel, mostly from Sudan and Eritrea.

Almost all of them reached Israel during the last decade via our southern frontier with Egypt. That flow has been stemmed by a formidable barrier completed between the two countries in late 2013. In 2014, only 21 Africans managed to cross it.

Often, those picked up by the IDF along the border were put on buses and dropped off in Tel Aviv. Others made their own way there. It's said that at present, more than 20,000 live in that city's poorer southern neighbourhoods. There are smaller African populations in other cities and towns around the country. In Jerusalem, where I live, it's estimated roughly 2,500 Africans live and work in the city.

Southern Tel Aviv has suffered from the influx of these Africans. Many are unemployed. They loiter. Crime rates have risen. Tensions between Africans and their Israeli neighbours have risen. Israelis in these neighbourhoods are tormented.

From the outset, the government classified these Africans, people who chose Israel to better themselves financially, as "infiltrators." Based on this misguided perception, it set about making them miserable and encouraging them to leave. It made it difficult to employ them; didn't give them health care; half-heartedly processed their requests for refugee status (during these years, only three Africans have received such status); offered them money if they'd return home; and established prisons and holding facilities just for them.

Our government prides itself in its success. Some 6,400 Africans left Israel "voluntarily" in 2014.

Human rights NGO's have been fighting back. Remarkably, in decisions handed down in 2013 and 2014, the Supreme Court quashed as unconstitutional two separate amendments to a law authorizing detaining or holding Africans administratively for extended periods because they're "illegal infiltrators." In its latter decision, the court ordered that Holot be closed by December 2014.

Built at a cost of 323 million shekels ($97 million Cdn) and requiring another 100 million shekels ($30 million Cdn) annually to run, Holot houses 2,350 Sudanese and Eritrean men. The government has no intention of closing it, despite the court ruling. In December, before dispersing ahead of the upcoming election, the Knesset passed another amendment authorizing holding Africans in Holot for up to 20 months.

Putatively, detainees are free to leave during daylight hours, but they're prohibited from working while detained there and are required to attend a daily roll call (under previous legislation they had three a day). They must also be under lock and key from 10 p.m. till 6 a.m. every night.

On my most recent visit to Holot earlier this month, I sat with several inmate leaders just outside the facility's dusty gates. In contrast with previous visits, they expressed sad despair. They've done nothing wrong, miss their loved ones and have nowhere to go.

Going home isn't an option – they'd be imprisoned or worse. Sudan and Eritrea are among the most totalitarian regimes in the world today. No other country will have them. They're not provided any form of training or education in Holot. They pass the hours sleeping, watching TV, taking walks around the remote facility and wondering what the government will do with them at the end of 20 months. There's not a lot of hope, and increasingly, inmates are suffering emotionally.

Thankfully, this country has many well-intentioned individuals and organizations working tirelessly to improve the lot of these Africans and promote changes in government policy, which will also benefit Israelis living in south Tel Aviv.

Ve'ahavta lere'echa kamocha.

The Jewish state's government should know better. ■

NETIVOT HATORAH
נתיבות התורה

Netivot HaTorah Day School Seeks Director of

Gan Netivot

Title: Director, Gan Netivot
Reports to: Head of School
Location: Netivot HaTorah Day School, North Campus, 18 Atkinson Avenue, Thornhill

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UJA Federation

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While we appreciate all applicants' interest, we will contact only those selected for an interview.

CIJA urges Jewish community to remain calm

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler, who was in Israel, sent a message that the world should not "sanitize" such attacks because that makes the next more likely.

What happened in Paris was felt in a very personal way by Marcelle and Armand Perez, even though they left France for Montreal in 1968. She still has two sisters living there that she had not been able to contact and was worried. She spent the day riveted to TV coverage.

"This is not the first time Jews have been attacked in France, but this was particularly sad. When you live in a democratic country, it is very hard to accept," she said. "Now this is a conflict not only for Jews."

"It always comes back to the Jews," said Sarah Bauer, a native of Belgium, whose husband, Julien, is from France. "Maybe now the people of France will wake up."

Elsewhere, CIJA urged the Jewish community in Canada to be calm and reassured that they're under no heightened threat.

"We have been in regular contact with police in major cities, and there is no indication that security alert levels have increased," said communications director Martin Sampson. "That said, we strongly encourage that existing security protocols be ensured... The police have stepped up their patrols around Jewish institutions.

"Take a deep breath. There is no need for panic, there is no intelligence to suggest we are at risk."

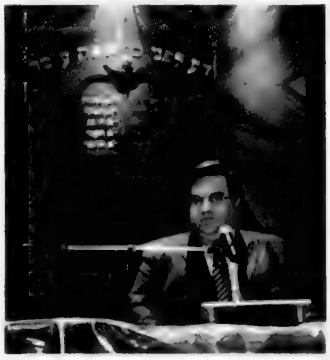
In a statement, CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel said: "These acts of terror represent not only an attack on the people of France or the targeting of the French Jewish community. They constitute an assault on fundamental western and democratic values, as illustrated by the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*.

"That said, we are acutely aware that today (Jan. 9) the hostage crisis unfolded in part in a Jewish neighbourhood at a Jewish business. History records that whenever Jews are attacked, as they have been in France for years, it is a harbinger of attacks targeting the broader society.

"France must do all it can to rebuff that threat, and we must all stand together with France in that battle."

B'nai Brith Canada urged French authorities to do more to protect the "beleaguered" Jewish community.

"The fact that the attackers chose to target a kosher supermarket right before the Sabbath at its peak hours underscores the high levels of animosity towards France's Jewish community," said CEO Michael Mostyn. "French authorities must confront the threat of jihadist radicalization head-on and redouble efforts to stem the rising tide of anti-Semitism in the country."



Mayor Denis Coderre at Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto president and CEO Morris Zbar said: "As an organization with a long and unbreakable bond with the people of Israel, we know all too well the pain and emotional trauma that results from such senseless and cowardly terror attacks...

"As Jewish Canadians, we stand together with our brothers and sisters of France, and extend to all the victims of this week's tragic events our deepest condolences, hopes and prayers."

Montreal's federation is spearheading an emergency fund to assist the French Jewish community. The most pressing need is safeguarding Jewish schools, synagogues and other institutions against further violence, and to provide immediate relief to victims of terror, Laxer and CEO Deborah Corber said in a letter to the community.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper condemned the attacks as "cowardly terrorist acts" and commended French authorities for swiftly ending the immediate terrorist threat.

"We stand with our allies in defiance of those who commit such barbaric acts and whose only aim is to usurp the rights of freedom-loving people everywhere, including the fundamental right of freedom of expression." ■

Security increased in France

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Near the supermarket site Friday, schools were put on lockdown or evacuated. Synagogue services in Paris were cancelled, reportedly for the first time since World War II.

The Hyper Cacher market is located on the easternmost edge of Paris, bordering Saint-Mandé – a heavily Jewish suburb with many kosher shops and restaurants. Just a quarter mile away from Hyper Cacher is the century-old Synagogue de Vincennes, which long has catered to the community's sizable Ashkenazi population. The synagogue is adjacent to another congregation, Beth Raphael, founded in 2005 to serve to the growing population of Jews of North African descent.

On Friday, Cours de Vincennes, usually a lively boulevard with a street market, was nearly abandoned. The only sound was that of police convoys heading to the Hyper Cacher nearby. Meanwhile, police ordered shops closed on the rue de Rosiers in Paris' Marais district, a Jewish area teeming with shoppers before Shabbat.

France announced Monday that it will increase security at Jewish institutions, including Jewish schools, with soldiers.

Nearly 5,000 security forces and police will be deployed to protect the country's 700 Jewish schools, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuves said in a meeting with parents at a Jewish school south of Paris near the Hyper Cacher attack.

The promise came a day after Hollande said in a meeting with French Jewish leaders in the wake of Hyper Cacher attack that France would move to protect synagogues and Jewish schools, including using the military.

On Sunday, nearly 500 people attended an aliyah fair organized before the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre by the Jewish Agency and attended by Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, who was in Paris for Sunday's mass rally, and Jewish Agency chair Natan Sharansky.

The day before, in an interview in the *Atlantic* conducted before last week's violence, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said the emancipation of the Jews was a "founding principle" of the republic and that if Jews were to leave, "The French Republic will be judged a failure." ■

SeeJN | Rally in Paris

SERGE ATTAL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Over one million people, including world leaders such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, gathered in Paris on Jan. 15, in tribute to the victims of last week's attacks. There were no speeches at the rally. Marchers carried signs in French reading "Je Suis Charlie," referring to the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* where 12 staff members and security forces were killed Jan. 7. Other signs read in French "I am a Jew," representing the four men killed during an attack Jan. 9 on a kosher supermarket in a Paris suburb. A police officer was also killed by one of the attackers.

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DIRECTOR, TORONTO OFFICE

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Jewish Life

Order of Canada recognition 'particularly sweet,' Denis Brott says

Denis Brott

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Denis Brott, a renowned cellist who helped to establish Canada Council's Musical Instrument Bank, was driving when he got a call from the Governor General's office asking him if he would accept an appointment to the Order of Canada.

"It was a total surprise," Brott said of the phone call he got out of the blue at the end of last month.

Any Canadian can nominate a candidate for appointment to the Order of Canada, which recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation, but information about nominations is kept confidential for reasons of privacy.

A native Montrealer, Brott, 64, said he was thrilled to accept the unexpected honour of being named a member of the Order of Canada.

"Recognition is not anything I have sought," he said. "I do what I do because I'm passionate about it, whether it's playing, teaching, or the instrument bank. Getting this recognition is particularly sweet because it's unsolicited and it comes from my country."

As a player, Brott is an international star who has toured the world. He came into prominence after winning the second prize in the Munich International Cello Competition in 1973 and has been mentored by some of the world's greatest cellists. He played with the Orford String Quartet for eight years, during which the quartet recorded 25 CDs, and he has made several solo recordings.

Brott teaches at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec, and he's the founder and artistic director of the Montreal Chamber Music Festival. He had a pivotal role in launching the Musical Instrument Bank in 1985.

The bank currently holds 22 historically significant violins, cellos and bows made by luthiers including Stradivari, Guarneri and Gagliano from 1600 to 1900, valued at about $40 million.

As a young cellist in his 30s, Brott saw the need for an instrument bank. "I needed a great cello," he said. "A great instrument is really your voice. It's a tool of your trade."

But a "great" cello can cost up to $1 million, which was beyond Brott's means. He wrote to several CEOs for help in creating an instrument bank and only one replied, William Turner of Consolidated-Bathurst, a newsprint company that has since been sold. Through Turner's connections in corporate Canada, they raised enough money, a quarter of a million dollars, to start the bank.

Brott is still active in acquiring instruments, which are left to the bank in people's wills or are purchased outright, which involves fundraising. He explained that you can buy excellent new pianos, clarinets and other orchestral instruments, but that's not the case with strings.

"With age, string instruments only get better," he said. "These instruments need to be played and should be played by great performers."

In 1995, Brott and his wife, Julie, founded the annual Montreal Chamber Music Festival "around their kitchen table," he said. This year, for the festival's 20th anniversary, about half of the instrument bank winners will be playing at the March to June event.

The 2015 edition of the festival commemorates "the end of the war, the end of the Holocaust and focuses on the resilience of the human spirit," Brott said.

It's an understatement to say that Brott was raised in a musical family. His father was the late violinist and composer Alexander Brott and his mother is the cellist Lotte Brott. Denis' brother is the conductor Boris Brott.

"My parents were totally devoted to their professions," Denis said. "Music was my parents' outlet and what they talked about around the dinner table." He said initially he took up piano to get his parents' approval. He switched to cello around the age of eight, eventually finding within himself a passion for music.

"I never question what I do. It's a force greater than myself," he said.

Brott is a member of Montreal's Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, where each year he plays *Kol Nidre* on cello. "It's a pleasure," he said, "and a poignant and meaningful work to play at that time of year." ■

Jewish film society opens with light Israeli *Cupcakes*

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Eytan Fox's musical comedy *Cupcakes* kicks off the 37th annual Toronto Jewish Film Society on Sunday, Jan. 18.

A group of friends and neighbours sit around a television to watch a talent competition called the Universong. The friends, five women and one man, root for the singer from their home country of Israel, hoping he belts it out better than the other countries' superstars. Disappointed by the Israeli's performance, the friends decide to cheer each other up by singing and strumming along to an original tune.

This early scene sets up Eytan Fox's colourful romantic comedy *Cupcakes*, which kicks off this year's Toronto Jewish Film Society (TJFS) on Sunday, Jan. 18. Like the characters from *Cupcakes*, film society members should find themselves rooting for a lot of Israeli talent this year.

The TJFS, North America's longest-running society of Jewish film, often showcases one or two titles from Israel in its annual program. In 2015, its 37th year, four of the eight selected films come from Israel or are Israeli co-productions.

"We take input from our members, and there's no question that Israeli film, in all of its diversity, is something that excites them," says Mark Clamen, chair of programming for the TJFS. "The film industry in Israel is thriving."

The four Israeli films showing at the Al Green Theatre in Toronto this year range from the upbeat musical *Cupcakes* to a powerful, personal documentary set in Germany.

In *The Flat*, director Arnon Goldfinger tries to make sense of a curious artifact he finds in his late grandmother's apartment, dating back to World War II. That acclaimed film will screen on Oct. 18.

The other Israeli titles include *The Matchmaker*, a coming-of-age drama set in Haifa during the late 1960s, which screens on Feb. 15. Meanwhile, festival favourite, *Metallic Blues*, a dark comedy about two Jewish men who face challenges while trying to sell a vintage car in Germany, deals with memory and the Holocaust. It will close the annual slate on Dec. 13.

Unlike the titles above, which focus on or deal with chapters from Jewish history, *Cupcakes* is a delightful slice of Israel's modern culture. You can get a sense of the film's chaotic flair from its North American title, as well as the Israeli moniker, which translates to "*Bananas*."

The romantic comedy is both funny and far-fetched. The film focuses on a circle of six friends from Tel Aviv who come together to watch a worldwide singing contest. After the male member of the group, Ofer (Ofer Shechter), records them singing an original tune, he sends it to the judges of the talent competition.

Miraculously, the friends are picked to represent Israel in the talent contest the following year. However, the instant celebrity and international pressure have their drawbacks.

Like the snack that gives the film its name, *Cupcakes* is light, sweet and filled with whirls of colour. In a nice, meta-touch, the actors in the main ensemble share their own names with those of their characters.

The film also has a lot of cheeky if familiar subplots. For instance, the openly gay Ofer worries that his exposure in the competition could drive away his closeted boyfriend. Meanwhile, Dana (Dana Ivgy, from *Zero Motivation*) is torn between following her dream to be a singer and moving forward with her political career.

With a scant 90-minute runtime, Fox's comedy zips along so quickly that few of the storylines get time to develop. Several of the conflicts are introduced quickly but are then solved rather hastily, without dealing with the issues for long.

Even though several scenes from *Cupcakes* are predictable, the film has an infectious energy from the beginning and never lets up. With swift one-liners, a terrific pop soundtrack (featuring songs in English and Hebrew) and an endearing message, the film's optimism and energy floats above some of the formulaic plotting.

Cupcakes is a delicious introduction to the TJFS program this year, one filled with terrific Israeli talent. Like past incarnations, this year's society will have a speaker curate each of the films and lead a discussion with the audience after the feature. ■

A subscription to the eight films is $101 for adults and seniors and $60 for those between the ages of 18 and 35. Individual tickets are also available at the theatre box office.

Cupcakes is one of a record four Israeli titles the society will screen this year.

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

CHEZ L'ARABE, BOOK OF SHORT STORIES BY MONTREAL AUTHOR MIREILLE SILCOFF

Recently published by the House of Anansi, Montreal author **Mireille Silcoff**'s *Chez L'arabe* is a book of semi-autobiographical short stories, partly interconnected, about a narrator who becomes ill, as Silcoff did at age 32, with a neurological disorder that keeps her bedridden for years. "I wrote a lot of the book when I had to lie flat in bed because my brain had no suspension because I didn't have any spinal fluid," Silcoff recalls.

Chez L'arabe focuses on a woman in her mid-30s, trapped in her elegant Montreal townhouse and in her own mind and body. Feeling profoundly alone as she faces an increasingly indifferent husband and a volatile mother, she realizes that, even after she recovers, her life will never be the same.

Also, the University of Ottawa Press recently released *The Collected Poems of Miriam Waddington* in a two-volume set; and Cormorant Books has given us *From Tolerance to Tyranny* by **Erna Paris**, about Spain's descent, centuries ago, from a pluralistic, multicultural society to the least tolerant nation in Europe.

• • •

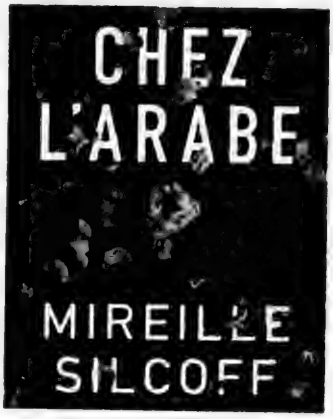
Toronto Jewish Film Society: The Society launches its 37th season with *Cupcakes*, a recent French-Israeli co-production by director **Eytan Fox** about a group of Tel Aviv neighbours who compose a tune to cheer up one of their fellows, not imagining that it will be entered in a European song contest. "This exuberant and uplifting film will have you dancing in the aisles."

Co-presented with Kulanu Toronto and Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival, with guest speaker **Jamie Levin**, UofT Centre for Jewish Studies. $15, $10 (cash only). Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, Bloor and Spadina. Sunday, Jan. 18, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Box office opens one hour before screening times.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Film critic **Adam Nayman** discusses two movies, illustrated with film clips. On Monday, Jan. 19, it's **David Fincher**'s *Zodiac* and on Monday, Jan. 26, it's **Paul Thomas Anderson**'s *The Master*. Miles Nadal JCC, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop-in, students $6.



***Chez L'arabe* focuses on a woman trapped in her elegant Montreal townhouse.**

• *Maus* creator **Art Spiegelman** offers a chronological tour of the evolution of comic books in "What the %@&*! Happened to Comics?", presented by the Koffler Centre of the Arts. Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W., Monday, Jan. 26, 7 p.m. $39, $29.

• Film critic **Kevin Courrier** presents a series of film lectures with clips on "Forbidden Desires: The Films of Alfred Hitchcock." Learn how the master filmmaker took the taboo subject of voyeurism and made it into an acceptable dramatic strategy in such classics as *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Rear Window* and *Psycho*. Mondays, Jan. 26, Feb. 2 and Feb. 9, 1 to 3 p.m. $12 drop-in, students $6. Registration, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• • •

At the Galleries

• In *Ultra-Parallel*, Toronto artist **Kristiina Lahde** transforms ordinary objects and materials through a process of geometric re-organization in which measurement and pattern play a significant role. Lahde's solo show opens Jan. 22 at the Koffler Gallery with a free reception from 6 to 9 p.m. Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Continues to March 29.

• The Koffler Gallery offers a free Contemporary Art Bus Tour that takes in the Blackwood Gallery, Art Gallery of York University and Doris McCarthy Gallery. Departs from 180 Shaw St. on Sunday, Feb. 1, noon; goes to 5 p.m. Reservations to Suzanne Carte, 416-736-2100, ext. 44021 or scarte@yorku.ca

• **Aba Bayefsky**'s *Tattoo* paintings, *Legends and Market Scenes* are on view in the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery until Jan. 26.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 15, 2015

Singing at the Café Sztuka: Vera Gran's postwar trials

NORM RAVVIN

Cafés and nightclubs attain special resonance in times of great artistic or historical ferment. Jean-Paul Sartre's Les Deux Magots helped birth existentialism; the pre-World War I Café des Westens in Berlin offered a gathering place to avant-gardists like Kandinsky and Marc; in 1940s Harlem, Minton's Playhouse provided a venue for the new bebop developments in jazz. So it was that in the Warsaw Ghetto that the Café Sztuka gained a special role in the lives of the closed district's inhabitants.

In the spring of 1942, the newspaper *Gazeta Zydowska* described the Ghetto's "public for theatres and concerts." People went "above all, to the Sztuka. This was the most popular, most prestigious literary café, where the intelligentsia met. It was located at 2 Leszno Street. Many Polish-Jewish artists made appearances there, including the stars of prewar cabarets. In the Sztuka, Wiera Gran, Diana Blumenfeld, and Marysia Ajzensztadt sang. Wladyslaw Szpilman and Artur Goldfeder formed an excellent piano duet. In the Sztuka, *Snow White* was also staged for children.

The best known name among those listed is, of course, Szpilman, who survived the Ghetto, composed a memoir, and was offered far greater cultural familiarity by way of Roman Polanski's 2002 film *The Pianist*.

Wiera Gran, or Vera Gran as Agata Tuszynska spells the singer's name, was, like Szpilman, well-known to Poles before the war. Her earliest records were made in her teens under the name Sylvia Green, sometimes to an "orchestra of Hawaiian guitars." In 1937, she toured Poland as a celebrity and earned substantial fees "making short advertising films" for lotions, soaps and colognes. Though her musical career was a Polish-language phenomenon, in 1939 she made use of her childhood Yiddish alongside Ida Kaminska in *The Homeless*, said to be the last Yiddish film made in Poland before the outbreak of war.

Tuszynska's presentation of Gran's story makes quick work of the singer's prewar success. The story associated with Gran that drives the narrative of *Vera Gran: The Accused* derives from accusations, which first arose in the Ghetto but grew more ferocious after the war, that she used her popularity to create connections with the Gestapo.

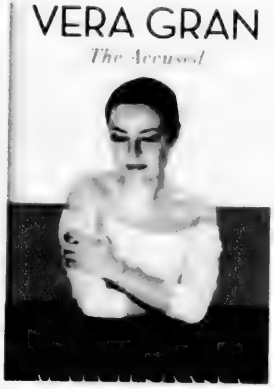
Drawn into this tangled tale is Szpilman, with whom Gran performed at the Café Sztuka. And so the book's lengthy self-description, which appears on its dustcover but not inside on its title page: "The Celebrated Singer of the Warsaw Ghetto, her Piano Accompanist Wladyslaw Szpilman, and a Meditation on the Nature of Collaboration."

Tuszynska befriended Gran in 2003, when she was living as a near recluse, largely forgotten, in a cluttered apartment in "an elegant neighbourhood of Paris, the 16th, around the Eiffel Tower… An old woman, not very tall, in a pink dressing gown, opened the door a crack."

They became an odd couple – meeting to record reminiscences and to struggle over how to understand the past – and Tuszynska stuck by her subject till the end, visiting her once when she moved to a home in the countryside dedicated to the care of Polish aged in France, and, finally, visiting her unmarked grave in a Paris suburb.

Tuszynska's approach to her subject is greatly influenced by her uncommon access to and intimacy with Gran. The portrait we receive is of an alternatively angry, depressed, paranoid, even psychotic solitary figure, whose memories, though in many ways revealing, are marked by a sense of having been wrongly accused of collaboration.

There is almost nothing in the historical record to support this accusation. Tuszynska's approach is to leave the question open, though she is ultimately on her subject's side. There is an extended discussion in *Vera Gran: The Accused* of the nature of collaboration in the Warsaw Ghetto. The proposal is made, loosely supported by a side comment in the diaries of Emanuel Ringelblum, that spending evenings in cafés, whether as a performer, impresario or audience member, while children starved, was unethical. But Ringelblum's criticism was aimed at the proprietors of certain cafés, who were in fact in contact with the Gestapo.



Vera Gran: The Accused
By Agata Tuszynska
Knopf

Tuszynska indulges the question of whether Gran might have considered that "practising her profession… could be inappropriate in this situation." This runs contrary to the majority of historical writing on the role of the arts and culture in the major Nazi ghettos. In her monumental history of the Warsaw Ghetto, Barbara Engelking asserts the role of art, which, before the war, was simply "normal," in the Ghetto became an "expression of dissent from the Nazi world order."

Something untold or untellable seems to lurk in connection with Szpilman. For Gran, he is the key *bête noir* in her downfall, a figure lionized after the war who, she says, compromised himself as a Jewish policeman in the Ghetto. After the war, when Gran begged him for work in his Polish radio concerts, he denied her, based upon accusations regarding her wartime behaviour. Others backed him up. But, like Szpilman, they seemed to have a less than straightforward reason for doing so – something in their own wartime activities that made them fearful, even vengeful.

This aspect of Gran's story remains shadowy. We understand that Gran was unduly accused, her career and possibly her sanity destroyed. The motives of her accusers remain vague, though Tuszynska does convey the complicated mindset of postwar survivors. Years after pointing the finger at Gran, key figures recant, while the damage continues as accusations reappear in Poland, in Israel and among survivors elsewhere.

Vera Gran: The Accused offers a counter-proposal to the notion that we can come to know another life, however public in its character, through careful research. The events of Gran's life were chaotic; many of those who knew her, including her family, were murdered by the Germans; her treatment after the war was bizarre and troubling, a kind of trap she could not escape from. But out of these loose ends Tuszynska weaves a revealing narrative of Polish-Jewish identity, wartime experience, and, more importantly, the confusions and deceits lurking in postwar Holocaust response. ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and teacher living in Montreal.

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Hopefuls audition for JAM's talent show

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Tensions ran high in a small upstairs room at the Prosserman JCC on Jan. 8, as eight brave souls auditioned before a panel of judges for a spot in Jewish and Modern (JAM)'s upcoming talent show Jewish & Talented.

The show, which will be held Feb. 12 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, is a brand new initiative for JAM, a volunteer-run, not-for-profit group focused on strengthening Toronto's Jewish Russian-speaking and Russian-Israeli community through social and educational events – typically for young professionals aged 22 to 40.

"We have so much talent in our community," said Tanya Grabarnik, one of the judges and an event co-ordinator at JAM, who said she first pitched the idea of a talent show to fellow JAM organizers back in April. "People often don't have a place to show their talents, to show what they've got. That's exactly why we're doing this."

The eight auditioning that night, whose talents ran the gamut from singing to magic tricks to impressions, were, along with 21 people who submitted video audition clips, vying for one of the coveted 12 spots at the show.

The sense of nervousness in the room was palpable, but despite the obvious sense of competition, a spirit of camaraderie seemed to prevail among the contestants. As they took turns facing the panel to showcase their talent, those waiting gathered in the hallway outside and proceeded to engage in a companionable sing-a-long.

The strains of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* could be heard seeping into the closed audition room, as individuals mostly in their early 20s – several from Israel or of descent from the former Soviet Union – eagerly attempted to woo the judges.

Sasha Liknaitzky, 20, a singer-songwriter who, accompanying herself on guitar, performed a song by the group Kodaline as well as one of her own songs, spoke graciously of the competition.

"It seems like everyone's got different kinds of talents," she said. "But, at the end of the day, we all love the same things: music, the same TV shows...we were all totally nerding out!"

Dan Fridmar, 20, born in Israel to a Russian family, performed a rendition, in Russian of poems by Russian poets Alexander Pushkin and Sergei Yesenin. "I'm doing this because I love performing," he said. "Whoever gets it, as long as there are amazing people performing – that's great," he said.

Leah Bassett, who had the judges chuckling with her comedic characterization of a vain and buxom Mexican *conchita*, said, "There's not really a lot of opportunities for me to utilize my skills, or gifts. I thought this would be a great opportunity."

Zack Liknaitzky, 24, Sasha's brother, performed a series of impressions. "Everyone else was busy singing," he said. "I was like, 'Whoo, I'm in a different category!'"

Judges Grabarnik, Ilia Dobkin and Oren Kats have been promoting the show via Facebook and word of mouth, and, with other organizers, will select the 12 talent show acts.

Dobkin stressed that the show, which they hope will become an annual event, is meant to be a community affair, and their aim is for the audience to include a broader age demographic than the usual bracket JAM targets.

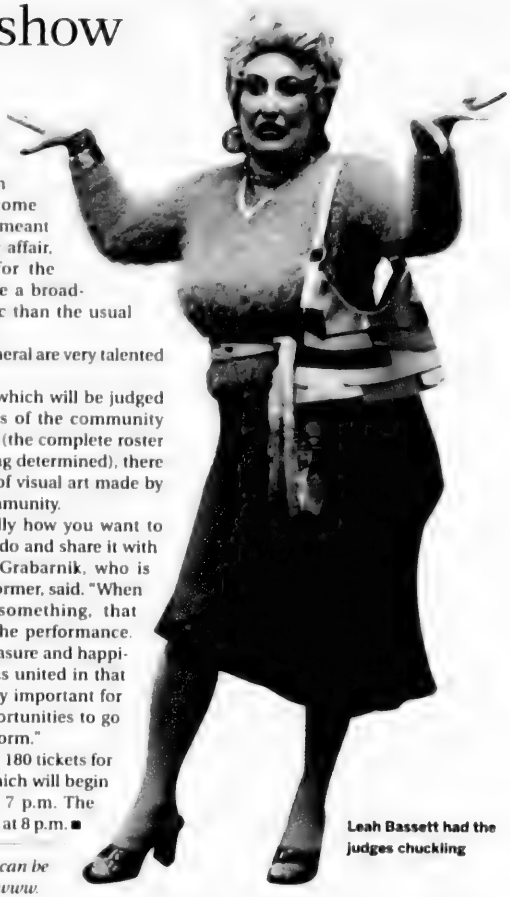
"I think Jews in general are very talented people," he said.

Before the show, which will be judged by several members of the community involved in the arts (the complete roster of judges is still being determined), there will be a showcase of visual art made by members of the community.

"I know personally how you want to show what you can do and share it with your community," Grabarnik, who is herself a circus performer, said. "When you enjoy doing something, that comes through in the performance. It brings out joy, pleasure and happiness and everyone is united in that experience. It's really important for people to have opportunities to go to shows and to perform."

JAM's goal is to sell 180 tickets for the Feb. 12 show, which will begin with a reception at 7 p.m. The talent show will start at 8 p.m. ■

Tickets cost $25, and can be purchased online at www.ticketmaster.ca.



Leah Bassett had the judges chuckling

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They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 2, 2015. Not all submissions can be published, and not all those selected will appear in both Toronto and Montreal editions. We look for originality. Please don't send more than three entries. We cannot correspond with submitters.
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What's New

JAN. 15 - JAN. 22

by Lila Sarick

Saturday, Jan. 17

THE MENTALIST
Mentalist **Mike D'Urzo** performs illusions and magic at a family-friendly evening at Beth Emeth Synagogue, 7 p.m. For tickets, call 416-633-3838.

THE BA'AL TSHUVAH
Psychologist **Lisa Aiken**, **Harvey Belovski**, **Rabbi Daniel Korobkin** and **Sholom Schwartz** discuss "The ba'al tshuvah and the experience of return," 8 p.m., Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, 613 Clark Ave. W. www.torahinmotion.org.

B'NAI SHALOM
B'nai Shalom Congregation, a Conservative egalitarian congregation in Peel Region meets today. Call 905-901-9889 or www.bnaishalom.ca

Sunday, Jan. 18

TALLIT MAKING
Lisa Rose offers a one-day tallit-making workshop, Temple Sinai, 9:30 a.m. $72 (includes materials and lunch). To register, call 416-487-4161.

WELCOMING THE INTERMARRIED
Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism hosts a discussion on "Open heart Judaism: welcoming the intermarried," led by **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger**, 7:30 p.m., Barbara Frum branch, Toronto Public Library, 20 Covington Rd. RSVP 416-385-3910, or roby@oraynu.org.

Tuesday, Jan. 20

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Galilee Eskimos*, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz**, 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. Jan. 27, *Real Inglorious Bastards*. 416-221-3433. $5.

TALMUD COURSE
Rabbi Avraham Plotkin teaches a Talmud course for women, starting today. **Rabbi Yudi Zarchi** teaches "Men and wisdom," starting today. Course on Kabbalah for men and women, starts tomorrow. All classes at Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. To register, call 905-886-0420, ext. 221, or www.chabadmarkham.org.

The Hebrew Order of David Ilan Ramon lodge's recent raffle raised $12,000 for OneFamily Fund Canada's work supporting victims of terror in Israel. The Hebrew Order of David is an international non-profit fraternal organization. Pictured from left are OneFamily Fund Canada president Shawn Klerer; Eddie Schneider and Adrian Lichtman, both of the Hebrew Order of David; OneFamily Fund Canada past president Jonny Diamond and Les Prosser of the Hebrew Order of David.
STAN SHOOLMAN PHOTO

Wednesday, Jan. 21

GUILD OF JEWISH TEXTILES
Brainstorm ideas with artist **Laya Crust** on new ideas for the Pesach table, sponsored by the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, 7:30 p.m., Temple Sinai. New members welcome. To learn more, email info@pomegranateguild.com.

THE FEAR FIX
Psychologist **Sarah Chana Radcliffe** discusses her book *The Fear Fix*, and how to cope with stress and fear, 7 p.m., Barbara Frum branch, Toronto Public Library, 20 Covington Rd.

ROSH CHODESH
Aviva Chernick celebrates the new moon, Rosh Chodesh, with song, silence, contemplation and community, 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue. Go to www.bethsholom.net to register.

Thursday, Jan. 22

JEWISH LIFE IN SURINAME
Jacob Steinberg discusses "375 years of Jewish life in Suriname," 7:30 p.m., Lodzer Synagogue. RSVP 416-636-6665. $10.

Coming Events

EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP
JVS holds employment workshops every Thursday at 10 a.m. Call 416-649-1688.

MACCABI CANADA
Maccabi Canada is seeking male basketball players born in 1997 or later to compete at the Maccabi Games in Berlin (July 2015) and Santiago, Chile (December 2015). Contact the coaches at vlad@kovalevsky.com or andre.serero@gmail.com. For more information, visit www.maccabicanada.com.

MORASHA
Prof. Barrie Wilson presents "The lost gospel, a Jewish perspective," a literary and archeological mystery uncovered, Feb. 25-April 1, 11:15 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. To register, call **Loretta** 416-789-7400.

JEWISH GENEALOGY
Gregg Loane discusses "Making history accessible: illustrating and publishing your family story," with the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto, **Jan. 25**, 10:30 a.m., Temple Sinai. info@jgstoronto.ca.

DANI TOUR AND TEA
DANI Centre offers a tour and tea, **Feb. 1**, 11 a.m., Garnet Williams Community Centre, 501 Clark Ave. W. RSVP ssokol@dani-Toronto.com.

SUPER BOWL PARTY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds a '50s concert and tailgate party, **Feb. 1**, 5 p.m. $20. RSVP by Jan. 22, 416-221-3433.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Jan. 29 is Jan. 19. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Am Shalom Synagogue in Barrie holds a special program **Jan. 31**, 10 a.m. The adult choir will perform a musical program, with guest speaker, **Frank Simkevitz,** director of JNF Canada.

At Beth Sholom Synagogue, **Cantor Eric Moses** and the choir sing, starting at 8:45 a.m.

Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds a musical service, with **Cantor Tibor Kovari** and the choir, starting at 9 a.m.

SUPPORT FOR ABUSED WOMEN

The Legal Information Service of Act to End Violence Against Women offers legal support and guidance to Jewish women who have experienced abuse. Free. Call 905-695-5374 or email info@acttoendvaw.org.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- Parenting in the age of technology: Media personality **Joe Rich** hosts a workshop on parenting children and teens in a digital age. Jan. 21, 7:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Mind-body connection for women: A 7-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Jan. 28, 1 p.m. or Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Lebovic JCC.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 5-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married this year. Starts Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play Pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC. Paul Hyman** discusses brain fitness. Beat the winter blues with fun and physical exercises to improve memory, energy and reduce falls. Jan. 22, 1:30 p.m. $4.

Bernice Chan of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto is the guest speaker, Jan. 21, noon. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, Feb. 18; Manicures and facials, Jan. 22 (call for appointment); Barber/hairdresser, Jan. 22, 10 a.m. Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Jan. 16, **Myriam Shechter** discusses "Mistaken identities and glorious music: Donizetti's rollicking *Don Pasquale*," 10 a.m.; Jan. 18 Silverthorn Symphonic Winds perform, 1:30 p.m.; Jan. 22, physiotherapist **Elliot Tse** discusses "Neck and back care," 1:30 p.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or **Judi** 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420 or email Rabbig@chabad-markham.org
- **Circle of Care Exercise class.** Free exercise classes offered at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, Mondays 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays, 3 p.m. 416-787-1631.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Mad Science Junior Adventurers (ages 3-1/2 to 5 years) starts Jan. 20, 4:30 p.m.
- If you love Yiddish and good conversation, join the Yiddish group, starts Jan. 19, 1:30 p.m.
- Beginner and intermediate mah-jong start Jan. 21, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Reflections in the hall of mirrors," a lecture series on how movies have soaked up the political and cultural ideas of their time, Feb. 4-March 25, 1 p.m.
- Ceramics classes during the day and evening are open to all levels.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele," Feb. 17, 24 at 1 p.m.
- **Galya Sarna** shares recipes as she prepares an Israeli-style meal with a French twist, March 19, 6:30 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Subscribe to the Jewish Film Society. Eight films shown between January-December 2015. joellem@mnjcc.org or ext. 139.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society shows the Israeli film *Cupcakes*, Jan. 18, 4 and 7 p.m. Tickets $15/$10. Box office opens one hour before screening time. Ext. 606.
- Hebrew classes for beginners to advanced start Jan. 19. For placement tests, contact anniem@mnjcc.org or ext. 388.
- Accessible yoga, a fully inclusive yoga class, open to people of all abilities. Free demo, Jan. 18, 1 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a weekly group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m., second term starts Jan. 20.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: the films of Alfred Hitchcock," Mondays, Jan. 26- Feb. 9, 1 p.m.
- The paintings of **Aba Bayefsky** are in the gallery until Jan. 26.
- **Elaine Mitchell** teaches a journaling workshop on "Dating without fear," Jan. 29, 7 p.m.
- **Adam Nayman** discusses two movies. Jan 19, *Zodiac*, Jan. 26, *The Master*, 7 p.m. Ext. 606.
- Support group for adult children of Holocaust survivors meets Jan. 19. Call **Shoshana Yaakobi** 416-785-2500, ext. 2271.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in social innovation, community-building and entrepreneurship. Apply now for winter. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- Enjoy a glass fusing workshop creating a challah tray,with **Marcela Rosemberg,** Jan. 20, 7 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What's so funny," Feb. 18, 7 p.m.
- **Rachelle Shubert** presents "Here's to Music! Here's to Life," March 5, 2 p.m. at Four Elms Retirement Residence.
- Book club discusses *The Little Bride* by **Anna Solomon,** Jan. 27, 7 p.m.
- Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m. ■

Ask Ella

Responsibility = accountability and independence

Ella Burakowski
ellacjn@gmail.com

Dear Ella,

It was mahj night at Carol's when her daughter walked in with two huge bags and announced, "Here is our laundry." Carol looked embarrassed and immediately made an excuse: "The kids work so hard." We looked at each other, and after full confessions were over, we realized we are all somewhat responsible for not allowing our kids to take responsibility for their own lives. We laughed and blew it off, but I'm not sure this is funny. Is this typical or are the four of us just total patsies?

Overindulgent Parents

Dear Overindulgent Parents,

You are not alone. It seems that more and more parents feel it's okay to step into their children's lives and "help." If your kids are old enough to be out on their own, you must support their independence. Empower them by allowing them to prioritize – pay their own bills, do their own laundry, buy their own groceries, get their own car repairs, etc. I promise you they will not go to work with dirty clothes, they will not starve, their electricity will not get cut off.

If you are really honest with yourselves, you will admit that you are not doing these things because you don't have confidence in your children. Carol is doing her daughter's laundry because it's an excuse to see her. "Helping" is a way to stay connected and not give up total control.

It's not the kids having problems, it's the parents not being able to let go. It's a passive way to lure your kids home, and it makes you feel useful. You can tell yourself you are not doing any harm, but you are giving your kids a warped sense of what it means to stand on their own two feet. Stop keeping them dependent on you.

They know you love them and you will never let harm come to them, but are you really helping? Will they have enough life experience to make important decisions without you? Will you let them do this without interfering?

Allow them to stumble and fix their own problems: they will feel accomplished and empowered because they were able to work out a solution all on their own. Let them be responsible for their own time management, household budgets and chores. It's a good start.

Shift your relationship into the next gear. If you want to see them, invite them over for dinner, sans laundry. Leave your chequebook locked away and those extra few dollars in your pocket and enjoy a nice, adult evening with your kids.

Dear Ella,

My friend Barb's husband passed away a few months ago and she is like a lost sheep. Allen took care of all the bills, repairs, cars, insurance, investments – everything. Barb was never involved, and now that some time has passed, she is dealing with the reality of not knowing how to run her life.

I want to help her, but this was a wake-up call for me too, as my husband also handles everything. What can I do to help her and myself?

Financial Responsibility

Dear Financial Responsibility,

Losing a partner is like losing a big piece of yourself. There is no getting around that! Barb has to allow herself the time to find her new "normal."

The practical part of finances can be an overwhelming burden, especially while someone is grieving. If possible, Barb should hire a financial adviser to educate her and organize her financial obligations.

Another alternative would be to have a relative or close friend help and teach Barb about banking, paying bills, changing billing names and finding out which bills are paid automatically, online or by cheque.

There are many documents that need to be gathered besides the bills, such as bank statements, insurance policies, tax returns, loans or mortgages, car info and investment info, just to name a few.

Life is complicated, but death can be more complicated, especially if you have not dealt with day-to-day responsibilities. It's too late for Barb, but it's not too late for you. Learn how to run your own financial affairs now. It's much easier when it's your choice rather than when it's forced on you. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

DID YOU GO TO HEBREW SCHOOL?

HELP PROMOTE JEWISH EDUCATION THROUGH YOUR STORIES

Six stories will be highlighted in the "first" **Focus on Education** Feature Feb. 26th, on **cjnews.com** and our Facebook page.

Stories must be no more than 500 words and include a photo.
Submit by Feb. 2nd to ***cblackman@thecjn.ca***

*Winners must have attended (or be attending) Hebrew school and sign a release allowing **The CJN** to use their story and photo.*

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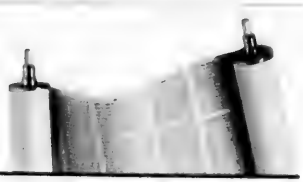
Parshah

Va'era | Exodus 6:2 - 9:35



Rabbi Ilan Acoca says anger isn't the answer, and the proof can be found in the plague of the frogs
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl argues our understanding of the Divine is always changing
Rabbi Catharine Clark highlights an example of justice delivered exactly on target

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

The second plague to befall Egypt was the plague of frogs.

The Torah (Shmot 8:2) says that at the outset, HaShem brought upon the Egyptians one huge frog.

Rashi quotes the Talmud in Sanhedrin 67b that when the Egyptians began hitting the frog in anger and frustration, it multiplied again and again, until frogs were everywhere.

Rabbi Yaakov Kanievsky asks the obvious question: why didn't they stop hitting it when they saw the results of their actions?

He answers with a very profound truth about human nature. When a person is angry and does something in anger, although he sees that no good will come out of it, he can't help himself. His anger carries him further to do what he knows intellectually he will regret later on.

How often do we get into an argument and begin saying things we know we will have to take back?

At the time, we feel that we just "have to" do this, regardless of the consequences. Later on we realize how foolish we were and wish it never happened.

We should realize that the majority of the time, getting angry does more harm than good. Although the rabbis tell us that there are certain times we are allowed to act angry if we are truly calm inside and there is good reason for it, nevertheless, experience has shown that this is difficult to rely upon.

Next time we think about losing our temper, let's remember the big Egyptian frog and think about the consequences.

This will help us find alternatives to solve our problems without losing our temper. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

At the beginning of Va'era, God appears to Moses, and the text says, "Elokim spoke to Moshe and said to him, 'I am Y-H-V-H. I appeared to Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaakov as K'El Shad-dai, but I did not make Myself known to them by My Name Y-H-V-H (Exodus 6:2-3). How is this possible? We know that many times in Genesis, God *is* referred to as Y-H-V-H!

Academic biblical scholars understand these verses to indicate that there were different source traditions that were brought together to become the Torah. The tradition represented here had part of the Genesis narratives, but not the one that used the name Y-H-V-H. One take-away is that the Torah has different strands, each recounting partial experiences of the divine message. We also have only a partial perspective and depend on what has been transmitted to us by earlier generations and the insights of others around us to develop a deeper and broader spiritual outlook.

The comments of classical rabbinic scholars offer other important lessons. Rashi notes that God did not demonstrate to the ancestors the full capacity of Y-H-V-H to fulfil divine promises. Rashi's grandson, Rashbam, suggests that even though God used a variety of names in Genesis for the Divine, only with Moses will the actualization of God's names attain completion. Ibn Ezra and Ramban, not usually in agreement, both propose that the complete significance of the four-letter name of the Holy One was not understood by the ancestors.

Perhaps the essence of the name Y-H-V-H, which is related to the name-phrase "I shall be," is intended to text a message that God is always "becoming." In every generation, we discover new understandings of the Divine. Parents often teach children about God, but sometimes children open our eyes to disclose new wonders – about the world, about life, about God. ■

Follow me at www.beth-tzedec.org and https://www.facebook.com/bfrydmankohl. Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

In the Bible, justice often is exacted in a manner that appears overbroad by modern standards, sweeping into destruction the innocent along with the guilty. In this week's parshah, however, justice is delivered exactly on target.

In the lead-up to the plague of frogs, God tells Moses to go before Pharaoh and threaten that the Nile will swarm with frogs, saying to the Egyptian leader, "They shall come up and enter your house, your bedchamber and your bed, the house of your servants and your people." Rashi asks why the Torah states "your house," and only afterward, "the house of your servants."

Rashi's answer refers to the previous parshah, in which Pharaoh instigates the oppression of the Israelites. In Parshat Shmot, it is Pharaoh who claims that the Israelites have become too numerous and must be enslaved lest they join Egypt's enemies and rise up against Pharaoh. Thus begins the Egyptian program of forced labour.

According to Rashi, because Pharaoh implemented the oppression of the Israelites and only then did other Egyptians join him in his ruthless policy, Pharaoh is appropriately punished first by the plague of frogs. The frogs will infest his home before they infest the home of his servants.

What a contrast to the modern world. When a foreign state violates international law and sanctions are imposed, the poor and powerless suffer before the leader who can and should reform the country's actions. Closer to home, when our elected leaders act contrary to the public good by failing to fund education or expand public transportation, for instance, it is the common person, not the government official, who sends her children to subpar schools or endures an arduous commute.

In this instance, Parshat Va'era models how justice could more fairly be meted out. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is the spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ont.

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When you crave beef...

EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Like many, my family has cut down on red meat consumption. However, every now and then, the need for beef overcomes my self-discipline, I give in to my craving and head right for the ribs. No, I'm not talking about putting them in a cholent, but beef ribs as a stand-alone main course. Typically, I make them in a crock pot and serve them for Shabbat lunch on a cold day.

There are two kind beef ribs available in most grocery stores or butcher shops, back ribs and short ribs. Easy to remember which is which: the back ribs are big and the meat is between the rib, and the short ribs are, well, short and the meat is on top. Most people prefer back ribs for the barbecue and the short ribs for the oven or crock pot.

Short ribs are my go-to cut for a longer, slower, make ahead in the morning, serve in the evening meal. I prefer the bone in short rib – it seems to have a deeper flavour – but the boneless cut is just fine. When you're looking for good ribs, there should be a nice layer of fat running through the muscle.

I don't always use a recipe when I'm making my short ribs. I braise them in a little oil (salt and pepper them first, then sear/brown the outside of the ribs in a pan over a high heat). I like them kinda charred a bit on the edges. Pull the ribs out of the pan, deglaze the pan and then pour the sauce or mixture of ingredients over the ribs, cover and cook for 4 to 8 hours on medium in a crock pot or 325 in the oven, depending on how many ribs and how much sauce, and falling off the ribs meat that is delicious.

I typically use about 1/2 to a pound of ribs per person (the men in my life like lots of ribs). I've used wine, broth, beer and lots of other "stuff" depending on my mood (and what's in my pantry). Fresh herbs and vegetables add to fun. You should always cover the ribs when cooking. You can, of course, use rubs for seasoning and serve them with rice or potatoes or even noodles. I have a friend who swears that there is nothing like a crispy slice of polenta with short ribs, but I say it doesn't matter what you serve them with, they truly are wonderful just by themselves. Oh, and they're even more amazing a day or so later reheated.

Sesame Short Ribs With Peppers

- ❑ 1/2 cup soy sauce
- ❑ 1/3 cup brown sugar
- ❑ 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- ❑ 2 tsp. minced garlic
- ❑ 1 tsp. dried ginger
- ❑ 2 red bell pepper, chopped
- ❑ 5 lb. short ribs
- ❑ 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- ❑ 2 tbsp. sesame oil
- ❑ 1 red onion, chopped to bite sized pieces
- ❑ toasted sesame seeds

Preheat the oven to broil. Place the ribs on a broiler pan and drizzle the sesame oil over the top of the ribs. Broil for 3 minutes on each side. In a large crock pot, combine the soy sauce, sugar, vinegar, garlic and ginger. Mix to combine. Add the ribs and mix to coat.

Cook for 5 to 8 hours, depending on whether you're cooking on medium or high. The meat should be falling off the bone. I serve these ribs with the toasted sesame seeds over fried rice. Serves 5 to 6.

Classic Short Ribs

- ❑ 1 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ 4 lb. short ribs
- ❑ 1 onion, chopped
- ❑ 1 tbsp. minced garlic
- ❑ 1/2 cup red wine
- ❑ 2 cups beef broth
- ❑ 2 tbsp. soy sauce
- ❑ 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- ❑ 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- ❑ 2 bay leaves

Preheat oven to 325. Heat the oil, over a cook top, in a large roasting pan or Dutch oven. Season the ribs with salt and pepper, then sear the outsides of the ribs in the hot oil for 4 to 5 minutes. Add the onions and garlic. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until all sides of the ribs are seared and the vegetables are soft but not mushy. Add the wine and bring the mixture to a boil. Simmer for 2 minutes, then add the broth, soy sauce, vinegar, brown sugar and bay leaves. Bring the mixture back to a boil, cover and cook in the oven (or if using a crock pot pour everything into the crock pot) for 3 hours (mix once or twice if you like). To serve, discard the bay leaf and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serves 4. This is great with mashed or baked potatoes.

Short Ribs In Beer

- ❑ 6 lb. beef short ribs
- ❑ salt and pepper, to taste
- ❑ 3 tbsp. oil
- ❑ 2 onions, diced
- ❑ 3 carrots, diced
- ❑ 4 celery stalks, diced
- ❑ 2 tbsp. minced garlic
- ❑ 2 cups dark beer
- ❑ 2 tbsp. ketchup

Preheat oven to broil. Season the ribs with salt and pepper. Place the onions on the bottom of a roasting pan and place the ribs on top. Drizzle the oil over the top of the ribs. Broil the ribs for 3 minutes on each side. Place the ribs, minced garlic and onions into a crock pot or Dutch oven if you're cooking this in the oven (cover the Dutch oven with a lid or foil). Spoon the ketchup over the ribs, then layer the carrots and celery over the top of the ribs. Pour the beer over the top of the ribs. Cover and cook for 4 hours at 325 in the oven or 6 hours on high in the crock pot.

To serve, remove the ribs to a serving plate. Using a food processor or immersion blender process the sauce until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 6 to 8.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 15, 2015

Uzi Landau: Seeking to boost travel to Israel

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Uzi Landau has served in the Israeli cabinet in a number of roles over the years, including as minister of internal security, and minister of energy and water. As a member of the Yisrael Beitenu party, he currently serves as the country's minister of tourism. Landau, who was a member of the Likud party for many years, was in Toronto last month where he met with local Jewish community leaders at a breakfast organized by the Israel Government Tourist Office jointly with the Consulate General of Israel. He spoke with *The CJN*.

Uzi Landau

What is the purpose of your trip to Toronto?
The purpose of the trip is to boost up tourism, to put it back on the normal trend of a constant increase. That used to be the trend over the past few years, and it was disrupted during the times of the terror activities and the shelling and launching of rockets from Gaza by the Hamas terror organization.

This has always affected us. What comes out as a perception for those who see the *BBC* or *CNN* is that Israel is a war zone – that people are shooting on street corners. We want to reconnect to our base communities, people who will understand that Israel is safe. That the perception is wrong.

Second, we think it would be good to show solidarity against the BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) campaign abroad. Anti-Semitism is on the increase.

This meeting today is to call on this informed Jewish community to go on solidarity missions, to go on vacations combined with a sense of purpose, to come to Israel to bring the Jewish community to stand up with the Jewish state.

Travel to Israel dropped after Operation Protective Edge. How badly has tourism been affected?
On the average, there has been a decrease, since July, of between 20 and 30 per cent, give or take in different countries. Interestingly, from the United States, it continues to go up. I was quite surprised by that.

Again, we do see a reaction by people that's normal, which makes sense. Why should we go to a place that is perceived to be unsafe? What I want to say is that once people come, leaders of the community, writers in newspapers, TV stars and others who have many followers on Twitter and Facebook, if they come, they can go safely from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. They can float in the Dead Sea. They can walk 24 hours a day in Tel Aviv, go to restaurants, culinary centres, boutique wineries, go to art shops and jewelry shops in Jaffa. People feel safe.

In Israel, parents send even their first graders, unescorted, to school. That's what's happening in our country.

If the numbers from the United States are not down, where have you noticed a drop off?
Much of the loss was in western Europe.

Did the synagogue attack in Jerusalem contribute to the drop in tourism?
Not this time. But if such things continue, obviously it will have some effect. Until now, over the past couple of months after Operation Protective Edge, despite all the extremists who have tried to add terror activities in Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem, even with all the problems we had, Jerusalem is a safe place. The only problem we had was with perception, because when you get this event and people zoom in on the area of killings, you get the feeling that everything is like that.

Naomi Shemer, a great poet, said "Thank God the BBC weren't operating with their cameras in the battle between David and Goliath. If they were, the camera would zoom on the forehead of Goliath, with the stone sunk deep in his forehead, and until today, everybody would be sure that David was the villain and that poor Goliath was killed."

There were some rockets that landed near Ben-Gurion International Airport during Operation Protective Edge. Did that affect tourism to Israel?
It did. The [rockets] didn't hit the area of Ben-Gurion International Airport. The airport continued to be protected, and it's the safest in the world. What made the problem was the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) directive to all American airlines to ban their flights to Israel. It was difficult for me to understand the source for that. The fact of the matter is that the FAA itself backtracked on its decision within 36 hours and all the major airlines that discontinued their flights came back to fly.

May I add that British Airways, Iberia, Aeroflot, Ukrainian International Airline continued to fly. Of course El Al continued to fly. It is our assumption that this decision caused many people to cancel their reservations.

Was tourism a growing industry before Operation Protective Edge?
Absolutely. Until July, for the third consecutive year, tourism was on a constant increase. Until July, it was eight per cent higher compared to [the same period in] 2013. That was again a record figure compared to 2012. Now we're trying to get back on track.

How has that drop in the number of visitors affected the Israeli economy overall?
In our assessment, it cost us about two billion Israeli shekels, which is roughly $600 million American dollars. And what we're now trying to do is invigorate tourism towards the end of winter and spring.

Can you point to a drop in employment or less tax revenue for the Israeli government as a result of this drop in tourism?
It's difficult for me to say that. This time, unlike on previous occasions, the war in Lebanon, things that took place in the past, the government arrived at a resolution that supports this industry with a figure of half a billion Israeli shekels. This is extraordinary. In previous times, it was about one-third of that. Our industry has to continue and function until it again will start to pick up. We hope it will be soon.

Is the situation today worse for the tourism industry than it was after the war in Lebanon or other Gaza wars?
No. There were models, characteristics that took place after the war in Lebanon (2006) and Operation Pillar of Defence (2012). We believe it will be similar to Pillar of Defence. It took six to eight months before the industry came back and functioned normally.

Has the BDS campaign had much of an impact?
I don't think economically it has had much of an impact. The problem with the BDS is that it makes legitimate the very debate whether the Jewish People has a right to their home. Do you know of any other nation in the world that is having this kind of a debate? Have you heard whether or not Canada has a right to exist? Does the United States have a right to exist? Is France a legitimate country? Why do you raise this issue about us?

Obviously, for us, this is done to undermine the right of the Jewish People to have a state of its own, like any other normal country in the world. This is what underlies all the BDS, these are old anti-Semitic sentiments that are surfacing under the pretext of what Israel does.

Who will you be meeting other than the Jewish community?
With Christian communities too. We had a meeting yesterday with Pastor Rondo Thomas [of the Toronto Christian Centre]. We're going to meet tonight with Christian leaders, including Thomas Cardinal Collins of Toronto. By the way, the safest place for an Arab in the Middle East today is in Israel. When it comes to Christians, they are the minority that suffers the most in the Middle East. There are dwindling numbers in Egypt, Lebanon – you name it. In Israel, the number of Christians is on the increase. And you know why? Because Israel is a democracy and we are proud to preserve all the rights of our minorities.

Has the number of people coming from Canada remained stable? Is that why you're visiting the Christian communities, because they've stopped coming?
I'm coming to [see] everybody. I also speak to people, and they tell me there has been a problem with the packages and reservations made for the future. Which means people are taking their time, they are looking around and seeing if it's safe to go. We do bring people to Israel to see that it is safe.

Do you have a marketing budget for Canada?
We're going to focus our marketing on our base groups first. We are going to speak to those who have in the past been very friendly to Israel and from there, we are going to continue and see how we reach out to new communities.

Now, and for the last few years, there has been a trend of FITs, free independent travellers, who already have different foci than they used to have. But we are focusing on our base communities for now. [Later] we will extend our efforts to new communities.

People say that the costs of accommodations in Israel are too high, especially now when hotels are not full. What can the government of Israel do about that?
The government of Israel is not going to intervene in the market. We are an open economy. But I guess when tourism comes down, then this will bring down prices. When tourism starts again the prices will come up. But rooms today are empty and people can find today a room in a hotel that is suitable to their needs. ■

Some academic boycotts are not such a bad thing

Backstory

MICHAEL BROWN

In 1936, the University of Heidelberg, one of the most illustrious universities in Europe and perhaps the world, was celebrating its 550th anniversary. The occasion was to be commemorated with pageantry and academic gatherings.

Jewish students had fared well in German universities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Unlike Russia, the United States, and Canada, quotas on Jewish students were not much in evidence in Germany. Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first president, studied there; Nehama and Yeshayahu Leibovitz earned their doctorates there. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik received his doctorate in Berlin just six weeks before Hitler became chancellor. Judah Magnes, the American-born Reform rabbi who served as the first chancellor of the Hebrew University, held a doctorate from Heidelberg.

But by 1936, the Nazis had been in power for three years. Just three months into their rule, they had shown their contempt for learning by burning tens of thousands of books by Jews and other "undesirables." Faculty members who were Jews or known leftists had been dismissed, and Jewish students, even those born in Germany, were no longer admitted. The number of women students was considerably reduced. In Heidelberg, the university rector, Wilhelm Groh, always came to campus in his SA uniform.

University education all over Germany had been radically altered and politicized. "Unreliable" professors had been replaced in many cases by men who were underqualified but ideologically acceptable to the ruling party. Non-academic activities, such as para-military training and lectures on Nazi ideology and the "science" of racism, as well as "voluntary" agricultural labour, were now compulsory university activities. Freedom of speech was no longer possible.

Many invitees to the Heidelberg anniversary were wary of toasting any institution in Nazi Germany. As it turned out, the Heidelberg festivities included parades of faculty and students in their various Nazi uniforms. One of the main speakers was Dr. Josef Goebbels, the minister of propaganda.

Anticipating all this, most British universities boycotted the events in Heidelberg and forthrightly told their German colleagues why. By contrast, some of the most prestigious U.S. universities accepted the invitation – Yale, for example, and Harvard, where the student newspaper, *The Crimson*, lobbied for an official delegation. At Columbia, the student paper, *The Spectator*, with many Jews on staff, lobbied against any official participation, and there were violent protests in support of that position. Princeton was not invited, probably because it had given sanctuary to Albert Einstein.

Canadians were torn between the British and U.S. positions. At the University of Toronto, the president, Rev. H.J. Cody, was inclined to participate in the belief that a refusal because of the Nazis' "oppression of minorities and their oppressive educational policy" would not be justified, that "Heidelberg's great work in the past is [reason] enough to honour her." In the end, however, he wrote to the Germans, that it "is not possible for this university to send a delegate."

Dalhousie's president, Carleton Stanley, was more forthright. He "acknowledged the great and glorious history of Heidelberg," and noted that in general, "Canadian universities are most desirous of promoting friendly relations with the academic life of other countries – relations in which the last war made so sad a break." It is, however, "impossible for us to participate in any university celebrations in Germany under the present regime." In other words, an academic boycott for political reasons.

McGill's principal, Arthur Eustace Morgan, minced no words. He had forbidden student exchanges with Nazi Germany and refused to take part in German-sponsored events in Canada. Not only did he turn down the invitation to the festivities, he even refused to attend a conference scheduled in Heidelberg before the anniversary chaired by an old friend from Britain. "I regret," he wrote to a friend and colleague, "that I feel unable to accept any invitation at the moment to attend a meeting to be held in a German university."

Most *CJN* readers, I'm sure, would agree with that academic boycott. Academic boycotts are not "in principle" illegitimate, then. What needs to be discussed in the case of any boycott is the particular issue at hand. ■

Michael Brown is professor emeritus and senior scholar of history, humanities and Hebrew at York University.

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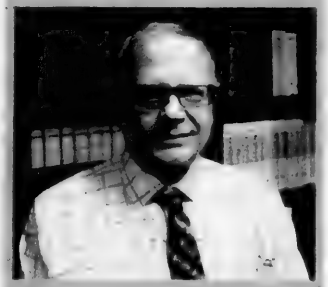


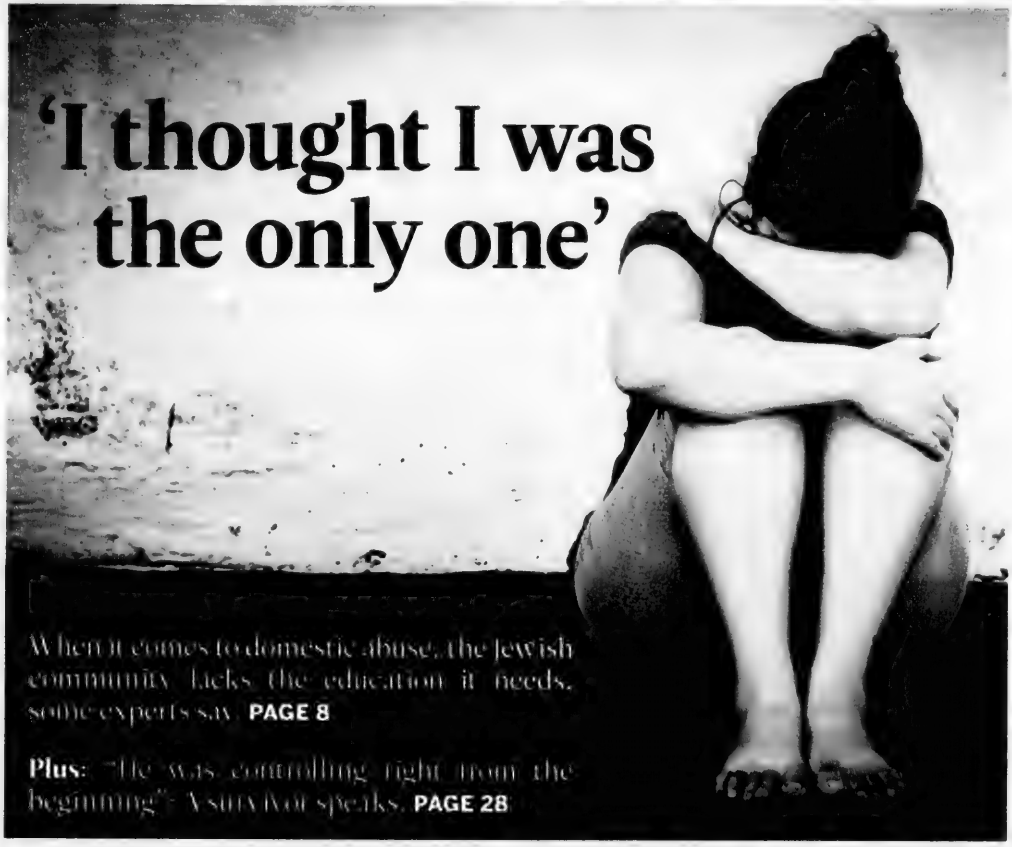
Beth David blazes trail
Becomes first Toronto Conservative shul to host gay commitment ceremony, officiated by its rabbi. **PAGE 12**

In praise of *Charlie Hebdo*
Israeli cartoonist Kichka says magazine's satirists died defending freedom. **PAGE 16**
See also comment on PAGE 6

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	4:52 p.m.	5:59 p.m.
Montreal	4:29 p.m.	5:37 p.m.
Toronto	4:58 p.m.	6:04 p.m.
Winnipeg	4:50 p.m.	6:03 p.m.
Calgary	4:53 p.m.	6:08 p.m.
Vancouver	4:36 p.m.	5:48 p.m.

'I thought I was the only one'



When it comes to domestic abuse, the Jewish community lacks the education it needs, some experts say. **PAGE 8**

Plus: "He was controlling right from the beginning": A survivor speaks. **PAGE 28**

A hotdog vendor's troubling tweets

Halifax's 'Dawgfather' refers to Jews and ovens to make a point about free speech. **PAGE 24**

Going back to Auschwitz

High schooler talks to her survivor grandmother about upcoming visit. **PAGE 22**

Toronto puckster up for top NCAA award

Senior Zach Hyman is having a breakout year at U of Michigan. **PAGE 42**

Communing with God has health benefits, and Woody branches out

Going to shul is good for you

Regular shul attendance may make you healthier, regardless of denomination, says a new study of five large U.S. Jewish communities by Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion. The study found that "adults who affiliate with a Jewish religious denomination and attend synagogue report significantly better health than secular or non-practising Jews," Jeff Levin, director of the institute's program on religion and population health, said last week. The study, based on data from community surveys in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and New York in the 2000s, was published in January's *Journal of Religion and Health*. Will a future study look at shul politics and migraines?

Filmmaker to make his first TV series

At the ripe old age of 79, Woody Allen is set to write and direct his first TV series, an Internet-only show for Amazon. Amazon, the online purveyor of virtually everything, is relatively new to original programming, but its *Transparent* won best comedy TV series at the Golden Globes this month. It has ordered a full season of Allen's as-of-yet unnamed project without even seeing a pilot. Amazon Studios vice-president Roy Price said the Internet behemoth "couldn't be more excited to premiere [Allen's] first TV series," to which the venerable Brooklyn-born filmmaker replied: "I don't know how I got into this. I have no ideas, and I'm not sure where to begin. My guess is that Roy Price will regret this."

Will Amazon regret this?

Jewish boy's parents file lawsuit

The family of a Jewish boy killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre is one of two families suing Newtown, Conn., and its school board for alleged lax security. The parents of Noah Pozner, 6, as well the parents of another boy, filed the lawsuit last month. It reportedly is seeking more than $15,000 in damages, as is standard. According to the suit, the school board and the town were negligent in not having a more secure entranceway and parking lot. Twenty children and six school employees were killed in the massacre. ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Gematria

$1 million

The value of the 2015 Genesis Prize for commitment to Judaism and Israel, to be awarded to Michael Douglas in Jerusalem June 18 by the Genesis Prize Foundation, the State of Israel and the Jewish Agency.

25%

The percentage of British Jews who have considered leaving because of rising anti-Semitism, according to a new poll.

Quotable

If political cartoonists are the foot soldiers of democracy, the ones at Charlie Hebdo were the advance guard in vigorously defending, with their last breath, one of the cardinal values of democracy: freedom of expression.

— Israeli cartoonist Michel Kichka. See p. 16.

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Letters to the Editor

Interdating opposed

I applaud Rabbi Jarrod Grover's stand on rejecting United Synagogue Youth's interdating policy change ("Opinions vary on USY interdating policy change," Jan. 8).

Why do we need to become even more compromising when intermarriage is spiralling out of control? Do we really want to send the message that interdating is acceptable?

With Jewish continuity already threatened, I fear the outcome of the next Pew study and am puzzled by the apathy of the Jewish community and its leaders.

Debbie Bauer
Toronto

The exodus is unique

In an interview about the movie *Exodus: Gods and Kings* (Dec. 25), Rabbi David Baron cited the metamorphosis of national character as a universal theme. "It's a question that all nations who've gone through and experienced exile and return go through. So, we can look at the experiences of many great nations in this regard," he said.

I wonder if Rabbi Baron could name one great nation, other than Israel, that has experienced exile and return? The French? The Chinese? The Russians? I'm afraid there are none. Interestingly, in the Torah itself, the audacious claim is made that nothing like the Exodus had ever happened to any other people, nor would it ever occur. Indeed, that claim has held true.

Perhaps Rabbi Baron should consult with the Torah, or a history book, before consulting for his Hollywood friends.

Stephen Starr
Victoria, B.C.

Defining who is a Jew

As a rabbi who assists many wonderful individuals seeking to convert, I believe letter writer Michael Diamond's point of view ("The politics of conversion," Jan. 15) is lacking. To classify the "few ideologues" as playing God actually misses the point and, I believe, takes us even further from any form of mutual respect.

Perhaps one could disagree with the traditions and beliefs of Orthodoxy, but if we do not have a uniform acceptance of who is a Jew and what constitutes a convert, then not only do we create chaos, we end up with no definition at all. The Orthodox rabbis follow the beliefs and traditions that have been with us for the past 3,000 years. Do they not have a right to follow those beliefs when asked to convert or recognize someone as a Jew?

I would certainly expect that liberal rabbis would have their own definition of who is a Jew. I can disagree with it, but it certainly must exist.

If there are legal definitions of an adult, a national definition of a Canadian citizen, religious definition of a Christian, why would someone fault us in expecting a definition of who is a Jew and expecting that it would be followed, at least by those who subscribe to it?

To allow every person to self-define themselves as being Jewish or not is actually, in my opinion, bad for the long-term health of the Jewish People. No one would really know who among us is actually a Jewish person, since there is no definition, or at most a totally fluid definition.

Canada is unquestionably a pluralistic society. However, religion at its best can not truly be pluralistic. We have to be tolerant of the beliefs of others with an expectation that others are equally respectful and tolerant of ours. To have a "belief of many truths," the definition of pluralism, simply does not work with religion. Tolerance, however, something that is sadly lacking among our own people, is something we all should strive for.

To dismiss rabbinic leaders as "playing God" is a lack of tolerance. Such a lack of tolerance, a lack of mutual respect, is unquestionably a serious problem.

The rabbis I know who take the time, care and interest to assist people in finding their way to Judaism as converts have a right to define who, what and how they do so based on the beliefs they have held for millennia.

To attack the ability of those rabbis to operate based on the beliefs they adhere to and to belittle them by inferring that they see themselves as God truly shows a lack of understanding and a lack of tolerance.

If we want to have a unified Jewish People, it is not by getting rid of definitions or making light of age-old beliefs. Rather, it is by showing respect and care for other Jews, regardless of their Jewish practice or lack thereof.

Rabbi Avram Rothman
Thornhill, Ont.

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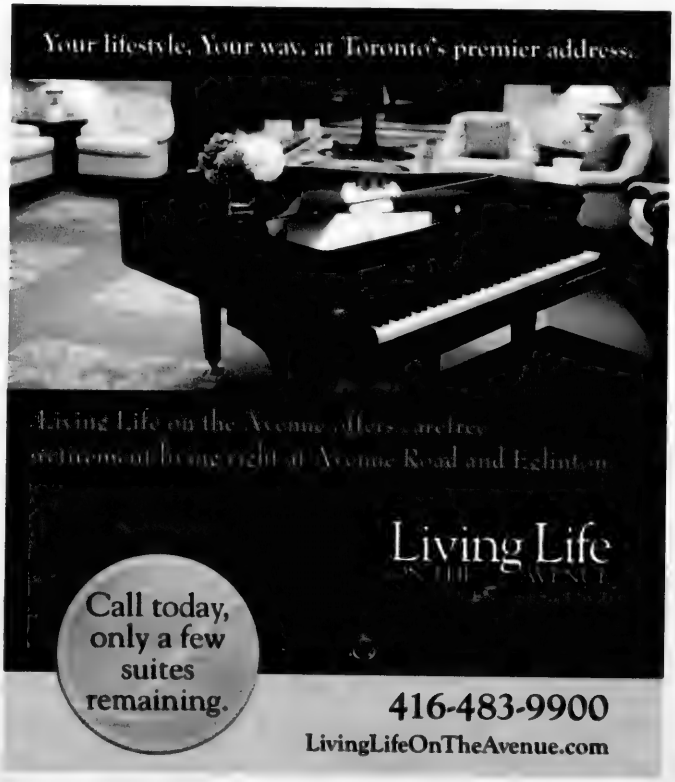

RABBI·2·RABBI

Superstition ain't the way

But where's the balance between our brains, which crave an ordered view of Judaism, and our souls, which seek a sense of meaning that rationalism can't always provide?

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Finegold: I have always had a hard time with some of the more superstitious aspects of Judaism. Stories of demons in the Talmud and other practices that seem antiquated – not to mention on shaky halachic footing – are difficult for me to incorporate into my daily practice.

For example, the custom of washing one's fingers upon waking to cleanse them of evil spirits is a custom I struggle with. Another example is the prohibition against placing meat and fish on the same plate for fear of causing oneself bodily harm. How do you reconcile these ideas with your understanding of Judaism in the 21st century?

Rabbi Scheim: Your question reminded me of a volume in my library that I took off the shelf this morning for the first time in decades. The book, *Kedushat Levi*, is the Torah commentary of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev.

The title page suggests the book be placed in every Jewish home, because its very presence will protect all members of the household from evil. I am proud to own the commentary of such an inspirational rabbinic giant, but have never taken its insurance policy proviso very seriously.

Similarly, I view mezuzot as reminders of our mitzvah responsibilities and of our mandate to transmit Jewish learning and practice to future generations. I resist the popular tendency to view the mezuzah as an amulet, providing household protection, and its theologically problematic obverse – that an unkosher mezuzah may lead to tragedy.

I fear that superstition can lead to a very unbecoming depiction of the Almighty as One who would invoke terrible punishment for relatively minor ritual infractions.

Rabbi Finegold: I wonder if we can eliminate all superstition from our religious practice, and whether that may not be what we want entirely. While I struggle with certain practices and customs that balance between Halachah and minhag – do you think anyone will deny me an aliyah because I do not wash the spiritual impurities from my nails in the morning? – I do validate that this structured approach of living does indeed offer many people value.

In fact, I often look at hyper-rationalist Jews and note their lack of awe and wonder toward the Divine. I see it often enough to come to the conclusion that some form of mysticism is needed in Judaism. The question then becomes how do we balance between our brains, which crave an ordered view of Judaism, and our souls, which want to be inspired and imbued with a sense of meaning that the Maimonidean rationalism does not always provide.

Don't get me wrong, I, too, share your mezuzah values, but I'm not sure how to present a Judaism that no longer speaks of angels and demons, but that also provides the framework to look out the window in the morning and see the sunrise as just one of the many miracles that God gives us daily.

Rabbi Scheim: Agreed. A balance is needed between pure rationalism and a religious sensitivity to the fears and emotional challenges that are so much a part of the human experience.

My teacher, the late Rabbi Max Kadushin, spoke of the "indeterminacy of belief," whereby we have multiple explanations for events and practices, meeting the diverse needs of the community. Thus, for some, a glass is broken under the chupah to remind us of the destruction of Jerusalem, while for others, it was intended to confuse the demons who would lurk at happy (and sad) occasions.

Similarly, for some, a pregnant woman should not enter a cemetery where the demons present could harm the fetus, while for others, there is no restriction other than respecting elderly family members holding to the superstition, or concern for the emotional and physical health of the mother-to-be.

Even though I tend toward the rational approach and away from superstition, I hold on to a small measure of fear and uncertainty, believing that it's always religiously sound not to be too sure of oneself. ■

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From the Archives | Family storefront

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS CC NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Members of the Gerston family, including children, from left, Harold, Harry and Helen, stand in front of their dry goods general store at 1038 Queen St. W. in Toronto in 1915.

SeeJN | Beauty pageant photobomb

INSTAGRAM DORON MATALON PHOTO

Miss Lebanon Saly Greige, currently participating in the Miss Universe contest in Miami, accused Miss Israel on the weekend of photobombing a selfie of them together and posting it on social media. Greige said Miss Israel Doron Matalon jumped into a photo she was taking with Miss Slovenia and Miss Japan, took a selfie and posted it. The photo caused an uproar in Lebanon, since Israel and Lebanon are enemy states. Any contact with Israel is illegal in Lebanon.

From Yoni's Desk

Free speech can be discomforting

Last Thursday, on Jan. 15, Jerry Reddick, a Haligonian hotdog vendor known as the "Dawgfather," caused a stir when he issued a string of anti-Semitic tweets.

"Hitler asked his people, 'How do you like your Jews'? Well done with a bagel and a kosher pickle. Freedom of speech goes both ways," one read. Another said, "What do you call a Jew sitting in one of Hitler's ovens? Toast, because they're cooked. Freedom of speech goes both ways!" There were more, including callous references to the victims of the 9/11 attack in New York City, and by the end of the day police in Halifax were investigating the Dawgfather for hate speech (see page 24).

In Paris a day earlier, police detained Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, the French comedian infamous for propagating the quenelle, a hand gesture that evokes the Nazi salute and has been adopted by anti-Semites around the world. Dieudonné was charged with inciting hatred after writing on Facebook, "Je me sens Charlie Coulibaly" ("I'm feeling like Charlie Coulibaly"), a riff on the "Je suis Charlie" expression popularized in the wake of the deadly attack on French magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, but with a sinister message: Ahmedy Coulibaly was one of two terrorists who killed four at a kosher supermarket in Paris on Jan. 9.

Both the Dawgfather and Dieudonné have since removed their provocative posts from the web and offered apologies of a sort. It remains to be seen whether that will be enough to assuage law enforcement agencies in Canada and France, since in both cases there is reason to believe that hate-speech laws have been contravened.

But many are nonetheless wondering whether these men are being treated unfairly. Why is *Charlie Hebdo*, which routinely and graphically mocks Islam, held up as a beacon of free speech, while the likes of Dieudonné and the Dawgfather are derided, perhaps even punished, for mocking their own chosen targets?

In the weeks since the *Charlie Hebdo* attack, many of us have been pondering the meaning of freedom of expression. "Je suis Charlie" has come to define much more than solidarity with those gunned down inside the magazine's office. For some, it has turned into a rallying cry for the notion that all of us must be allowed to say what we want, no matter who or what might be offended. Others, including Pope Francis and any number of media outlets who opted not to reprint *Charlie Hebdo's* cartoons after the attack, have argued just the opposite – that the lesson here is we must be careful what we say, even if we have the right to say it.

Free speech represents the true essence of democracy, but it is undeniably discomforting at the same time. It's easy enough to extol the virtues of unfettered expression when we aren't the ones being offended. But when the very ethos that underpinned the work of *Charlie Hebdo* is invoked in a way that makes us uncomfortable or angry or even scared we may be tempted to respond differently. In those moments, we face an existential predicament: do we affirm free speech or shut it down? If there's a middle ground, it's hard to see it. ■ — YONI

Feature

Coming of age in apartheid South Africa

Ismé Bennie

Apartheid was flourishing in my growing-up years. Jews were widely thought of as being opponents of this system of racial injustice, their liberal values being deeply rooted in a history of persecution in Eastern Europe. But there was also unspoken support for the government, not wanting the status quo to be disrupted or the economic and social superiority over the black populace to be undermined. And some felt that the government's focus on the blacks kept its attention away from the Jews, who might otherwise be targets.

Many South Africans, Jews, and non-Jews, who could not accept living in a racially split society, with its black underclass, left the country. Some were forced to leave, to escape arrest because of their political sympathies or activities against the system; some had no choice about remaining, being imprisoned or under house arrest as victims of the government's relentless persecution. Many of the names of whites in the forefront of the struggle for freedom were Jewish.

Many of my South African countrymen came to Canada. Not all were politically motivated to leave; economic concerns played a large role, too. One woman, a recent immigrant in those days, said she was pleased to be without servants: "They eat you out of house and home. They put butter on both sides of the bread." These sentiments may not have been specifically Jewish, but I was shocked to hear them spoken unabashedly by a Jewish mouth.

My father's brothers and sisters were Lithuanian immigrants. When they spoke amongst themselves, they spoke Yiddish. I know some Yiddish words like chutzpah, but most others that I knew have faded from memory. But a word I do know, I heard often amongst Jews and still do – *schwartze*, meaning "black person," usually said in a derogatory way.

I cringe when I hear it come out of a Jewish mouth. And now when on a trip back to South Africa, I visit an old friend or family member, someone with whom I grew up and with whom I have an almost identical background, and I hear the black maid being shouted at, my level of discomfort is great, and I find it difficult to accept that, in spite of shared childhood experiences, we still have such divergent attitudes towards right and wrong.

•••

My mother thought of herself as a liberal, a relative term in apartheid South Africa. It did not mean she was at the forefront of the fight against the apartheid regime, standing in silent vigil along the roadside as a member of the Black Sash, an organization of white women demonstrating against the increasing enforcement of oppressive racial segregation. My mother treated our servants better than most, fed and housed them comfortably – all again, relative.

We had several servants – Nanny, the cook/housemaid, Simon, the houseboy, Emily the wash-girl, and Daniel, the driver. Nanny had started off as just that – nanny to my sister Pauline, but as they shared a name, to avoid confusion, she was called Nanny. Nanny was promoted to housemaid when my sister and I were too old to need one. Sarah and James, our original house servants, were then retired to Top Location, one of the nearby non-white townships.

Every day Nanny brought early morning coffee up to our rooms, a South African tradition. Cooking was part of her job description. She wasn't a great cook, but then we ate pretty routine meals, and it was my mother, like many South African housewives, who did the fancy stuff like baking – chocolate cake, cheesecake, biscuits, and the traditional Jewish dishes at High Holiday times. Simon did the rough work, sweeping, polishing, and cleaning the windows. Emily came to wash on Mondays, and to iron on Tuesdays, with her baby strapped to her back in a blanket.

Nanny had two daughters, Tsotsie (little rascal) and Girlie, who lived with her. It was illegal in those days for them to be there, but my parents left it alone. Tsotsie's wedding was held on a summer's day in our backyard. My mother said it would be OK for the black guests to come inside to use our downstairs washroom.

•••

After I left South Africa, I seldom went back. But one of the occasions I did go home was for my nephew Dan's bar mitzvah. It was still during those apartheid years. Just like the celebrations of my youth, the religious ceremony and luncheon reception was followed by an evening party for Dan's friends.

Shirley, the black maid, who had worked for my sister since my nephew was born and who had looked after him through 13 years, summoned her son Stephen to the event. All dressed up, he looked like a city boy, even though in those days he was not allowed by law to live there with his mother. The two of them sat in the synagogue, two sole black figures in the white congregation, proudly listening to my nephew read his portion of the service.

In the early evening, Dan's friends started arriving. This was their time to celebrate. The grown-ups continued

The author in the arms of the servant Sarah.

to drink outside in a desultory fashion, the communion of the evening scotch. At one time I went indoors for some more ice. I looked into the room where the youngsters were dancing, nice middle-class kids having a good time. Also watching them was the black boy Stephen, still all smartly dressed in the clothes specially bought for today, a boy the same age as the rest, but not so much as even noticed by them as he stood in the shadows, a boy as bright as the rest, but it would never even have occurred to them to include him.

Did he feel left out? Would he even dare to think in those days that he could be one of them? I stood helplessly in the doorway watching him watch the others. ■

Ismé Bennie grew up in South Africa and immigrated to Canada where she won numerous honours and awards for her contributions to Canadian television. She now writes full time. This is excerpted from her book White Schooldays: Coming of age in Apartheid South Africa (Createspace).

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Domestic abuse is a Jewish issue, too

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Lynda can recall the very moment she gave into her then-husband's psychological and emotional abuse, giving him total control over her life.

"It was a situation when we were moving into our apartment and my parents were helping me in the apartment. He came home from work – this was before we were married – and he said, 'You have to choose, it is either me or them.'"

She chose him.

Lynda, who was married to her ex-husband for 13 years, said the abuse and the control he had over her started small and gradually escalated.

"I started becoming what he thought I should be rather than staying true to myself and along the way I lost my voice," Lynda said.

"I had three kids by the time I was 30. By that time, he controlled everything. He controlled the money, he controlled every single thing. He even kept track of my menstrual cycle so he knew when we could have sex."

Lynda's account is one of many Jewish women's stories of abuse suffered at the hands of their husbands.

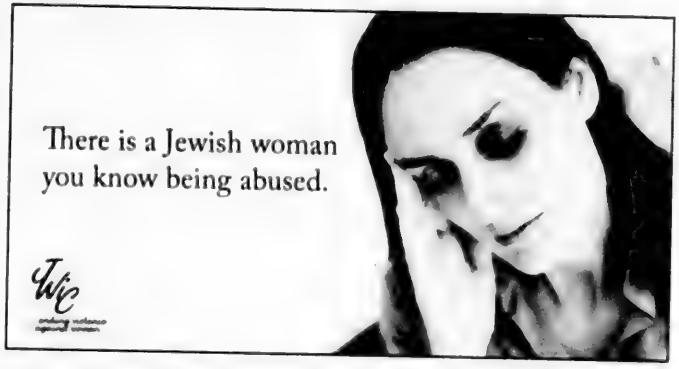
Sadly, Jewish families are just as susceptible to domestic abuse as those in any other community.

"For most people in our community, they don't believe it happens to us. They believe the Jewish community is immune to such things, because of our tremendous value on family and shalom bayit," said Penny Krowitz, the executive director of a non-profit organization that partners with Jewish Family and Child Services called Act To End Violence Against Women (ATEVAW).

According to the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, one in four women experience domestic abuse during their lifetime and abuse occurs in the Jewish community at the same rate as in the community at large – about 15 to 25 per cent of families.

"Understanding what abuse looks like is so important," Krowitz said.

"There is a lack of understanding of it in the Jewish community, and I assure you that for all the women we know about, there are that many more who are living in abusive relationships. I've had women say to me, after I've spoken at a sisterhood event, and they've said, 'Oh my God, I never knew it was called abuse," she said, adding that women often think that if their husbands aren't hitting them, they're not being abused.



The billboard erected by Act to End Violence Against Women in 2006.

Domestic abuse can be defined as an imbalance of power, when one uses threats or physical force to create fear, control or intimidate another.

In 2006, ATEVAW launched a campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse in the Jewish community by erecting billboards along Bathurst Street in Toronto.

The billboards portrayed a woman with a black eye and read, "There is a Jewish woman you know being abused."

"Our goal was to portray all Jewish women, but not to have a woman who was all beaten up, because the majority of abuse is verbal, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, sexual – it's not visible abuse," she said.

"The night before it went up I didn't sleep all night. I thought, 'The community is going to kill me,' to be honest with you," Krowitz said.

"We did get the comment, 'How dare you air our dirty laundry in public…' That was sad. But the best phone call I got was from a woman who said, 'I thought I was the only one.'"

Krowitz said raising awareness about the issue, and dispelling myths about what abuse is and is not, is central to the work she and her colleagues do across the country.

Diane Sasson, executive director of Montreal's kosher women's shelter, Auberge Shalom Pour Femmes, said the percentage of clients who are Jewish at the shelter is about 20 per cent, and about 35 per cent for its external services for women who aren't living in the facility.

Sasson said that now more than ever, people understand there are many types of abuse.

"Even in the more Orthodox world [which tends to be more traditional and insular], there is more of an understanding that there are many forms of abuse… I think there has been progress… but we still have tons of work to do, because while there is a better general understanding… The problem is not gone," said Sasson, who has been running Auberge Shalom for the past 20 years.

"There is more awareness, but the problem itself is still festering. I think it's about men having permission to be the stronger one in the relationship, and I believe that the patriarchal line [of authority] is still there. So yes, there is more awareness, but I don't think the change has been made."

Despite leaving her abusive husband 13 years ago, Lynda only learned about ATEVAW last year, and has been volunteering with the organization ever since, in the hope she can help other women who need support.

When she left her husband, "I didn't reach out because I didn't know that anything was available. I came from a family where you didn't talk about that stuff. I mean, I watched abuse all my life between my parents – verbal, emotional and sometimes physical with my parents. That was my life. I didn't know any different," Lynda said.

"I remember talking to my mother-in-law [about domestic abuse] and she would say, 'Oh it doesn't happen – there's no abuse in the Jewish community.' And I'm sitting there thinking, 'Yes there is.' I hadn't yet identified it in my relationship with him, but I knew that I had grown up with it."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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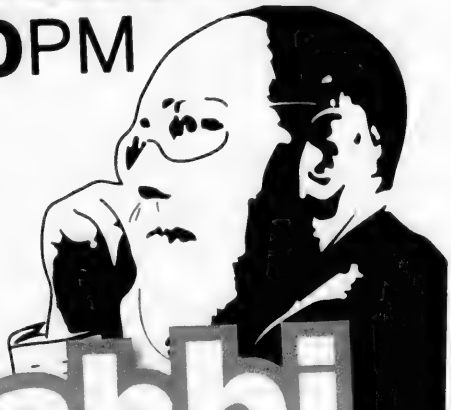

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Advocating can be rewarding and challenging

David Cape

This month I am excited to begin my tenure as chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the advocacy agent of Canada's Jewish federations. Having been involved in advancing the interests of the Jewish community in Quebec for many years, and having served on CIJA's board and worked closely with my colleagues across the country, I can only summarize the current landscape of Jewish Canadian advocacy as one of extraordinary opportunities and challenges.

Our community enjoys unprecedented freedom and equality in Canada, matched by remarkably strong Canada-Israel ties backed by cross-party support on Parliament Hill. At the same time, our Jewish friends and family in Europe and Israel face shifting, multifaceted, and often urgent security threats – as seen in the recent horrific anti-Semitic attack in Paris. As Canadian Jewish advocates, we must do all we can to support our fellow Jews overseas, while continuing to make a strong contribution here at home by advancing policies and causes that benefit all Canadians.

CIJA's work consists of both advocacy and community building. Our focus is primarily on those segments of Canadian society – including the political sphere, media, and civil society – that shape public policy and frame how issues are debated. Effective advocacy requires seeing these key actors as partners for our community in advancing a shared vision of Canada at home and Canada's contribution internationally.

Effective advocacy also depends on having a strategic plan based on sound research, independent data, and methods that have stood the test of experience. This is the basis of the successful "shared values" approach that has characterized CIJA's work and has in turn been adopted by other Jewish advocacy organizations around the world.

I am pleased that we will be conducting new public opinion research in the coming year. The goal is to test our assumptions about what drives Canadian attitudes toward Israel and the Jewish community, and how we can most effectively build support for our cause, which is to improve the quality of Jewish life in Canada by advancing the public policy interests of our vibrant community.

I anticipate a very busy agenda this year. While security and the anti-terrorism file will continue to be a priority, our team is involved in a range of policies and causes that do not often make headlines but are of crucial importance to our community. For example, CIJA has been working diligently to resolve the issue of availability and cost of kosher poultry in Ontario. This issue alone directly affects the pocketbooks and quality of life of thousands of Jewish families across the province.

At the same time, CIJA is working on various human rights causes in keeping with our community's tradition of fighting bigotry. This includes legislation to ban genetic discrimination as well as legal provisions to protect transgendered Canadians.

Advocating on behalf of the Jewish community can be very rewarding, and very challenging. I joined many other Jewish Canadians who take great pride in Israel, and the sense of understanding that Canada has developed for the situation in the Middle East. At the same time, our community has a diversity of views and concern that all views are not heard. We also struggle to fight adversaries who are unconcerned about truth, freedom and justice, and these struggles are often faced most vividly by our youths at our universities. To continue to support them, and our entire community, we need your ongoing support. Every member of our community has the potential to make a difference.

As CIJA chair, I want to create more opportunities to leverage the talent, energy, and experience of every community member who wants to get involved. Please connect with me at info@cija.ca to share your thoughts on how we can best advance our community's interests. ■

David Cape is chair of The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

Giving with the hand, heart and mind

Daniel Held

Over the last few weeks, three tzedakah moments have made me think about three tzedakah habits.

The first moment took place in December, when our daughter, along with 250,000 PJ Library subscribers across North America, received a little blue tin tzedakah box. While at first she insisted on putting chocolate Chanukah gelt through the little slot, each Friday night since receiving the box, she's put a couple of coins into the box, delighting in the clink as they drop.

The weekly ritual has become an important part of developing a habit of hand. For our daughter, tzedakah is now a regular practice and part of her weekly routine. This regularity and structure of giving is a lesson I could learn for my own giving. I, too, should learn to give to charity as a regular practice, rather than waiting for a friend to run a marathon or a campaign to ask for a donation. Putting the coins in the tin box is also a tactile task. She feels the coins, reaches up onto the sideboard and stretches for the tin. The physical task is an important part of her habit of the hand.

In giving tzedakah, we must develop a habit of the hand, one that is both regular and physical.

The second moment took place five years ago, but was recently jogged in my memory by an anniversary. On Jan. 12, 2010, I was travelling in a rickety van down a gravel road in the Yucatan Peninsula with a group of rabbinical students. We were spending a week volunteering in an impoverished Mexican community, helping to build a workshop for local craftspeople. On the radio, we heard news of the earthquake in Haiti. Over the next few months, efforts to send relief supplies and aid to Haiti were mounted in communities across North America.

For me, the experience of being immersed in a developing community – meeting the people face to face, living in their homes and understanding their lives – developed a tzedakah habit of the heart. It grew an urgency of tzedakah that was driven by passion and emotion, love and empathy. My experience in Mexico extended through the relief efforts in Haiti, and while images of both continue to tug at my heart, in the intervening years, they have begun to dim.

In giving, we must develop a habit of the heart, a sense of purpose and reason, passion and compassion.

The third moment took place by email. An American colleague recently pointed out that in 2008, shortly after the Madoff investment scandal rocked Jewish charities and at the height of the financial crisis, a group of philanthropists convened a summit to plan for the coming lean years of philanthropy. Their planning was critical in guiding the North American Jewish community through turbulent years. My colleague asked, "Today, with the stock market recovering, unemployment dropping, and the economy recovering, who is calling a summit to plan for the coming fat years of giving"

On a macro level, this communal planning is a habit of the head for tzedakah. But such a habit is required by each of us, as we carefully select and plan out giving. The needs of our community and our world are so great that each of us must develop unique thinking to guide our own tzedakah.

These three tzedakah moments have helped me clarify three habits that I hope to develop in myself and my daughter.

For her, the little blue tin box is developing the first habit of hand – regular giving. When she's ready, we'll help her develop her own habits of the heart and mind – her own passions and processes for tzedakah that will hopefully guide her philanthropy for years to come. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

The Bible through fresh eyes

Jean M. Gerber

Recently I began a quest: to read all the books on our shelves. It's a way to recall first encounters with the many volumes we own, and to see if I recover the same feelings I had when I first read them. Are we what we read? Let's see.

I was inspired to do this by a book in which the author does the same thing. Not knowing where to begin, I started with the top shelf. Note: Our books are loosely arranged by genre, but more often by how they fit on the bookshelf!

In honour of World War I, I reread *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Timothy Findley's *The Wars*. They remind us of a war, heartbreakingly futile, that helped to lead Europe into World War II.

Amos Oz's biography, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, gives the reader a unique entrance to the pre-state city and heart of Jerusalem, as well as its birth pangs. He depicts the interior world of a lonely child, the secrets of a family, the ultimate pain and silence of his mother's death.

Don Quixote broke my heart.

Some books no longer resonate with me. They go to the book sale.

One example – *Solomon Gursky Was Here*. When I first read it, I was amused. It was a picaresque assault on Canadian Jews, collectively and individually. This time? I found it uselessly cruel. The foibles and tragedies of its characters did not entertain, they embarrassed, and I felt ashamed, for them and for myself.

On the other hand, John Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany* is a keeper. While I still found that its underlying motif of redemption is overtly Christological, it remains a magical read.

But the final read I want to talk about is, in fact, a recent acquisition.

Introduction to the Bible, by scholar of Bible and Talmud Christine Hayes, is one of the open Yale courses from that august institution (yalebooks.com/oye). Drawing on a wide range of modern biblical scholarship, Hayes opens up the texts to our modern minds, starting with the stories in Genesis, with clarity and deep respect for traditional as well as contemporary approaches.

Some of our greatest heroes have always seemed remote to me – Abraham, Moses – too grand to be human. Not so the story of Joseph, a great novel in its own right, the conflicted Jacob, the all-too-male King David. These become more, well, believable, not in their historicity, but in the way the texts give us insight into their characters, their historical and political situations, their great moments as well as their failings and faults.

The canny Jacob, even the invisible Isaac – all come to life when we give them a chance to breathe again, viewed through modernity's eyes. It truly makes them grow in stature rather than diminishing them.

A fresh read of Abraham and Ishmael: we look at the text through other eyes – Abraham's constant love for Ishmael as his firstborn shines through all of his "tests." Maybe Isaac knew this, to his sorrow.

David was a complex and canny man presented with all his failings. Did the chronicler of his reign want us to remember him as a paragon? Or, more likely, as a man seriously flawed, but strong enough to unite a quarrelsome bunch of tribes. Yet, finally, he is presented as the person who invested the kingship with power that, when turned to idolatry, brought ruin on the state.

Still we love him. Because (and this is not in Hayes' book) he gives us hope.

But beginnings, I talked about beginnings. While I work my way through our library this year, I keep coming back to our foundational text, whether Hayes or – a totally different challenge! – Aviva Zornberg's books on Genesis and Exodus, read for each parshat hashavuah (the parshah of the week). Our Bible demands we continue to look at it through a world of various eyes. Every time, a new beginning. ■

Much work needed for French Jews to feel safe

Paul Michaels

In the aftermath of Amedy Coulibaly's Jan. 9 attack on a kosher supermarket in Paris, the *National Post*'s editorial "City of darkness" captured the unique threat that France's Jews have faced for some time: "The forces of Islamism sometimes target Canada and sometimes the U.K., sometimes a downtown cafe and sometimes a media outlet. But sooner or later, they always come after the Jews."

Acting in affiliation with the Kouachi brothers, who, two days before, executed journalists and others at the satirical publication *Charlie Hebdo*, Coulibaly told BFM-TV that his seizure of hostages at that supermarket was no accident: he deliberately targeted a Jewish business and quickly selected four Jewish customers to murder.

In a national address Jan. 9, French President François Hollande denounced the siege of the kosher market as an "anti-Semitic attack."

Yet, despite Coulibaly's media statement and Hollande's characterization of Coulibaly's assault, it was surprising how many western news outlets ignored these facts and failed to note the centrality of anti-Semitism in Coulibaly's actions. It was not until the massive rally in Paris on Jan. 11, when many Muslims carried the sign "Je suis Juif," that mainstream media devoted attention to the French Jewish community who feel under siege.

Islamic extremists have targeted French Jews for quite some time, including rioting against Jews and attacking synagogues during last summer's Gaza war, and murdering three Jewish schoolchildren and a rabbi in Toulouse in 2012.

On Jan. 5, days before the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* and the kosher supermarket, Natan Sharansky, head of the Jewish Agency, told the *Jerusalem Post* that, in 2014, approximately 50,000 French Jews asked the agency for information about immigrating to Israel.

Last year, about 7,000 Jews left France for Israel, a number representing about 70 per cent of the total number who emigrated from France (and twice as many as the number who immigrated to Israel) in 2013. Others went elsewhere in Europe or to North America with many settling in Montreal.

As the *Post* reported, "According to a 2013 study of European Jewry by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency, up to a third of the Jews in several countries [especially Belgium, France and Hungary] are mulling emigration.

Given that there are approximately 600,000 Jews in France – by far the largest Jewish community in Europe – that amounts to a significant number considering emigration. The cultural and psychological impact on France would be enormous. No wonder the French government is stepping up efforts to assure its Jewish citizens about their security.

The rise of anti-Semitism stems not only from the growth of Islamic extremism, but also from the gains of far-right parties including Marine Le Pen's National Front (even as she decries the anti-Semitism of the party's former leader, her father), and from Hungary's Jobbik party, which makes no effort to hide its anti-Jewish sentiment.

Yet, where Islamic extremism in France is concerned, even if manifest in only a tiny percentage of France's six million Muslims, much must be done to rein it in so that French Jews can indeed be made to feel safe.

To take just one example of the challenge: the liberal Israeli journalist Ben-Dror Yemini wrote in *Ynet News* just after the first Paris attack of the need to counter not only young jihadists, but also certain Muslim religious leaders embraced by the French establishment who harbour a not-too-hidden agenda. Yemini pointed to Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Qatari-based Muslim Brotherhood spiritual figure famous for, among other things, anti-Semitic diatribes on *Al-Jazeera* Arabic.

According to Yemini, Dalil Boubakeur, the head of French Muslim establishment wanted Al-Qaradawi to be the honoured guest at a large Muslim convention. The French government, however, wouldn't allow Qaradawi into the country. "Now, Boubakeur is condemning the [Paris] attack," said Yemini. "Of course he's condemning it. But the condemnation is worthless as long as Boubakeur and others oppose any Muslim who dares to speak out against the funding from Qatar and the radicalization." ■

News

Beth David to host gay commitment ceremony

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

In what is being termed a landmark event among Conservative congregations in Toronto, Rabbi Philip Scheim will officiate next month at a "commitment ceremony" for a gay couple in the sanctuary of the Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue.

The service will fall short of a halachically sanctioned marriage, but it will acknowledge the couple's commitment to each other and to live Jewish lives in the Jewish community, said Rabbi Scheim, Beth David's spiritual leader.

"I am performing a commitment ceremony," Rabbi Scheim said. "It recognizes their commitment to each other and it recognizes their decision to make a strong Jewish connection and a strong Jewish community connection."

Visually, the service for Josh Scheinert, 31, and Mark Friedman, 26, will resemble a traditional Jewish wedding, because of the venue, the presence of a chupah (canopy), and the breaking of a glass, which marks the conclusion of the formal ceremony. Kosher food will be served, Rabbi Scheim said. But the service won't include the traditional blessings, though substitute biblical verses will be read along with appropriate poetic verses. The ketubah (marriage contract) is also non-traditional.

"It is a parallel, but it is different," he said.

Rabbi Scheim said in crafting the service, he is relying in part on a text prepared by the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly, which has given the green light to same sex commitment ceremonies.

Rabbi Philip Scheim PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

Gay marriage is an issue that has divided the Jewish world. Orthodox congregations do not permit them while marriage ceremonies are performed in Reform temples.

"What I'm doing is centrist in a wider movement… In Toronto, it is groundbreaking," Rabbi Scheim said.

Ironically, Rabbi Scheim voted against gay commitment ceremonies eight years ago when he served as part of the Rabbinical Assembly's committee on Jewish law and standards.

But since then, he's changed his mind.

"As I get older, I didn't want to find a way to say 'no' to people who really wanted that connection [to the Jewish community]. I wanted a way to say 'yes.'"

"I wanted to follow Halachah and bring into the Jewish fold those who want to be in the Jewish fold."

In that sense, he continued, the Conservative movement is catching up to what the wider world has accepted and what the members of its congregations want.

Rabbi Jarrod Grover, spiritual leader at the Beth Tikvah Synagogue, said he was asked by the couple to perform the service at his Bayview Avenue shul. But the congregation was not in a position to agree, because of various administrative and legal hurdles that had to be overcome.

He told the couple the synagogue is already considering changes to its by-laws and internal documents, which refer to heterosexual unions in the context of marriages and cemeteries and which could not be amended in time for their planned February wedding. The issue is on the shul's agenda and its ritual committee is currently addressing it, Rabbi Grover said.

As for the upcoming ceremony, "I think this is a groundbreaking event. This is the first Conservative synagogue in the city to allow the ceremony," he said.

"It's a difficult issue, but I believe we have to do something for couples like this who want to live a committed Jewish life in the Jewish community.

"There are halachic and historical challenges to this," he acknowledged, "but this is a reality that is not going away, and the answer the Jewish community gives can't be that there can't be any intimacy in their lives. I don't think this is a tenable response. It's the equivalent of pushing people out the door."

Rabbi Grover, who is a personal friend of Scheinert, said he gave his most widely heard sermon of the year about homosexuality on Kol Nidre night before a packed audience at Beth Tikvah.

"I asked the community to welcome same-sex couples into our community."

He admits he was a little unsure how the congregation would react, but he said it has been "overwhelmingly positive."

"I believe people in my synagogue want to accept. They probably have gay and lesbian people in their families or as friends, and they want them included."

"The times have changed."

Rabbi Scheim said he, too, has changed with the times. Even as recently as two years ago, he would not have sanctioned, let alone presided over, a same-sex union, he said.

"I think the world is in a different place now. Look at the acceptance in the general community. Gay marriage is a non-issue now."

Rabbi Scheim said there was much greater push-back 30 years ago when women first became ordained as rabbis.

Scheinert understands that people of Rabbi Scheim's generation might look at the commitment ceremony as groundbreaking, but for himself and Friedman, and for their friends, it's just another wedding.

Scheinert said and he and Friedman grew up attending Conservative synagogue services, and both feel attached to the Jewish community.

"Judaism has been a part of our lives and we liked the symbolism of getting married under a chupah," he said.

The couple spent the last five months in India, including a trek to the base camp on Mount Everest. They were there during Passover and brought with them Haggadot and matzahs to celebrate the holiday.

They held their own seder at 4,600 metres – the Chabad rabbi in Katmandu agreed it was likely the highest one ever – and their Nepalese guide participated by searching for the afikoman, Scheinert said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 53

Got Jewish Camp?

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 22, 2015

Concert to support Jews living in poverty

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Working on a Dream is not only the album title by rock icon Bruce Springsteen, but it also describes United Jewish Appeal's (UJA) mandate to assist members of the Jewish community who need support.

Some 800 music enthusiasts will help that dream along at a fundraising concert at the Opera House, Jan. 24 at 8:30 pm. The Working on a Dream concert will feature the River Street Band, a Springsteen cover band, as well as Jesse Gold, a rising 22-year-old singer/songwriter and guitarist, in support of UJA's annual campaign and its ongoing efforts to help the more than 24,000 Toronto Jews who live below the poverty line.

"The UJA's closing event for the 2015 annual campaign promises to be a high-energy musical evening that will engage the community and show appreciation for its ongoing support," said event chair Jeff Olin.

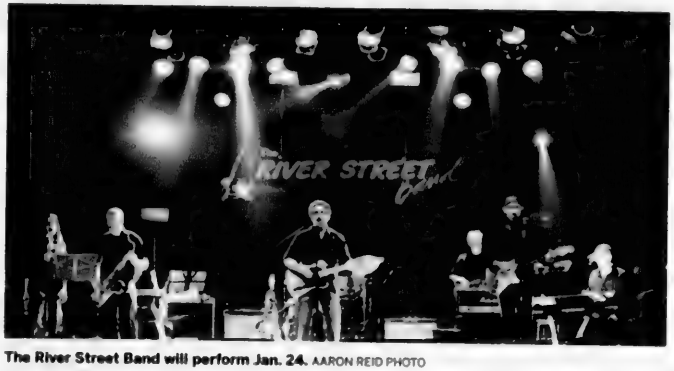
The 2015 campaign co-chairs Andrea Cohen and David Matlow wanted to do something fun to wrap up the campaign: a musical event where many worlds could intersect.

"This concert is for everyone – for those of us who were together in high school in the '80s, as well as today's youth of 19 and up," said Matlow.

"What better way to celebrate than a concert with a party atmosphere for a $30 ticket? You will have fun and raise awareness for an important social cause," Olin added.

"The issue of poverty in the Jewish community is not well-known or well-understood. The dream is to be able to help our fellow Jews who are in difficulty, whatever that difficulty may be – poverty, drug abuse, or living in a domestic situation that is abusive – and that we raise enough money for everyone who needs that help. That's the dream," Matlow said.

River Street Band founder Don Denaburg, who sings vocals and plays guitar and harmonica, told *The CJN*, "Springsteen's songs talk about the plight of people who are struggling and who are having to stand up in spite of the odds against them and keep pushing ahead and fighting for the hope and belief and promise of something better. I think that relates to Israel and the people in our Jewish community who are struggling and living below the poverty line."



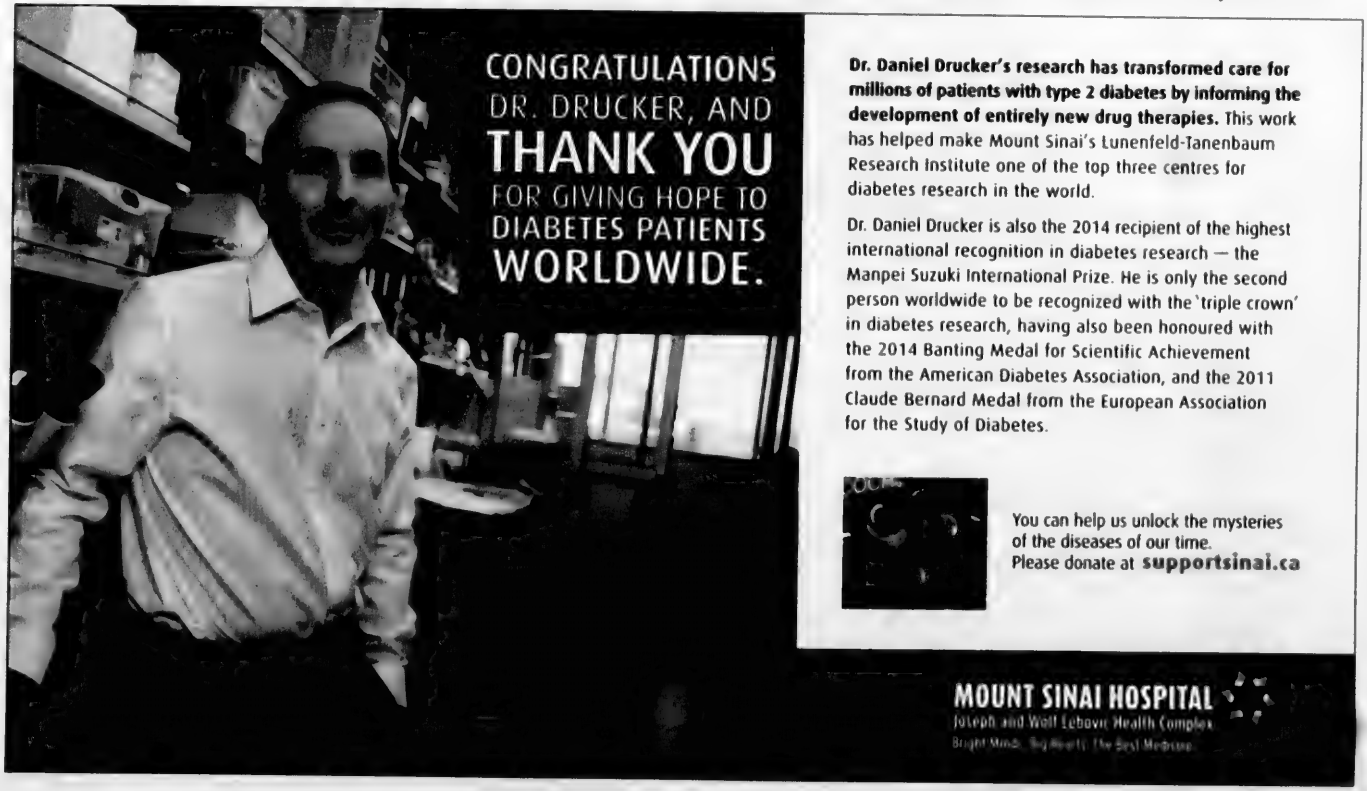
The River Street Band will perform Jan. 24. AARON REID PHOTO

Poverty among Jews is growing, community officials say.

"There are 24,315 Jewish poor in the Greater Toronto Area, representing a poverty rate of 12.9 per cent – an increase of two percentage points since 2001. Of the 24,315 members of the Jewish community who are poor, 3,545 are children and 5,035 are over age 65. There are also 3,850 'working poor' in the local Jewish community who earn wages that are not sufficient to push their income above the poverty line," said Sandi Pelly, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's director of capacity building for the social services.

"Statistical projections suggest that the figure of 30,965 Jewish elderly in 2011 will increase to 43,917 by 2021. Nearly one-third of the seniors in Toronto are Holocaust survivors and 25 per cent of those survivors are poor," Pelly added. ■

For tickets, visit www.ujaevents.com.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Israeli cartoonist praises dead *Charlie Hebdo* satirists

ELIAS LEVY
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"If political cartoonists are the foot soldiers of democracy, the ones at *Charlie Hebdo* were the advance guard in vigorously defending, with their last breath, one of the cardinal values of democracy: freedom of expression," leading Israeli cartoonist Michel Kichka told *The CJN* in an interview last week.

"The *Charlie Hebdo* artists assassinated... by fanatical jihadists are great heroes. For editorial cartoonists, *Charlie Hebdo* represents the famous 'red line' that we aren't supposed to cross. With their provocative drawings, Charb [Stephane Charbonnier], Cabu [Jean Cabut], [Georges] Wolinski, Tignous [Bernard Verlhac] defined and drew this red line every week without beating about the bush."

A major political cartoonist and artist in Israel, Kichka was extremely upset about the *Charlie Hebdo* killings. Born in Belgium in 1954, Kichka, who made aliyah in 1974, grew up with the drawings of Cabu and Wolinski. Tignous was a close friend. Like Kichka, Tignous was a member of the organization Cartooning for Peace. Founded by Plantu, the renowned newspaper caricaturist for *Le Monde*, and former UN secretary general Kofi Annan, Cartooning for Peace includes artists from some 50 countries.

Asked by Israeli TV and radio to comment on the attacks in France, Kichka struggled to explain to the Israeli public what the work of the *Charlie Hebdo* artists, who exemplify a longstanding French satirical tradition, represents. He also wrote an in-depth article on the subject, accompanied by a special cartoon, published in *Yediot Achronot*, Jan. 9.

"Unfortunately, we don't have a satirical newspaper in Israel," Kichka said in an interview from Jerusalem. "I explained that drawing the prophet Muhammad every morning isn't what French artists do. In the 'official' French newspapers, you don't draw Muhammad. *Charlie Hebdo* is a satirical paper that declared war on good taste and where there were never any limits or taboos. At *Charlie Hebdo*, they always stretched the boundaries more than at other publications. But that doesn't mean French satirical newspapers are part of a marginal press."

Satirical media, led in France by *Charlie Hebdo*, are "an excellent way of measuring the state of health of a democracy," he said. "I think a healthy democracy must be able to accept things that are out of their control, including those that infringe on the law. At *Charlie Hebdo*, they make provocative statements every day. It's the business of this vitriolic paper."

Will the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks embolden other artists to cross the line?

"When you draw for *Charlie Hebdo*, you can produce very provocative drawings, even a little silly," Kichka said. "But when you present those drawings in exhibitions organized by Cartooning for Peace, which go online on the organization's website, you have to do 'intelligent drawings,' that is, drawings that you have given some thought to, being aware that the caricatures circulate on the Internet and are no longer confined to a small village in Denmark."

For political cartoonists, *Charlie Hebdo* is "a kind of standard we refer to constantly," Kichka stressed. "The artists at *Charlie Hebdo* make me ask myself questions about my own limits when I take up my pencil. Their invaluable work sometimes helps me see deep down that I can go further than I usually do, that maybe I hold myself back too much, that maybe it's the *Charlie Hebdo* artists who are sometimes right. I also carry on a dialogue with myself comparing their work to mine. Then I tell myself, 'This time, it was my colleagues at *Charlie Hebdo* who were right. Maybe I should have gone further.' After all, drawing is a [form of] combat. You have to hit harder sometimes."

Kichka's Jan. 9 *Yediot Achronot* cartoon

Kichka teaches drawing at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem. His cartoons on national and international events appear weekly on several popular Israeli public affairs TV shows. For several years, he chaired the Israeli Association of Caricaturists and Comic Artists. ■

For the full French interview, visit cjnews.com. Carolan Halpern translation.

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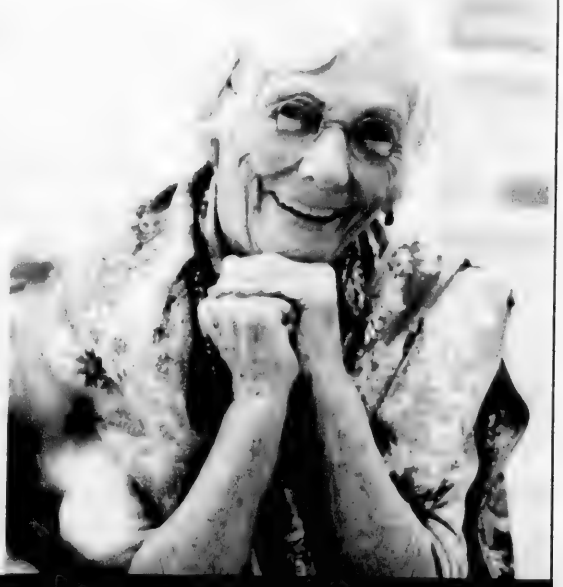

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No imminent danger, but Jewish institutions remain alert

SHERI SHEFA
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Staff at Canadian Jewish institutions – synagogues, schools and community centres – are being asked to be more vigilant in light of the recent terror attacks in Paris that included the murder of four Jews at a kosher supermarket.

Adam Cohen, the Israeli-born, Montreal-based national director of security at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said that although there isn't anything to suggest an attack on Canadian Jewish institutions is imminent, world events like these can lead to copycat attacks.

"Because of that, we told our synagogues and schools to be extra vigilant," Cohen said.

"I've talked to teachers and students... if you're leaving your school or entering it and there is someone next to you that you don't know, don't hold the door open. Just like you don't hold the door open for a stranger to come into your home at night, you're not going to hold the door open for a stranger to come into your school if you don't know who they are."

Cohen added that police across the country have been increasing their patrols around Jewish institutions.

Toronto Police Service spokesperson Const. Jenifferjit Sidhu said, whenever there is "a significant world event," police will generally increase their patrolling of relevant areas of the city.

"At this time, we have no reason to be on alert here in Toronto," she said. "[But] each division that does have Jewish schools or synagogues, that particular division would be aware of it, and in general make sure their presence is visible – not because there is a threat, but just to be visible in the area and do proactive policing."

Many of the staff at Jewish institutions in Toronto and Montreal that were contacted by *The CJN* were advised by Cohen not to discuss their security protocols with the media, but a number of synagogues and schools did release statements about the issue.

"In the wake of this latest round of terror in France, working with our local Toronto Police division, marked police cruisers were constantly patrolling on Bathurst [Street] and in both of our parking lots this past Saturday," wrote Russ Joseph, Holy Blossom Temple's executive director, in a statement posted to the shul's website.

"This, we are told, with a combination of our regular security force, augmented by police officers, is the appropriate response based upon an assessment of risk."

Adam Cohen

Helen Fox, principal of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, wrote in a statement that she's been advised there is no intelligence that suggests a need for increased security measures.

"The tragic events that unfolded in Paris have reminded us of the need for heightened awareness and concern at school. We will be reminding students through our regular daily announcements of the need to be constantly vigilant when it comes to reporting intruders, suspicious packages, and any other odd or unusual activity at or around school," Fox wrote, adding that the school doors will now be locked at all times during the school day.

Students will have to use their personal access cards to gain access to the building.

Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto sent a similar statement to parents and staff, to assure the community that "our security is visible, and our security guards are trained by reliable agencies to deal with any potential threats... We want to assure you that we are in regular communication with our local police authorities as well as CIJA, and we will continue this throughout the school year and beyond."

Cohen said he's confident in the security system in place at Jewish schools in Toronto, Montreal and elsewhere in Canada.

"We have all kinds of elements, all kinds of protocols and all kinds of systems that we put in our schools so that if, God forbid, something does happen, our schools have the know-how and the tools to go into full lockdown until help arrives," Cohen said.

"Are we 100 per cent [safe]? Never. Do I sleep well at night? I do."■

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Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre
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Jewish community gathers to recall Paris terror victims

PAUL LUNGEN
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Deputy Consul General of France Dominique Faille called the attacks that left 17 French citizens dead "barbaric acts of violence."
CENTRE FOR ISRAEL AND JEWISH AFFAIRS PHOTO

In France, guards armed with sub-machine guns patrol outside Jewish schools and other community institutions – a reflection of the danger French Jews face in the home of liberty and fraternity.

In Toronto, it hasn't quite come to that. But at a Jan. 14 memorial service and solidarity rally in support of France and French Jews, police were visibly present and beefy security guards were everywhere. Security was tight in what has become the new normal for Jews when they gather to celebrate or to mourn.

Organizers and security personnel were not responding to any specific threats, said Steven Shulman, campaign director of UJA Federation. "After events in France and the general tenor in the world, we pay heed to that."

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, along with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), hosted the event at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Some 600 people gathered to pray for the victims, stand in solidarity with France and French Jews, and hear the attackers condemned.

The audience listened to a variety of speakers: Berl Nadler, co-chair of CIJA's Toronto council; rabbis representing congregations across the religious spectrum; and French and Israeli diplomats.

Politicians from three levels of government were there, as were advocates of Christian-Jewish dialogue and representatives of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the Church of Scientology. Also present was a Shia imam who advocates interfaith dialogue.

Nadler began by pronouncing that "we in the West are at war with Islamist terrorists, all of them, for the future of western civilization."

He recounted incidents of terrorism around the world in the name of Islam, calling the attacks in Paris on *Charlie Hebdo* an attack on the fundamental value of free speech, while the deadly attack on a kosher grocery was an attack on the values of tolerance and pluralism.

Deputy Consul General of France Dominique Faille called the attacks that left 17 French citizens dead "barbaric acts of violence."

"French men and women were murdered because they represented free speech. French people were murdered because they were Jewish. French men and women were murdered because they supported free expression and the respect for all faiths," he said.

"Freedom of speech is essential in a democracy. Anti-Semitism is an unacceptable attack on democratic values.

"Together, we must defend democratic values. We owe it to ourselves to fight anti-Semitism, racism and hatred for others. We must keep matters clear. Let there be no mistake as to who the enemy is."

Faille didn't identify the enemy, though Israeli consul general DJ Schneeweiss wasn't so reticent. Linking the "Islamist terror" attacks faced by Israel to the recent ones in France, Schneeweiss said the proclamations in France of "je suis Charlie, je sui francais, je suis Juif... [are] an expression of a common heritage and a common fate shared by western civilization as a whole."

Jews are members of a broader society, "heirs to the western way of life infused with the values of tolerance, peace, freedom and individual rights, justice and the rule of law," he said.

"The battle lines are real. There is no escape from the consequences of the militant Islamic assault on our democratic values and way of life. We're all in this together. We must stand together, with each other and for each other, if the threat posed to us all by those who hate Jews, modernity and freedom is to be defeated," he said.

"When you see Jews being attacked, know that this is an attack on you. When you see Israel being maligned... know that this too is an attack on you.

"Don't airbrush the anti-Semitism inherent in much of the militant Islamic and Arab education out of the story," he continued. "No matter how much you may wish it weren't so, this hatred of Jews is a core component of militant Islam's aggressive agenda vis-a-vis the west and as a whole."

Schneeweiss ended on a hopeful note, saying Jews must stand together, never surrender to victimhood, and be comforted that they have many friends in Canada and elsewhere who are horrified when they're targeted for being Jews. ■

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Israeli, Canadian ministers support 'Grand Challenges'

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Economic ties between Canada and Israel continue to grow, with the announcement over the weekend that Grand Challenges Israel (GCI), which is modelled on Grand Challenges Canada (GCC), will fund 10 Israeli innovators offering solutions to health, water and agricultural challenges faced by developing countries.

The announcement came during a meeting on Sunday between Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird and Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman.

Israeli innovators will each receive 500,000 shekels ($152,000 Cdn) from GCI, to further research and product development in a variety of areas, including early detection of pneumonia, malaria control and biotechnology development.

GCI is an initiative of the chief scientist in the Ministry of the Economy, the Prime Minister's Office and MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Co-operation within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It was created in consultation with Grand Challenges Canada and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). GCC was founded in 2010 and is funded by the Canadian government. It supports innovators in low- and middle-income countries, as well as in Canada, who attempt to integrate science and technology to offer benefits in health and other social concerns around the world.

The partnership between GCC and GCI was discussed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during Harper's visit to Israel in January 2014.

Peter Singer, CEO of GCC, said the organization operates as a sort of venture capital program, injecting funds into early-stage efforts by innovators to produce products or solutions that will help developing countries in a variety of fields.

To date, GCC has provided $158 million to about 700 innovators operating in more than 70 countries. Other funders, including those in the private sector, have added another $224 million in later stages of product development.

Creation of GCI in co-operation with GCC "taps Israeli innovation and entrepreneurship to tackle global challenges," Singer said.

"Canada and Israel are working together to do good in the world, using science and innovation," he added.

Peter Singer

GCC played an important role in introducing GCI into an international network of similar organizations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as others in India and Brazil, Singer said.

Fifteen years ago, the Gates Foundation began to fund a meningitis vaccine that has been introduced into Africa, leading to a 90 per cent reduction in incidents of the disease, Singer stated.

"That's the kind of good people should expect from innovation." Not all projects will succeed, but those that do "will be transformative. Innovation can be a game-changer," he added.

"I think it's something that Canadians in the Jewish community can feel proud of, the way Canada is supporting Israel to improve the lives of people in the developing world," Singer said.

"Today's announcement is the latest example of the significant mutual benefits to be found in burgeoning Canada-Israel research and technology ties," said Shimon Fogel, CEO of CIJA.

"That Israelis looked to Canada for a model to nurture innovation is a direct result of the countless partnerships and connections that have been forged between Canadian and Israeli researchers, academics and relevant government ministries," he said.

"CIJA was pleased to play a supporting role in bringing GCC to Israel. We look forward to seeing the results of their exciting projects.

We will continue working to strengthen Canada-Israel research partnerships – which have the potential to solve some of the most pressing challenges facing the world today," Fogel stated. ■

Israeli consul general makes first visit to Halifax

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

Israeli Consul Ziv Nevo Kulman helped open *The Courage To Remember* exhibit in Halifax.
JOEL JACOBSON PHOTO

Ziv Nevo Kulman expected a warm welcome on his first visit to Halifax – and he received it.

What he didn't expect were questions surrounding an anti-Semitic Twitter rant by a local hot dog vendor.

The visit of the recently appointed consul general of Israel to Quebec and the Atlantic provinces was marked with questions about the rant by the Muslim vendor who tweeted inflammatory statements Jan. 14 (see story on page 24). Jerry Reddick, known as the Dawgfather, talked about Jews and the Holocaust as he tried to make a point about free speech and the *Charlie Hebdo* Muhammad cartoons.

"All I can really say is that if this is the way he wants to promote his hot dog business, I'm glad I'm a vegetarian," Nevo Kulman joked during an interview on Global TV's morning show Jan 15.

Nevo Kulman was in Halifax to open *The Courage To Remember* exhibit, recognizing International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Nevo Kulman also had business meetings with Nova Scotia government officials and researchers at Dalhousie University to promote co-operation between the Atlantic region and Israel. He addressed a church gathering of Bridges For Peace, a Christian group with strong Israeli ties, and he addressed a luncheon of Jewish seniors at the Masada Club.

Nevo Kulman, 45, the son of a Holocaust survivor from Poland, was born in Tel Aviv. He's held several positions in cultural affairs in Israel and abroad and most recently worked in the ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem in charge of diplomatic professional training.

He told the Masada group about his role as consul in promoting commercial, educational, scientific and cultural interests between the region and Israel.

"Commercial ties, specifically, between Canada and Israel could be better, because Israelis think of the United States more so than Canada. I have to work on that. But Israel is an open society based on immigration and multiculturalism, just like Canada, so I hope things can work better."

To the Masada and church groups, Nevo Kulman spoke of issues between Israel and the Palestinians.

"If Palestinians want to negotiate, but only using their moderates, establishing two states can be solved. Yet Hamas won't accept our presence and that's where it becomes dangerous."

He touched on the recent violence in France. "Perhaps now the world can see what radical terrorism can do," he said. "Western governments can see what might happen in their own cities. Israel has been quiet about this because we know the dangers of terror. We live with it every day. This is an international problem that needs international co-operation to stifle it."

Nevo Kulman expressed concern for the 500,000 Jews of France, who comprise one per cent of the country's population, compared to six million Muslims.

"Half the incidents of attacks in France in the last year were against Jews. The French government has to secure its citizens, but isn't doing enough. More than 7,000 Jews made aliyah to Israel last year. We can't tell others to come to Israel. It's their decision on their own but we'll open our doors if they choose.

Nevo Kulman's meeting with government and Dalhousie officials were successful, he said. "The Nova Scotia government emphasizes industrial ties and we spoke positively about agriculture and aquaculture opportunities.

"Martha Prago [Dalhousie's vice-president of research] was full of ideas and knows Israel well through our connections with Dal and Hebrew University, Ben-Gurion University and [BGU's Eilat campus]. Exchanges, involving dozens of people, are already going on in ocean research, water monitoring and neuroscience. There are good things happening."

The consul also met with the *Halifax Chronicle Herald's* editorial board, finding it "friendly, in an open and frank discussion. They asked intelligent questions."

Overall, Nevo Kulman was "overwhelmed with the hospitality of the people. Nova Scotia is a friendly province and I will be back," he stressed, adding, with a smile, "in the spring, when the weather is friendlier." ■

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My grandmother's return to Auschwitz

HANNAH ZIEGLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Miriam Ziegler, second from left, being liberated from Auschwitz in 1945, in a now-iconic photo.

Miriam Ziegler with granddaughter Hannah

My grandmother, Holocaust survivor Miriam Ziegler, is busily preparing for a trip to a place she never thought she would go again.

On Jan. 27, she's returning to Auschwitz, joining more than 100 fellow survivors for the 70th anniversary of their liberation. She will also be reunited with five of the 13 children who were photographed by a Soviet photographer as the Russian soldiers approached to give them their freedom.

She didn't even know about the existence of this picture until a visit to Israel in 1981, where she saw the photo of herself on the walls of Yad Vashem. She likens the experience to "seeing a ghost."

Miriam Ziegler, born in Radom, Poland, experienced her first glimpse of war through four-year-old eyes.

"I left my hometown on horse and buggy with my mother when the war broke out. We saw the Nazis shoot our driver. That was my first of many escapes from death during the war."

We sit in her comfortable Thornhill condo discussing the traumatic events of the war. She seems a bit tired after having been interviewed by several news sources earlier in the week. She is not used to all the attention.

She shows me an old photo album, one of the only relics from her youth. She clutches these photographs, pointing out the many family members who were killed. "I didn't have a childhood," she explains.

Miriam spent her early years in Radom, the only child of store-owners Hershel and Rose Friedman. When Nazi soldiers marched into her town, she fled to her grandparents' village of Ostrowiec. She was hidden by a farmer, and then by a Polish woman, and survived a mass shooting in an attic before being smuggled back into the ghetto.

By the summer of 1944, Miriam and her family were transported to Auschwitz. She was one of the few children who survived the horrors of the death camp. She witnessed death marches and other atrocities about which she dared not utter a word. She was separated from her family and received a tattoo that reduced her to a number. "A16891. That was my name in Auschwitz," she laments. She points to her arm, a familiar pose.

When she was finally liberated on Jan. 27, 1945, she became part of what would become an iconic picture. She is seen standing with other children behind a barbed wire fence, pointing to her number. While all the children are standing solemnly and stiff, Miriam pointed to her tattoo instinctively. "I was so used to responding to my number," she explains.

Freedom should have tasted sweet, but Miriam felt nothing but dread. "I was standing there, numb, because I didn't know where my family was. I didn't know where I was going to end up."

She was relocated to an orphanage in Krakow before reuniting with her mother and grandmother. Her father, she eventually was told, died in a death march.

Miriam moved to Canada in 1948, where she later met and married Roman Ziegler, also a Holocaust survivor. They now have three children, and four grandchildren.

For a long time, my grandmother has been reluctant to talk about the Holocaust and the toll it's taken on her. When she was asked by the World Jewish Congress and USC Shoah Foundation to attend the 70th anniversary, she was hesitant to say yes. After a previous visit to Auschwitz in 1981, she vowed to never go back.

"It brought back horrible memories," she says. "They showed me a movie [of the liberation], and seeing myself being taken out of the gates to the orphanage..." She pauses for a few seconds to collect her thoughts. "I feel it is my duty to go back. I know there are not many survivors left to speak, and I need to speak on behalf of the millions who were killed, who had no voice. And I need to tell my story to the future generations so they will never forget."

My grandmother places her old photo album back on the table, surrounded by pictures of our family.

She will be joined by my aunt, Adrienne, on this trip. They will also be visiting Ostrowiec, where she hopes to find her grandparent's store and old house.

"Hopefully this will give me closure... I get more scared every day as the trip approaches, but I have to face it. I have to be there to say 'I am here, I am alive, and I have my family.'"

There is no doubt that this will be an emotional journey, but my grandmother has faced unimaginable challenges with strength and courage since she was four years old, and will do the same at age 79. This time the whole world will hear her voice. ■

Hannah Ziegler is in Grade 12 at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

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Israeli company helps address cyber attacks

PAUL LUNGEN
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In December 2013, right in the middle of the Christmas shopping season, U.S. retail giant Target was hacked in the biggest-ever retail computer attack in the United States. Some 40 million credit card numbers were stolen. It cost Target more than $70 million to address the issue.

Then, nearly a year later, hackers calling themselves the "Guardians of Peace" illegally acquired data and personal information about Sony Pictures employees and their families. The hackers demanded cancellation of the planned release of the film *The Interview*, a comedy about a plot to assassinate North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

And just last week, hackers claiming to be tied to the Islamic State (ISIL) gained access to the Twitter and YouTube accounts of the U.S. military's Central Command, or Centcom, though no classified material was compromised.

Hacking has become a serious concern for businesses, governments and non-governmental agencies of all types, say Carmi Gillon, executive chair of the board of directors of Cytegic, and Shay Zandani, the company's CEO. Cytegic is an Israeli startup specializing in addressing cyber attacks and providing senior management, government leaders and corporate executives the tools to monitor and address these attacks.

Gillon and Zandani were in Toronto and Winnipeg last week to introduce their company and its products to potential customers in the public and private sectors.

The fact that their product was developed in Israel, with its reputation for high-tech wizardry, didn't hurt their presentations. Israel has a well-deserved reputation for leading technological solutions to a variety of problems, they said.

It's likely their personal profiles didn't harm the credibility of their presentations either. Gillon is a former head of Shin Bet, Israel's internal security agency, and Zandani is the company's self-styled "cyber security guru." Before that, he founded the information warfare department for the Israel Air Force, and later served as CEO of Global Risk Management Solutions for PricewaterhouseCoopers.

> *We expect the risk to go higher. We know that from strategic analysis.*

Cytegic's product suite (a group of software products packaged together) is geared toward company CEOs and senior officials of other organizations, who often have to pay with their careers for cyber infiltrations that succeed. The CEO and board of directors of Target were all replaced after the credit card fiasco, Zandani pointed out.

Cyber attacks pose "a huge risk," Zandani stated before flying off to Winnipeg. "Not just for the business's reputation, but in direct costs. We expect the risk to go higher. We know that from strategic analysis."

Threats can originate with state players, he said, from organized crime, 'hacktivists,' disgruntled employees or even just young people in their parents' basement, showing off their computer skills.

The costs to business and government can be enormous. In addition to affecting the corporate bottom line, successful plots could have wider ranging consequences, equivalent of a terrorist attack. Zandani said plots have been uncovered to take down the electric grids in both the United States and the U.K.

Carmi Gillon and Shay Zandani PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

With computers controlling other vital strategic infrastructure, it's not hard to imagine plots to disrupt traffic lights or to shut down air traffic by infiltration of the computer systems linked to airport x-ray machines. Your neighbourhood medical clinic could face cyber infiltration that would expose their patients' confidential medical information, Zandani suggested.

So how does Cytegic help keep cyberspace safe?

They offer product suites to collect and analyze massive amounts of data available in the public realm, sifting through it, determining trends and winnowing it down to usable information they call DYTA, or Dynamic Threat Analysis.

CYMA, the Cyber Maturity Assessment, then considers the efficiencies of existing defences, such as firewalls and anti-virus software, as well as organizational processes that permit an organization to identify and respond to threats. These can range all the way to the method a human resource department uses to deal with a potential threat, Zandani said.

Finally, Cytegic's CDSS or Cyber Decision Support System takes the information collected by DYTA, considers the security posture offered by CYMA and offers clients the best solution to the likeliest attack. Clients receive a dashboard display of potential threats that are constantly updated.

"Our product will give you all the existing risks," said Gillon. "Your customers decide on priorities and we give you advice if you are already protected and if you need to invest in more checkpoints or firewalls."

Gillon believes the market for Cytegic's products is substantial. They have already recruited several prominent clients in Israel, including Bank Hapoalim and Bank Leumi, and they have a commercial relationship with Telmex in Mexico.

Coincidentally – or not – the government of Canada announced last week it will invest $100 million in cyber security to safeguard government computers.

Cytegic believes success here could open the doors to the lucrative American market. But Canada is an important market in its own right, said Gillon, who met with potential clients in the financial services sector, energy, utilities and government. "Canada's behaviour is very much respected by other nations. I've spoken to a lot of Canadians. You are too modest.

"We think Canadians can be a base for us, not just for the United States, but the whole world," he added. ■

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Dalhousie hot dog vendor tweets racist messages

BY JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

The Dawgfather removed offensive and sensitive tweets from his Twitter page Jan. 16 and added several apologies to his followers in the wake of his anti-Semitic postings earlier in the week.

Jerry Reddick, a proud Muslim who has sold hot dogs outside Dalhousie University's Student Union Building for many years under the name Dawgfather, tweeted several racist messages Jan. 14 under the same name, many about Jews, the Holocaust and ovens.

"I used a sledgehammer to get my point across about the double standard in free speech. I was wrong and I apologize!" he tweeted Jan. 16.

He added: "I made hateful comments which were completely out of character and downright mean to my Jewish friends. I can't explain it! Forgive me!!!?"

On the morning of Jan. 16, his hot dog cart was also absent, something he attributed to "other business. I will be back next month after visiting family out west."

Halifax police continue to investigate the offensive posts. Police spokesperson Const. Pierre Bourdages said a complaint was received about anti-Semitic posts online. "The investigation has been assigned to the general investigation section, but there have been no charges and arrests."

The Dawgfather said his hot dog cart would be back Jan. 19, citing "working on other things" as the reason for its absence from the campus in the last few days.

Reddick admitted he posted the Twitter messages to prove a point about the different standards applied to freedom of expression, particularly related to world-wide comment on the *Charlie Hebdo* and kosher market shootings in Paris.

Reddick said in one post, "Yeah! This is what freedom of speech looks like from the other side."

Another post stated, "No group of people has more right than the other to express themselves. Muslims have never ever said any foul things about Jesus or Moses."

His remarks were made public on the day an event recognizing International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was being held at the Nova Scotia Archives.

"The man is either demented, crazy or looking for trouble," Jon Goldberg, executive director of the Atlantic Jewish Council, said when he was shown a post that read, "How does freedom of expression look when it's not about Prophet Muhammad, s.a.w. Let's send ovens to all the Jews."

Jerry Reddick, a.k.a. Dawgfather
TWITTER PHOTO

"It's right out of Goebbels, Himmler and Hitler," Goldberg said, adding the posts violate the country's hate crime laws.

Another post read, "Hitler asked his people, 'How do you like your Jews'? Well done with a bagel and a kosher pickle. Freedom of speech goes both ways."

Reddick also tweeted, "What do you call a Jew sitting in one of Hitler's ovens? Toast, because they're cooked. Freedom of speech goes both ways!" And, "What does one Jew say to the other Jew when they walk by a hot oven? Do you recognize anyone?"

Another post read: "In 2001 I thought Americans could fly by the way they were jumping from the twin towers in New York."

Goldberg said the comments make it clear that Reddick doesn't care who his words hurt, including survivors of World War II.

In one of his posts, Reddick insisted he is not anti-Semitic. "I respect all people. Nobody agrees with what them boys did in France, nobody. I just wanted to point out the hypocrisy."

In a Jan. 15 tweeted response to Goldberg, Reddick said: "Jon Goldberg should remember who ran and financed the trans Atlantic slave trade before he jumps on me."

He added: "I proved my point when Jon Goldberg comes out and compares me to a Nazi but he said nothing when a cartoon depicted Muhammad as a terrorist?"

Goldberg said he'd like to see the city rescind the Dawgfather's hot dog cart license, "now that we know exactly how he feels about members of our community."

Among the tweeted responses to Reddick were messages such as, "comparing a cartoon to the biggest genocide in history.." and "You're not just racist, you're a f--ing LUNATIC. I hope Dal gets wise and boycotts your idiot ass."

Another poster said "You take stupid to a whole new level. I feel sorry for your kids." ■

Never any threat of violence at Garneau event, CIJA spokesperson says

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

There was never any indication that a violent protest would take place at an event organized by a pro-Israel group where member of Parliament Marc Garneau was scheduled to speak, said a Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) spokesperson.

Eta Yudin said CIJA national director of community security Adam Cohen spoke at length with police, who told him they had information that there might be "a peaceful protest by people known to them" outside the event.

The event was to have taken place on the afternoon of Jan. 12 at the downtown office of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research (CIJR), which had allowed the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) to use its premises.

The chief organizer was Concordia University student Bradley Martin, a CAMERA fellow. He wrote on his Facebook page around noon on Jan. 12 that the event had been cancelled because police had notified CIJR that "a hostile and violent protest" was expected, and he expressed his disappointment and outrage that freedom of speech and assembly has been compromised.

Garneau, the Liberal foreign affairs and international trade critic, was to have spoken on Canada-Israel relations.

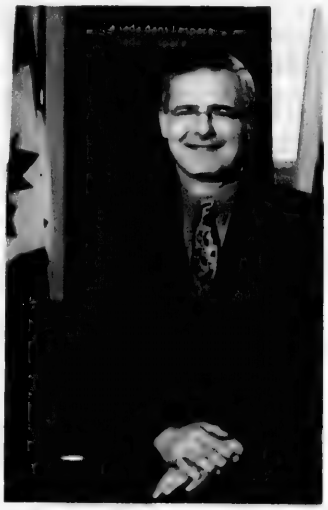
A CIJR staff member took a call from police on the morning of Jan, 12, CIJR chair Jack Kincler said.

Because there were "too many unknowns" and "in light of events that took place in France the week before," he decided to cancel the event.

Yudin said police confirmed that they were only notifying the organization of the information they had, but never advised pulling the plug on the event.

The incident, however, quickly circulated on social media. The group Israel on Campus: Concordia, reacting to Martin's post, commented on its Facebook page that "police were alerted of a planned violent protest, which has caused the organizers to cancel the event. We understand their concern given the rise of anti-Semitism and violent attacks around the world.

"It is extremely disheartening and upsetting that members of our own national government are not given a chance to share their ideas freely for fear of violent consequences... We will not be silenced and will continue to fight for Israel on campus and in our country."



Marc Garneau, the Liberal foreign affairs and international trade critic, was to have spoken on Canada-Israel relations on Jan.12 at the downtown office of the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research.

Kincler said the police asked if the street-level entrance to the building would be locked at that time, and the CIJR informed them that the door is only secured after business hours.

"They gave us a red light, but they did not say cancel the event," he said. "I had no idea who might come in. Bradley also had no clue who might show up or how many. I didn't want a screaming match here."

Kincler, who was out of the country when the room was given to CAMERA, said that if it had been a CIJR event, he would not have cancelled it, but the organization always takes advance registration for its activities and keeps its address confidential.

Whatever might have happened, Kincler added that "it is unacceptable that it is always one side intimidating" the other in the Middle East conflict.

The CJN was unable to reach Martin for comment. He emailed on Jan. 13 that he had "too many prior commitments" to speak. He did not return follow-up emails and his phone line was either busy or not taking messages. ■

In Memory Of
FANNY PILLERSDORF, Z"L
March of the Living Toronto and the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, extend sincerest condolences to the Pillersdorf family on the passing of Fanny, z"l, a longtime Holocaust survivor speaker and educator with our organizations.
May her memory be a blessing.
Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre
March

Shabbat Shirah Community Concert

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31 AT 8:00 PM
Starring
Cantor Simon Spiro
with special Guest Conductor Josh Jacobson, founder of the world-renowned *Zamir Chorale*
An intimate evening of song and revelry for the whole family with music from around the world, featuring Toronto's top vocalists and musicians
Special appearances by
• Cantor Charles Osborne
• Cantor Sidney Ezer
• The Beth Tzedec Singers
• Voices of Tomorrow children's choir
And many more surprises!
Dessert reception following
Tickets: $25 in advance, $36 at the door
Sponsored in memory of David and Bessie Pullan, Sophie and Rose Pullan
The Concert Theatre at Beth Tzedec
1700 Bathurst Street
[illegible] info@beth-tzedec.org
בית צדק
Beth Tzedec Congregation
A Sense of Tradition-Building for the Future

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 22, 2015

New fresh kosher lettuce now MK-certified

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, Montreal

Kosher consumers in Montreal will soon be able to enjoy salads with a greater variety of lettuce and without the laborious soaking, or even washing.

In December, the Vaad Ha'ir issued its MK hechsher to two packaged lettuce products from Urban Barns Inc., a new Montreal-based company that grows produce indoors year-round without soil or pesticides or chemicals of any kind, and with minimal watering and just the right amount of LED lighting.

The two products certified are its red romaine, which goes under the brand Breen, and butterhead, or Boston, dubbed Frank. They are sold "live," that is, with their roots intact, packed in plastic clamshells.

These lettuce heads grow in an attractive round, floral shape rather than upright, generally in an individual serving size. No need to tear them into pieces.

It's a breakthrough both for those who keep kosher and in technology, said Vaad executive director Rabbi Saul Emanuel, who is highly impressed by Urban Barns' patent-pending "Cubic Farming" system. It's the result of five years of research and development that continues in conjunction with McGill University, which has a dozen scientists working with the company.

Invented by a Dutch-born farmer in Langley, B.C., this year-round, controlled-environment agriculture combines manufacturing production line practices with optimal growing conditions.

Non-GMO seeds are started in a naturally sourced fabric-like substrate. The tiny germinated plants are then transferred to a mechanical installation that consists of rows of trays in which the seedlings are positioned.

They are continuously rotated vertically under a series of lighting tubes and watered automatically, with the runoff recycled.

What thrills Rabbi Emanuel is that the produce is completely free of infestation and ready to eat. While lettuce, like all vegetables is, of course, pareve, the Vaad has strict rules about its consumption because of the risk of insects or worms, often too small for the untrained eye to see.

The only unpacked lettuce varieties the Vaad sanctions are iceberg and Boston, and they must be have their four outside leaves removed, be cut into quarters and all the leaves separated. The lettuce is then put in a solution of either vinegar, salt or soap and water for five minutes.

The water must then be rinsed off and every single leaf inspected carefully to make sure it is free of bugs. The only other packaged lettuce bearing the MK is from Bodek Inc., a long-established New York-based company. A range of its bagged, shredded salads are sold in Montreal.

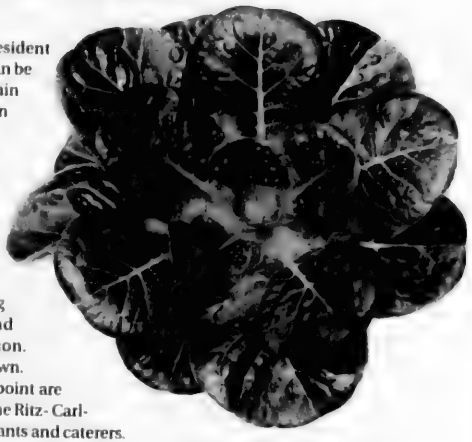
Montreal-based entrepreneur Richard Groome took Cubic Farming commercial when he joined the company a couple of years ago and moved its headquarters to Montreal last year. Urban Barns opened in a rented facility in Mirabel in June which it announced as unique in the world.

He recently gave *The CJN* a tour.

The company has so far acquired some 50 customers in Montreal and Toronto and, starting in January, in New York, the Gristedes supermarket chain in Manhattan is carrying its wares. Urban Barns plans to have its products in IGA and Sobeys stores in Canada in the coming months, and at a competitive price.

Groome, the firm's president and CEO, said produce can be picked and shipped within a 600-mile radius within a day.

In addition to lettuce, Urban Barns grows a variety of microgreens, seedlings of vegetables and herbs that are prized as garnishes. These are not kosher – but Groome is working with the Vaad to expand Urban Barns' certification. Herbs have also been grown.



A kosher red romaine from Urban Barns

Most customers at this point are high-end hotels, such as the Ritz-Carlton and Fairmont, restaurants and caterers. Clients of the Mada Community Centre, a kosher soup kitchen and hunger relief organization, have also enjoyed generous donations of produce from Urban Barns.

The company is working with McGill on other types of vegetables and fruits that can be grown in this eco-friendly, economical way. Testing by the university and an independent lab show the nutritional value of its products is actually superior to their conventionally grown counterparts, Groome said. They also grow faster and have a longer shelf life.

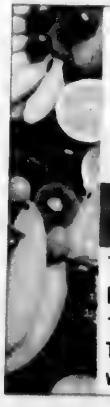
Cubic Farming can also keep prices competitive because of low overhead. Urban Barns has just eight employees.

The system is now in its third generation, and a fourth-generation prototype has been developed by local engineers that should greatly increase productivity, Groome said. The current iteration has a capacity to grow 19,000 plants per year per machine (Urban Barns currently has 13 operating). The next generation is projected to produce 126,000 plants per year – all within a 320,000-square foot footprint, Groome points out.

"This is an absolute revolution in agriculture," he says without any trace of hyperbole. "In the field, two lettuces can be grown per square foot in a year. In a greenhouse, it's 20 lettuces. With our current generation, we grow 120 plants. With the fourth generation, that will be up to nearly 300."

That's a current capacity of about 350,000 units per year. In addition to expanding production and broadening the types of vegetables and even fruit, Groome's long-term goal is to see the Cubic Farming system established worldwide, and he's scouting the U.S. tri-state area for a second "barn."

He will, not, however be licensing the technology; Urban Barns will own all facilities in order to control quality, he said. ■



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To register, please contact 416-225-2112 ext. 126 or katieg@betelcentre.org

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Toronto, ON M2R 3T6
www.betelcentre.org

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bernard betel centre

An incorrect ad was published in last week's CJN. CJN regrets the error.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CONGREGATION MACHZIKEI HADAS, a modern Orthodox Shul in Ottawa is looking to fill two positions in June 2015. The first, that of Executive Director is a full time position. The second, that of Director of Family and Children's Programming is a part time position.

Duties of Executive Director include:

- In conjunction with the Rabbi and the Board, implement and coordinate all Shul activities.
- Implement programs to attract new members;
- Manage the day to day operations and functions of the office and staff, being accountable for results and ensuring the Shul functions smoothly.
- Manage and implement fundraising activities and develop new fundraising initiative;
- Manage Shul communications, website and social media.
- Interact with the Jewish Federation and other Jewish organizations

Duties of Director of Family and Children's Programming include:

- Shabbat morning youth programs;
- Monthly family programs;
- Work with Executive Director to attract new members;
- Develop and maintain relationships with young member families and potential young member families.

Applications should be submitted to **president@cmhottawa.com** or **Congregation Machzikei Hadas, Attention Search Committee, 2310 Virginia Drive, Ottawa Ontario K1H 6S2.**

Former OSC head was active in community

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Jack Geller, a leader in the Toronto Jewish community, a distinguished lawyer, and a loving husband, father and grandfather passed away at his home Jan. 7 at age 84.

Remembered for his grace, ethics and resilience, Geller was a trailblazer in both the Jewish and legal communities.

In 1959, he became the first Jewish lawyer to become a partner in an establishment Toronto firm, and what followed was an illustrious career first in private practice and as vice-chair and acting chair of the Ontario Securities Commission.

Geller was a beloved member of Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple and served as its president from 1976 to 1978. He was named honorary life president in 1998.

He was born in Toronto in 1930 to parents who had emigrated from Poland. According to a 2010 interview conducted with Geller and his wife Sybil for the Law Society of Upper Canada "Diversifying the Bar: Lawyers Make History" project, Jack, who had two older sisters, first expressed wanting to be a lawyer as a child.

He attended Forest Hill Public School and Forest Hill Collegiate, and, in 1951, earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Toronto, where he was known as an excellent debater.

Geller met his wife Sybil in 1948, during his second week at U of T, where she was also studying. They met on the steps of the Royal Ontario Museum and, according to their daughter Dana, "When she saw him, she knew he was the one, and went after him."

They married two weeks after graduating.

Geller went on to study law at Osgoode Hall. Sybil worked as a secretary to put him through law school.

Despite graduating with distinction in 1955, he initially struggled to secure a position.

"There were no major non-Jewish firms at the time accepting Jews," his daughter, Dana Lampe, said. "His criteria was that he wanted to be at a major law firm. Religion didn't come into it."

Geller eventually found a place at the firm Campbell, Godfrey & Lewtas, where he worked for many years.

"Whatever his clients needed, he developed an expertise in it," his daughter said. "He had a brilliant analytical mind… but I think his real forte was his interactions with clients, advising them."

Though he frequently travelled during the week for work, he always made an effort to be home for Friday night dinner.

"When he was home with us, he'd read to us, tell us stories," she recalled.

"He always went to bat for us," daughter Jan Babins added.

In 1992, Geller retired from his practice and became vice-chair of the OSC. Five years later, he took on, until 2001, the position of acting chair.

His commitment to the Jewish community and to Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple, which he joined at age 17, was evident throughout his life.

He and Sybil volunteered with groups such as Canadian Jewish Congress and regularly attended Friday night services at Holy Blossom.

"In all his many communal activities, nothing was as dear and rewarding to him as Holy Blossom Temple and what it stands for," said Rabbi Dow Marmur, rabbi emeritus at Holy Blossom.

"We learned from him not to sit on the sidelines," Geller's son Lawrence said. "And to do good… He wasn't fussed about how we chose to do it, but taught us to be mentors."

Jack Geller

After suffering a stroke in 2002, Geller developed aphasia and spent five years working tirelessly to regain his reading abilities. Though he was sometimes difficult to understand, Sybil interpreted for him.

He continued to participate in synagogue activities, such as board meetings.

"Everyone says they were blessed to have him in their lives," Lampe said. "We all feel touched by having known him."

Sybil, who has ALS and uses a computer to communicate, said what she'll miss most about her husband is "his presence."

Geller is survived by his wife Sybil and four children – Dana, Larry, Jan and Harold – as well as six grandchildren. ■

Five-year-old's project raised $19,000 for brother's illness

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Five-year-old Na'ama Uzan was bothered by the idea of doing nothing while funds are needed for research efforts to find a cure for Angelman syndrome, the neurogenetic disorder her older brother, Nadav, suffers from.

Last summer, determined to help raise money, Na'ama decided to have a lemonade stand for the cause, and her venture quickly snowballed into an extensive, community-wide fundraising initiative that has earned $19,000 to date. She now plans to raise more money with a hot chocolate stand on Jan. 29.

Na'ama's parents, Ruchama and David Uzan, said that last year, they told Na'ama about the scientific measures being taken to treat Angelman syndrome, which causes Nadav, 6, to have epilepsy, makes it difficult for him to sleep and affects his speech and balance.

"We'd been talking about different ways people raise money and mentioned as an example how she'd had a lemonade stand the summer before, for herself," Ruchama said. "And Na'ama said, 'OK, let's do [one] for this, too.' We let her lead us."

So last June, Na'ama set up a lemonade stand in front of the family's home in the Bathurst Street and Lawrence Avenue area of Toronto, selling lemonade for 50 cents a cup and popcorn. At the end of the day, she'd made $100.

The profits were directed to the U.S.-based Foundation for Angelman Syndrome Therapeutics (FAST), whose focus is to try to find a cure for the syndrome.

From that day, the initiative "took off way beyond our wildest beliefs," said David, who, like Ruchama, was "blown away" by their daughter's sense of initiative.

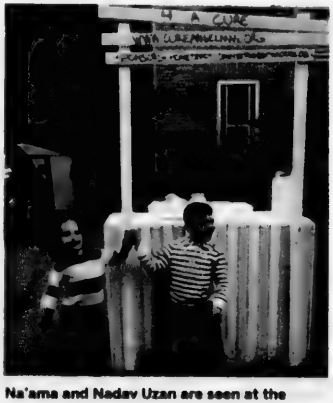
"It was important to me to do this because it's my brother who has [Angelman syndrome]," Na'ama said articulately over the phone. "His life is very, very, very hard."

News of Na'ama's lemonade stand rapidly spread among friends and acquaintances in the community, through both word of mouth and social media. Soon, others in the Jewish community were offering to host their own lemonade stands in support of the cause.

"It picked up to the point that once or twice a week, there would be a lemonade stand [to raise money for Angelman syndrome] in the area," David said. "People really took ownership."

The stands were usually held in or near the Uzans' neighbourhood, but some were further away. They typically happened on Sundays or on weekday afternoons, and featured lemonade and kosher baked goods, including challahs, all made by friends or donated by local businesses.

They were amazed by people's generosity. "People would say, 'I'll take a couple of lemonades,' and then put $20 in the jar," Ruchama recalled. "It was astounding. At one stand, we made $800."



Na'ama and Nadav Uzan are seen at the lemonade stand they used last summer to raise money to find a cure for Angelman syndrome. UZAN FAMILY PHOTO

Several family foundations pitched in, as did corporate sponsor Gamma-Dynacare Medical Laboratories.

Home Depot also helped, donating wood to build sturdier lemonade stands. Then a local builder helped construct them and a group of neighbourhood children decorated them.

On Jan. 29, fundraising will resume: from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., Na'ama will sell hot chocolate, coffee donated by Starbucks and various types of baked goods outside her family's home.

"We're obviously really proud of Na'ama's sensitivity," Ruchama said. "This has tumbled into something so enormous… When I was five, I wasn't doing anything like this!"

David also expressed awe at their daughter's accomplishments, saying, "Everything, from Na'ama's understanding, to her initiative, to her love of her brother, to her drive and articulateness – we're just in disbelief."

To participate in or donate to the hot chocolate stand, contact the Uzan family at aslemonadestand@gmail.com.

The Facebook page for this initiative is www.facebook.com/ASlemonadestand. ■

For more information about FAST, visit www.cureangelman.org.

GUEST VOICE

'He was controlling right from the beginning'

LISA HOFFMAN*
SPECIAL TOTHE CJN

Our story began on a blind date. I was 20 years old and he was 26. What I now identify as abuse started early in our relationship. It was emotional and subtle. He would tell me that I looked "too Jewish" and comment on my short hair and weight. I wanted to be acceptable to him, so I started to diet, grew my hair and dressed to his style.

He was very controlling right from the beginning, making all the decisions of what we would do, where we would go and who we would see. I began to try things with him that I had never done before. Our relationship was on and off for two years until we got engaged. I got pregnant while we were planning our wedding. I was 23 years old.

We lived an extremely insulated life. He did not want me to work, and I did not have a car, so I became completely dependent on him. After our baby was born, his need to control intensified. He did the laundry and shopping, managed the money and made all the decisions about our life together. I was responsible for looking after the baby, but he was very clear in his expectations of how he wanted things done.

Visitors were minimal, because he didn't want germs in the house. My family and friends were only allowed to come over when he was at work. We did not leave our baby with anyone, as he trusted few. He controlled everything and told me that I was not capable. I believed him. Our physical relationship was also dictated by him.

There was no questioning him, as he believed that he was always right. I was afraid to challenge him.

After many years, I was finally allowed a car. He would threaten to remove the starter cable if I wanted to go somewhere that he didn't agree to. The car was for driving the kids (we had three by then) and shopping for the house. He controlled the money and gave me enough for groceries and if the children needed something. He expected dinner to be on the table at a certain time, and if the children started acting up, he would say that he did not want to eat with them. He was very harsh and blunt with his words and expectations. His behaviour was often threatening, however the abuse was never physical. He was overly protective and attentive to the children and very controlling with them as well.

> *He would threaten to remove the [car's] starter cable if I wanted to go somewhere that he didn't agree to*

I never identified my marriage as abusive, because it was what I had seen growing up in a Jewish home where verbal and emotional abuse happened every day and physical abuse often became a reality. This was my "normal" Jewish household with my parents and in my marriage. I think that I knew deep down that it wasn't. Nobody ever talked about it, and I didn't tell anyone about what I was living in my marriage, because at that point I hadn't named it. Abuse didn't happen in the Jewish community, and it was never discussed.

Later, after I left him, I found out that many people were aware that something was not right. Many years later, his mother told my daughter that she understood why I left.

The catalyst to my leaving was when my daughter started to act as a referee between us. This was the behaviour that I used with my parents, and I realized that I was watching my life replay. I was becoming more aware that my children were not seeing and learning healthy things from our relationship. I have always said that the greatest gift I gave my children was leaving their father, because this empowered them as well.

When I decided to leave, I didn't know where I would go, what I would have or how I would live because he controlled everything. What I did know was that I had to save my soul. I began to realize that I was not isolated and alone and that there was lots of support available once I became open to accepting it. I began to own my choices and stand proud in who I am without apologizing.

I took back my voice and found the person I had lost so many years before. ■

**Lisa Hoffman is a pseudonym.*

Community needs to talk about domestic abuse

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Krowitz said the general feeling on abuse is that it happens to somebody else.

"The image people have is that it happens to a family that is quite poor, uneducated, heavy drinking, drug use – that's the family that has abuse going on in the relationship, so people are shocked to learn that there are no socio-economic barriers," she explained.

"One of the myths is that all Jewish families are loving, nurturing and harmonious... I'll say something very unpopular – shalom bayit is a double-edged sword. When you have it in your home it is wonderful, and that's what we strive for, but sometimes it becomes a barrier for a woman, because she is ashamed that her home is not a place of peace and she feels like it is her fault."

She said one of the biggest barriers to seeking help is the concept of the situation being a *shandeh* – "the shame of admitting, disclosing, that your home is not a happy place. That your husband doesn't treat you well, that you are frightened, that you walk on eggshells."

Krowitz said the community needs to talk freely about the issue.

"I think we have to talk about it and break down the shame and recognize that... everyone has the right to live in a peaceful, content life and be mutually respected." ■

Penny Krowitz

For more information about services available to women coping with domestic abuse, contact ATEVAW at 905-695-5374; Jewish Family and Child Services at 416-638-7800; or Auberge Shalom's support line at 514-731-0833.

Domestic abuse checklist

The best way to help the community acknowledge that domestic abuse does occur in the Jewish community is to shatter myths about what abuse is and is not, and to educate people that abuse is not limited to physical abuse, which can include slapping, grabbing, pinching, punching, kicking, shoving or dragging.

You may be in an abusive relationship if your partner:

- **Embarrasses, calls you names and puts you down in public**
- **Uses intimidation, anger or threats to get his way**
- **Makes you feel helpless and dependent**
- **Does all the decision-making**
- **Controls and withholds money**
- **Denies access to medical treatment or services**
- **Calls you repeatedly or shows up unannounced to make sure you are where you said you would be**
- **Checks cellphones, emails or social networks without permission**
- **Exhibits extreme jealousy, insecurity and erratic mood swings**
- **Makes false accusations**
- **Blames you, drugs or alcohol for saying hurtful things or physically abusing you**
- **Pressures you into sex acts you're not comfortable with**
- **Isolates you from friends or family**
- **Doesn't treat you as an equal partner**
- **Threatens to keep your children from you**

INTERNATIONAL

Baird remains committed to Israel/PA

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

After a hostile greeting by protesters in the Palestinian Authority capital of Ramallah, who pelted his convoy with shoes and eggs, Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird returned to Jerusalem to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman and President Reuven Rivlin.

According to reports, Ramallah activists carried signs reading "Baird you are not welcome in Palestine." Baird has opposed the PA's bid for war crimes charges against Israel and other aggressive moves by the PA at the United Nations. Ottawa has also been vocally supportive of Israel under Prime Minister Stephen Harper's tenure.

Baird's visit came on the anniversary of Harper's landmark tour of the region in 2014. Baird hoped to reaffirm Canada's commitment to the strategic partnership and agreements forged on that visit. "Canada deeply values its close ties with Israel," Baird said prior to his trip.

Baird travelled to Ramallah Sunday morning to meet with PA Foreign Minister Riad Malki. At that meeting, which Baird called "cordial and constructive," Baird and Malki discussed Canada's "desire for a future of peace and prosperity, stability and security for both Palestinians and Israelis."

Baird said Canada considers itself a "friend" to both Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

"As friends, we have candid and frank exchanges on areas where we differ in opinion." Baird said he asked Malki to "strongly reconsider the consequences of moving forward with any action that may be counterproductive to a negotiated solution with the State of Israel."

Last week, the PA brought war crimes charges against Israel at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, along with ongoing efforts to seek sanctions at the UN. Baird said these moves, "will not contribute to peace and security in the region."

As Canadians, said Baird, "we strongly support Israel's right to defend itself, and we will play our part to defend Israel from international attempts to delegitimize it."

"Canada believes strongly in a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinian Authority," Baird said prior to the trip. "Negotiations provide the only viable path to lasting peace."

Israel's President Reuven Rivlin, left, with Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird ISRAEL SUN

Returning from Ramallah Sunday afternoon, Baird met privately with Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman.

Liberman has earned notoriety with his plan to annex Israeli Arab villages to the PA. Under Liberman's plan, only those Arabs who moved to Israeli-controlled areas and pledged loyalty to the State of Israel would retain their current citizenship. Once considered a contender for prime minister, Liberman's chances have been diminished considerably by recent corruption allegations.

The ministers jointly signed four memoranda of understanding and agreements, including a declaration of solidarity and friendship, and a declaration on trade that Baird said aims "to double the value of our [countries'] commercial relationship."

Baird said that with the rise of worldwide terrorism, including October's attack on the Parliament buildings in Ottawa, "the relationship between Canada and Israel is stronger than its ever been, and getting stronger every day."

Business development between the two countries will be targeted specifically in the area of defence, security and cyber security, Baird said.

Canadian Ambassador Vivian Bercovici and other official representatives from both countries remained after Baird's departure for award presentations to the 10 finalists of Grand Challenges Israel (GCI). Inspired by Grand Challenges Canada (GCC), which is led by CEO Peter Singer, who received the Order of Canada in 2011, GCI rewards entrepreneurs for advances in affordable health care for the developing world. Finalists, chosen from more than 100 entries, presented innovations in water purification, disease diagnosis and an affordable wheelchair for children. Worldwide, the Grand Challenges initiative was launched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2003.

Baird's trip to the region included a stop in Egypt, which Baird visited prior to the Israel leg of his trip.

There, he met with Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry but failed to ensure the release of Canadian-Egyptian journalist Mohamed Fahmy, convicted for being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood organization, which is banned in Egypt.

A year ago, on Jan. 20, Harper became the first Canadian prime minister to speak in the Knesset. His remarks about Israel's right to exist and defend itself received a standing ovation, along with jeers and catcalls from Israeli Arab MKs who stormed out in protest. On that visit, Harper pledged millions of dollars in increased support for the Palestinian Authority.

Although Harper's visit was well received by the Israeli media, the Canadian press was critical of Harper's large delegation and "rigid" pro-Israel stance.

Baird's Israel agenda originally included stops at the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, both atop the hotly debated Temple Mount area behind the Western Wall in Jerusalem. No reason was given for the decision to cancel visits there. Harper cancelled a similar visit a year ago.

Baird met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday afternoon before leaving Israel Jan.20. He was to continue on to Davos, Switzerland, to attend the 2015 World Economic Forum from Jan. 21 to 24. ■

Argentine special prosecutor found dead of gunshot wound

JTA
BUENOS AIRES

Argentine Special Prosecutor Alberto Nisman was found dead hours before he was to meet with lawmakers regarding the AMIA Jewish centre bombing case.

Nisman, 51, was found dead in the bathroom of his apartment in the Buenos Aires City neighbourhood of Puerto Madero early Monday morning.

Nisman was to have a closed-door meeting with congressional lawmakers, in which he was expected to reveal details of his allegations against President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and Foreign Minister Hector Timerman for their alleged cover up of Iran's role in the 1994 bombing, which killed 85 and injured hundreds.

According to Nisman's accusations, contained in a lawsuit filed last week in federal court, Fernandez covered up for former Iranian officials accused of involvement in the attack. Timerman, who is Jewish, also was named in the lawsuit, which seeks a freeze on Fernandez's assets.

Nisman was found dead from a gunshot wound from a 22-caliber pistol. No other details have been revealed. ■

Netanyahu plans to discredit ICC probe

JUSTIN JALIL
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu plans to launch a campaign to discredit the legitimacy of the International Criminal Court, following its announcement that it would pursue a war crimes probe against Israel over the summer war in Gaza, Israeli sources said Sunday.

Netanyahu convened a meeting of legal advisers and other officials to hash out an Israeli response to the ICC move, a source in the Prime Minister's Office said.

Earlier, Netanyahu derided The Hague-based body's decision and vowed to fight it.

Chief ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda opened a preliminary investigation on July 16 in order to examine if war crimes were committed by Israel, the Palestinians or both in the lead-up to, and during, Operation Protective Edge, last summer's 50-day conflict between the Israel Defence Forces and various groups in Gaza.

Netanyahu met with security officials and legal experts, concluding that it was necessary to thwart any attempt by the court to prosecute Israel for defending itself against terrorism.

The group will work to discredit the legitimacy of the international tribunal, as the Palestinian Authority is not a state and technically unable to file a case against Israel in the ICC, said the PMO source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The panel also expressed disappointment over the hypocritical nature of the ICC, accusing The Hague of being biased against Israel and stating that the probe would harm the global effort to fight terror.

Israeli and American officials have been harshly critical of the ICC move since the Jan. 16 decision.

"The decision by the prosecutor at the International Criminal Court to begin an inquiry against the State of Israel is the height of hypocrisy and the opposite of justice," Netanyahu said at the start of the cabinet meeting Sunday morning. "I have already encountered such phenomena during my years of public service representing the State of Israel both as ambassador to the UN and as prime minister, but this decision by the prosecutor is in a category of its own. It gives legitimacy to international terrorism.

"We will fight it in every way possible and we will also recruit others to fight this absurdity, and they are already being recruited. We will not allow Israel Defence Forces soldiers to face international tribunals.

"I would also like to say that these steps will not deter us from doing what is necessary to defend the State of Israel and its citizens," Netanyahu added.

He also slammed the investigation the day before, claiming the ICC was subverting its own "lofty goals," which were to prevent the repetition of history's worst crimes, including the Holocaust.

"The court was founded to prevent a repeat of history's worst crimes, foremost among them the genocide of six million Jews," he said. "Now the Palestinians are cynically manipulating the ICC to deny the Jewish state the right to defend itself against the very war crimes and the very terror that the court was established to prevent."

Benjamin Netanyahu FLASH 90 PHOTO

Earlier, Hamas welcomed the ICC decision to probe Israel, saying it would provide the tribunal with evidence to aid the investigation. "What is needed now is to quickly take practical steps in this direction, and we are ready to provide [the court] with thousands of reports and documents that confirm the Zionist enemy has committed horrible crimes against Gaza and against our people," Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum said.

Prosecutors in The Hague said preliminary examination would review "in full independence and impartiality" alleged crimes committed since June 13 last year, the beginning of tensions between the two sides that culminated in the summer conflict, which resulted in the deaths of some 2,200 Palestinians, according to Hamas figures, and 72 people on the Israeli side.

Potential cases ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda could take on include allegations of war crimes by Israel during last summer's Gaza war, where the Palestinians suffered heavy civilian casualties. Israel's settlement construction on land claimed by the Palestinians could also be examined. The cases could also include alleged war crimes by Hamas, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, including the firing of thousands of rockets at Israeli residential areas from crowded neighbourhoods.

The prosecutor's announcement came after the PA acceded to the Hague-based court's founding treaty and recognized its jurisdiction dating back to July, before the last Gaza war. That move opened the door to an ICC investigation that could target possible crimes by both Israel, which is not a member of the court, and the Palestinians.

"A preliminary examination is not an investigation, but a process of examining the information available in order to reach a fully informed determination on whether there is a reasonable basis to proceed with a [full] investigation," Bensouda said.

Depending on her findings, Bensouda will decide whether to launch or quash the investigation, based on the initial probe. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Hezbollah vows retaliation for airstrike

STUART WINER
JERUSALEM

Sources in Hezbollah said on Monday that retaliation for an alleged Israeli airstrike that killed several of its members was inevitable, but would be restrained enough to not provoke a war.

The Lebanese daily *As-Safir*, which is identified with Hezbollah, cited sources close to the Shiite terror group as saying that it would choose a time and place to hit back, but would do so in a manner that would not cause an escalation in the conflict.

At least six Hezbollah members, including a senior commander, were killed in an Israeli helicopter strike in the Syrian Golan Heights on Jan. 18, according to sources close to the terror group.

Among the dead was Jihad Mughniyeh, the son of Imad Mughniyeh, a senior Hezbollah commander killed in Damascus in 2008, allegedly by Israel. Jihad Mughniyeh had been serving as the Shiite terrorist group's Golan District commander, western sources said.

The attack would "draw a painful and unexpected response, but we can assume that it will be controlled and beneath the level that could escalate into all-out war," the Hezbollah sources told *As-Safir*, and recalled a roadside bomb attack in October 2014 that injured two IDF soldiers.

At the time, Hezbollah claimed the bombing was revenge for the killing of one of its members, Hussein Ali Haidar, in a Sept. 5 explosion that Lebanese officials claimed was caused when Israel destroyed one of its own surveillance devices that had been uncovered inside Lebanon.

"Even though Hezbollah doesn't intend to up the ante, the organization is planning for a worst-case scenario in which Israel decides to venture into Lebanon," the Hezbollah sources were quoted as saying.

Meanwhile Ibrahim al-Amin, editor of the *Al Akhbar* newspaper, which is also closely associated with Hezbollah, published an editorial in which he "envisioned" a meticulously planned response rather than a knee-jerk reaction.

"Special considerations caused the enemy leadership [Israel] to take the decision to carry out the crime yesterday," he wrote. Hezbollah's response, he said, "should be an act that isn't based on emotion, but on considerations that go down to the finest details, an action that demands quiet and consideration, without any connection to the emotional aspect."

The strike against the Hezbollah activists also drew censure from the organization's patron, Iran.

Although there was no official confirmation that Israel was behind the attack, an unnamed Israeli security source told *AFP* that an Israeli helicopter had conducted a strike against "terrorists" near Quneitra, on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights.

Mughniyeh was killed along with five others as they patrolled near the Syrian town. *Reuters*, citing a western intelligence source, said that Mughniyeh was the commander of Hezbollah forces in the Golan Heights and Syria and that he had prepared numerous attacks on Israel, including some that were carried out.

With the backing of Syria and Iran, Mughniyeh had overseen Hezbollah's presence on the Golan Heights and planned significant assaults on Israel using artillery rockets, anti-tank weapons, improvised explosive devices along the border, anti-aircraft weapons, and cross-border incursions against Israel Defence Forces soldiers and Israeli civilians, *Ha'aretz* reported, citing western intelligence sources.

As the son of slain Hezbollah terror chief Imad Mughniyeh, and with close personal connections to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and the commander of the Iranian Republican Guard's special forces unit, Qassem Soleimani, Jihad Mughniyeh was known as "the Prince" within the Lebanese terror organization. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

OPINION

I am woman, hear me roar (but not in politics)

Zohar Mandel

Israel started 2015 with a sense of hope. After a summer spent in bomb shelters, and watching our teenage soldiers fighting in Gaza, our government has dissolved itself and we're heading toward an election. Over the next few weeks, every newsroom will be full of anchors, spokespeople, former politicians and experts who will try to convince the Israeli public that this time, the election matters. And it does. This time, awareness of female representation in the Knesset is at an all-time high.

Israel is well known for its large number of political parties – more than 15 ran in the last election – and they focus on a wide range of issues. However, when it comes to gender equality, there's an unspoken problem. Not only were women poorly represented in the previous Knesset – at 27 out of 120 members – but there are ultra-Orthodox parties that forbid women from running as part of their electoral lists. The other parties, meanwhile, depend on an age-old excuse: because of Israel's security issues, we need security experts and former military commanders to represent us. Therefore, if we promise seats to women, it will be at the expense of someone who might have the knowledge to make this country better and safer for our children.

In the past, Israel had its feminist moments of glory.

Arguing against the under-representation of women, many point to the "Golda story" as one of Israel's proudest moments. Most people in Israel don't know much about Golda Meir or what she believed in, but they take pride in the fact that from 1969 to 1974, Israel had a female prime minister, making it one of a handful countries in the world to have elected a woman to its highest office. This argument is worn out, and it's used every time someone argues that women are under-represented in Israeli politics and that the Knesset is run by an old boys club.

Then along came Tzipi Livni. It doesn't matter if you're right-wing or left-wing. It doesn't matter if you agree or disagree with her politics. After listening to the Golda story for so many years, Livni offers voters an opportunity: she's a real candidate, not just a pretty placeholder, who dares to challenge the system and who has inspired us all with the real hope of having a woman as prime minister once again.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not asking anyone to vote for her just because she's a woman. On the contrary: I'm asking you to close your eyes, listen and give her a fair chance.

I'm asking the people of Israel, who are used to only voting for generals or veterans, to stop and listen to a woman. Women make up more than half of our population. There's no reason that they should not make up more of our elected officials. I'm asking news producers to make sure women are invited to speak on panels, give their opinions, raise issues and fight for what's right. I'm asking the Israeli public to make sure this election is about real issues that affect our society and economy, and not just a macho ego fight about who gets to run this country.

> *Make sure this election is about real issues that affect our society and economy, and not just a macho ego fight about who gets to run the country*

The upcoming election affects us all, and there are real issues at stake. It's a real opportunity to make history once again.

It's time for women to roar. ■

Zohar Mandel is external relations director at the Reut Institute

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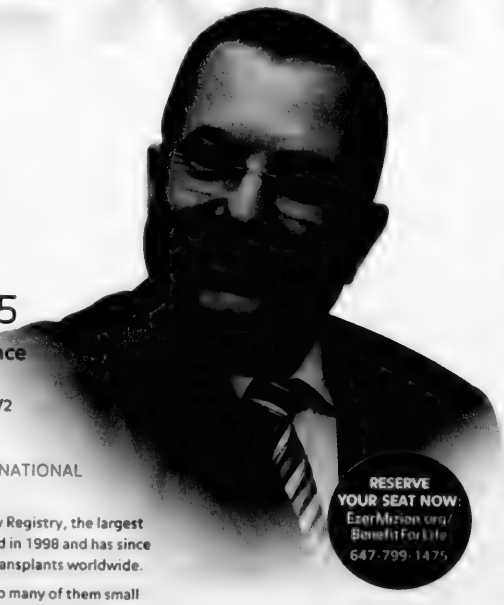

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 22, 2015

Paris march 'for Charlie, not for the Jews'

CNAAN LIPSHIZ
JTA, PARIS

As he marched through Paris with some 1.5 million people, Philippe Schmidt felt he was experiencing a "beautiful moment of unity."

For Schmidt, a Jewish human rights lawyer and vice-president of the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, the so-called Republican March on Jan. 11 was "a sign of popular mobilization against extremism" following three attacks this month by Islamists in the Paris region that killed 12 at the offices of a satirical weekly, a police officer on the street and four Jews at a kosher supermarket.

French President Francois Hollande and dozens of world leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, attended the rally in commemoration of all 17 victims that drew a record number of demonstrators.

Yet in Schmidt's estimation, most of the people marching "were there for Charlie, not for the Jews," he said, in reference to the killings at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, a magazine targeted for its satirical cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

His opinion is shared by many French Jews who, despite supporting the massive response to the attacks, doubt it will help curb rising anti-Semitic violence.

"I hope the response heralds a change in the indifference to anti-Semitism, but I am also aware that no such response came when only Jews were targeted," Schmidt noted in reference to the murder of four in 2012 at a Jewish school in Toulouse by another Islamist, Mohammed Merah. Three children were among the victims.

"There was no Republican March or anything comparable after Toulouse," he said.

Some prominent French Jewish figures boycotted the march because it was co-organized by far-left organizations that they hold responsible for promoting anti-Semitic violence.

"Some of the people walking today are the same people who walked against Israel last summer," said Philippe Karsenty, the deputy mayor of the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, in reference to anti-Semitic violence during protests against Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza. "This is completely hypocritical."

Many of the marchers who carried "I am Charlie" signs "would never carry a sign reading 'I am Jewish' or 'I am Hyper Cacher,'" he said, in reference to the supermarket that was attacked.

A vigil the night before outside Hyper Cacher drew approximately 2,000 people and featured hundreds of Israeli flags and the spontaneous singing of *Hatikvah*.

"Look around. There are almost only Jews here," said Serge Bitton, a resident of the Paris suburb of Saint-Mande. "The absence of non-Jews tells you everything you need to know about how French society feels about the attacks on our community."

CRIF, the umbrella group of French Jewish communities, and the Union of French Jewish Students of France, (UEJF), called on members to attend the march on Jan. 11.

But the leaders of the National Bureau for Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism stayed away for reasons similar to the ones expressed by Karsenty.

By contrast, France's chief rabbi, Haim Korsia, spoke of the march and the hundreds of smaller gatherings and walks organized elsewhere in France as a possible turning point. He has long complained of indifference to anti-Semitism in French society.

"This time, French society has done its duty," Rabbi Korsia said at a memorial ceremony for the 17 victims on Jan.11 at the Grand Synagogue here. "Often we asked, 'Where is France? Where are the French?' We feel isolated. Well, today, on this historical day for France, we felt this fraternity."

While many French Jews doubt that their society cares as such about anti-Semitism, they are less skeptical about the government's stance.

Hours after the hostage taking and killings at Hyper Cacher, Hollande called it an anti-Semitic attack. He and Prime Minister Manuel Valls both attended the memorial service at the Grand Synagogue, and Valls also came to the vigil outside the supermarket, along with Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo.

During an address Jan. 13 before the National Assembly, the French parliament's lower house, Valls, whom many French Jews regard as something of a hero, reiterated his trademark assertion that without its Jews, "France will no longer be France."

To Schmidt, the Valls speech and Hollande's attendance at the synagogue "were very powerful symbols of support."

Bitton, the Jewish resident of Saint-Mande, said he was very grateful for the government's support. But, he added, "the government of France is not France."

"It changes every few years," he said. "The anti-Semitism stays put." ■

Israeli security forces bust Galilee IS cell

MITCH GINSBURG
JERUSALEM

Israeli security forces arrested seven Arab citizens of Israel who had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State(IS), were actively planning to join the Salafist jihadi group in Syria and were plotting to carry out attacks in Israel, including against the Arab Druze minority, the Shin Bet said Sunday.

The men, all from the Galilee region of Israel, were indicted Jan.18 on several counts, including membership in an illegal organization, IS, which was declared illegal in September. The police and Shin Bet conducted the arrests and subsequent interrogations during November and December.

The discovery of the cell and the foiling of a plot to acquire weapons and shoot Druze citizens of Israel, who are considered infidels by the adherents of Salafist Sunni Islam, "points to a dangerous escalation among Israeli Arabs," the Shin Bet said.

The central member of the Galilee cell was identified as Adnan Ala a-Din, a 40-year-old lawyer from Nazareth, who, the Shin Bet charged, presented himself to the other members of the group as a "senior and official IS officer in Palestine."

A-Din allegedly preached Islamist ideology to the other members of the group, advocated strongly in favour of terror attacks against Israeli civilians, and had the members slaughter sheep in order to steel themselves and "prepare their souls" for the rigours of jihad.

Another alleged central figure was Karim Abu Salah, 22, of Sakhnin, who was arrested in July 2014 at Ben-Gurion International Airport on his way to Syria. From prison, the Shin Bet alleged, Abu Salah sought to organize strikes against Israeli military targets and against Druze citizens of Israel.

The group would convene regularly for religious lessons, studying under an unnamed religious leader in the north of Israel, and maintaining contacts with Islamic State fighters in Syria, including several Arab citizens of Israel.

Additionally, on Nov. 20, the Shin Bet and the Israel Police arrested Omar Musa Abu Kush, a doctor who had recently graduated from the Jordan University of Science and Technology's Faculty of Medicine.

In custody, Abu Kush, an Israeli citizen from the Bedouin village of Arara, admitted to supporting the Islamic State and to having met with IS activists in Jordan. His intention was to travel to Syria to join the ranks of the organization, which has led the battle against Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime and brutalized local populations, killing men who do not adhere to the organization's interpretation of Islam and forcing women into servitude.

Abu Kush apparently planned to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Othman Abu Alkayan, another Bedouin citizen of Israel, from the nearby village of Hura, who had worked as a resident at Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon before joining the Islamic State in Syria, where he was killed in battle in August.

Both men, Abu Kush and Abu Alkayan, were exposed to the Islamic State's radical ideology on academic campuses in Jordan. Abu Kush has been indicted for contact with a foreign agent, support of a terrorist organization, and promotion for an illegal organization. ■

ALEX KOLOMOISKI/YEDIOTH AHARONOTH/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

An emotional visit

Akie Abe, the wife of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, is visibly moved during a visit the couple made to Yad Vashem over the weekend. They toured the Holocaust History Museum, participated in a memorial ceremony in the Hall of Remembrance, visited the tree planted in honour of Righteous Among the Nations Chiune-Sempo Sugihara, visited the children's memorial and signed the Yad Vashem guest book.

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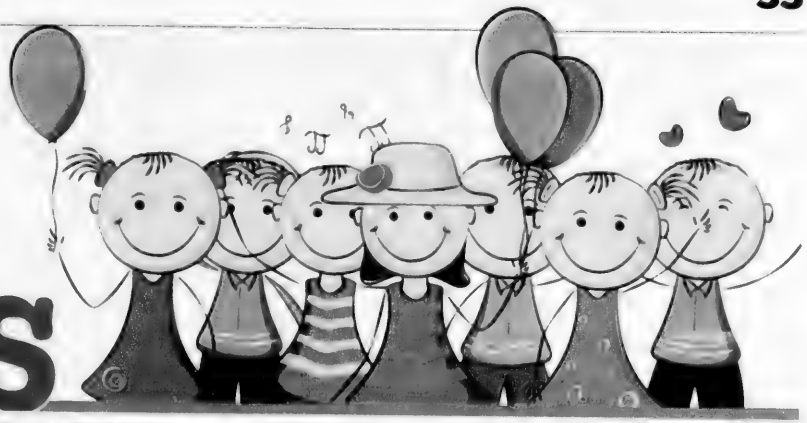

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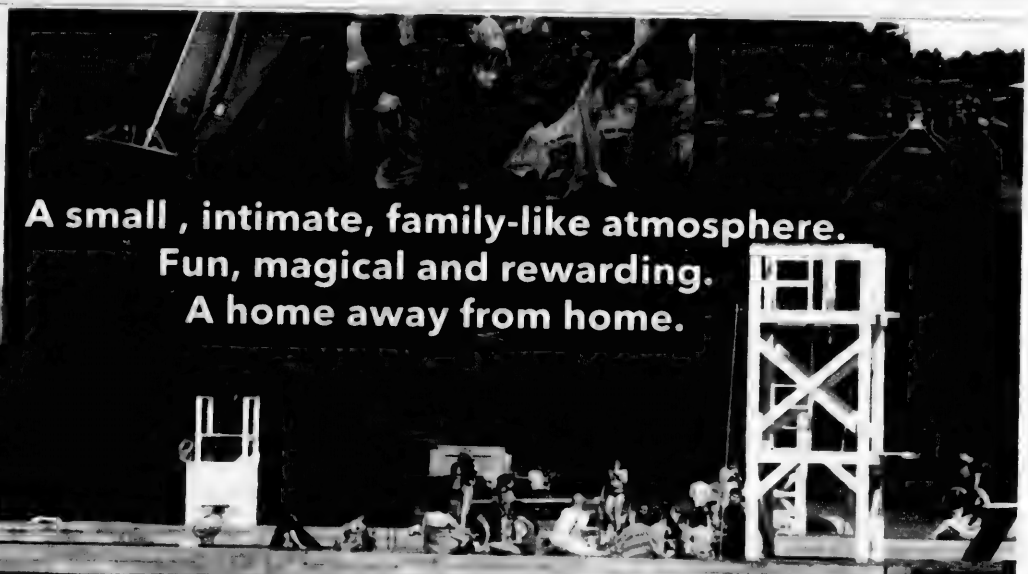

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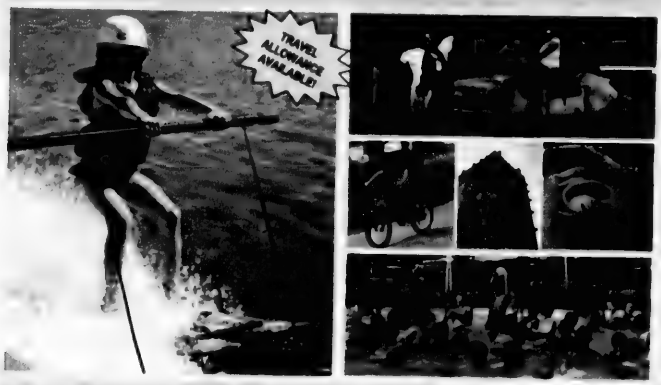

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CBB of Ottawa, located on the shores of the Ottawa River, has been the summer home for Jewish children (ages 7-16) since 1935. Through varied programs (Olympic sized pool, water-ski/sail/canoe, & arts programming etc), children acquire new skills & opportunity for self-expression. Sense of community & family atmosphere allows campers to enjoy the outdoors and build self confidence. We offer a fully kosher kitchen, Jewish culture and community connections, while making lifelong friends! Sessions available: Weekender, 2, 3 1/2, 5 1/2 and 7 weeks.

CAMP KADIMAH (1943)
4600 Bathurst Street, Suite 200,
Toronto, ON M2R 3V3
Director: Phil David
Tel: (416) 634-3089
www.campkadimah.com
Email: info@campkadimah.com
Kadimah is a co-ed Young Judaea camp offering an inclusive experience immersed in Jewish values and authentic Maritime hospitality serving campers aged 7-16 from across Canada and internationally. Session lengths of 2, 3 & 6 weeks include Athletics, Waterfront and Arts programs. Register online or contact our Toronto office.

CAMP MASSAD
514-488-6610
info@campmassad.org
www.campmassad.org
Where going to camp means coming home – With a great staff to camper ratio, and a true sense of community, you can feel confident that our campers (grades 2-10) are well cared for and engaged. Campers and staff from all over the world, look forward to returning year after year. Tammid Muchan!

CAMP NEW MOON
Jack and Sue Goodman
Owners/Directors
www.campnewmoon.ca
info@campnewmoon.ca
416-787-4461
Our smaller size and personal touch create a sense of belonging. Amazing facilities and extensive programming promote fun, independence and accomplishment. Younger campers receive specialized supervision and care. At New Moon, everyone knows everyone within a setting that develops resilient, confident and very happy children with fabulous, lifelong memories!

CAMP NORTHLAND BNAI BRITH
Camp Director: Lewis Sohinki
Tel: 905-881-0018
Website: www.campnbb.com
Email: happycamper@campnbb.com
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CAMP RAMAH IN CANADA
Dr. Ron Polster, Camp Director
416-789-2193
www.campramah.com
info@campramah.com
We offer a variety of "Taste" opportunities – shorter sessions to enable younger children to experience Ramah in a way that suits them best: a GR. 1 long weekend, a GR. 2 10 day taste program, and a GR. 3-4 two week adventure. Space is limited. Register early in order not to be disappointed.

CAMP ROBIN HOOD
158 Limestone Cres Toronto,
ON M3J 2S4
Owners/Directors : Sari & Howie
Tel.: 416-736-4443
Email: office@camprobinhood.ca
www.camprobinhood.ca
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CAMP WALDEN
Sol Birenbaum, B. Sc. Hon., B. Ed.
Co-Owner and Camp Director
sol@campwalden.ca
Website: www.campwalden.ca
1-888-254-4274
Walden is a traditional co-ed overnight camp located in Palmer Rapids, Ontario. Set on 750 beautiful acres, campers make life-long friends and lasting memories while participating in a variety of land and water activities. A committed and highly skilled staff facilitate a safe experience for campers that ultimately results in a tightly bonded camp community.

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411 Lawrence Ave. E.,
Toronto, Ont. M3C 1N9
Director: Eric Shendelman
Tel: 416-444-9595
Website: www.crestwoodcamp.com
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or 905-832-POOL (7665)
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www.elitecamps.com
Email: info@elitecamps.com
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Downsview, Ont. M3H 3R4
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Director: Dikla Weltzner
Tel.: 905-370-0448
email: dikla@bnaiakiva.org
www.moshavabairtoronto.org
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Agnes Stawicki
Tel.: 905-272-1843
Email: info@ourkids.net
www.ourkids.net
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Tel: 416 901 4776
website: PawsitivelyPetsForKids.com
Is your child crazy for pets and animals? Pawsitively Pets runs specialized hands-on animal camps, programs, classes, birthday parties & more! Programs available for children 2-15 years old. Programs, classes and parties available year round at our location or yours! Camp available PA Days, March Break, Pass over, Summer and Winter Break.

SHENDY'S SWIM SCHOOL
Director: Eric Shendelman
Tel: 416-576-SWIM (7946)
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www.sportplay.ca
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www.tacsports.ca
This camp is designed for children who are interested in having fun and learning new soccer, tennis, basketball and swimming skills. Programs are designed to maximize growth and development for students. Students are sorted into 5 different star levels from beginner to advanced. The main goal of our programs is to improve technical abilities, build self-confidence, and to cultivate a foundation of good sportsmanship and the value of effort. March Break Camp 2015 (4-16yrs): Toronto French School: 9-13 Mar.; 16-20 Mar. and West Ellesmere Community Church: 37 Marchington Circle, Scarborough. Call locations for rates and dates.

UJA - SILBER FAMILY CENTRE
4600 Bathurst Street,
Toronto ON, M2R 3V2
Ricci Postan - Coordinator, Silber Family Centre for Jewish Camping
Telephone: 416.635.2883 x5391
Email: OHCToronto@ujafed.org
www.jewishtoronto.com/camp
Studies show that children who go to Jewish camp are more likely to become adults who value their heritage, are engaged in their communities, support more causes and take on leadership roles throughout their lives. One Happy Camper Toronto awards a $1,000 incentive grant to first-time campers (from the GTA) choosing Jewish overnight camp.

URJ CAMP GEORGE
Contact: Jeff Rose or Karen Kollins
Director/Associate Director
3845 Bathurst Street, Suite 301 Toronto
Tel/Fax: 416-638-2635
Email: campgeorge@urj.org
Website: www.georgeurjcamps.org
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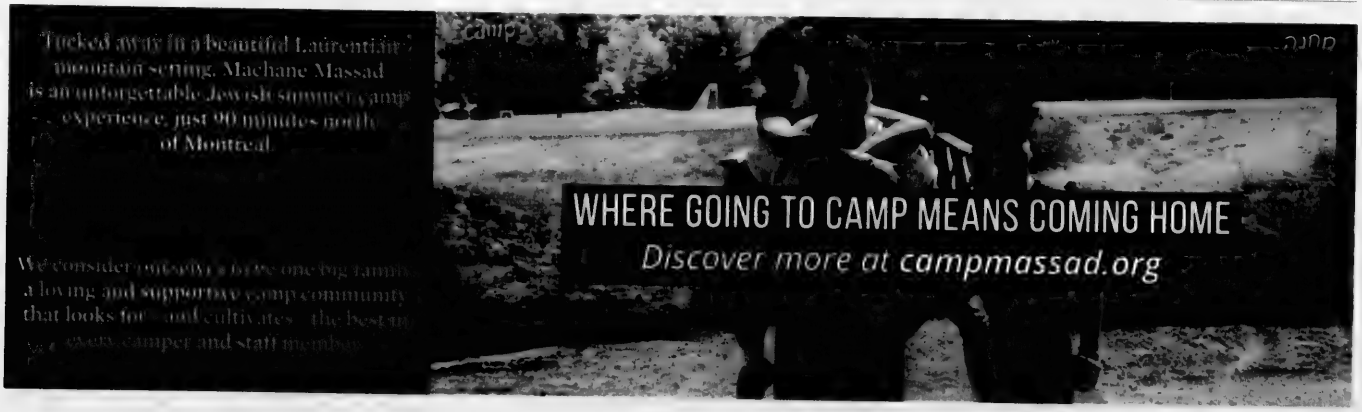
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Jewish Life

Zach Hyman
MICHIGAN ATHLETICS PHOTOS

Zach Hyman in the running for top U.S. college award

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

It took Zach Hyman a little while to get acclimatized to the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) and make his presence felt.

With press clippings galore from his time in Junior A hockey with the Hamilton Red Wings – he was RBC Canadian Junior Hockey Player of the Year in 2011 – he didn't exactly set the league on fire in his freshman and sophomore seasons. It wasn't until his third, junior, year with the University of Michigan Wolverines that he started to make an impact. And then, look out!

Now in his senior year, he's having a breakout season that is seeing him play on the team's top line, lead the team in scoring, receive player of the week awards and become one of the top three candidates to win the Hobey Baker Award, given to the top college player in the United States.

Oh, and the 2010 Florida Panthers draftee (fifth round, 123rd overall) is likely to turn pro next season.

Not a bad year. Not at all.

To his credit, Hyman, 22, doesn't want to look that far ahead. Contacted by phone in Ann Arbor, home of the Wolverines, he said he is not focusing on what the future might hold.

"I'm thinking more about the season and helping Michigan do well," he said.

If the future doesn't interest the native of Toronto, let's look at the present. Hyman, who's played centre and right wing, recently led Michigan to a two-game weekend sweep over the ninth-ranked Minnesota Gophers. He tallied six points in two games, including a goal and three assists in the Wolverine's 4-3 overtime victory. The next night he added another goal and one helper to help complete the sweep.

That performance left him atop the Big Ten in scoring and fifth in the nation, with 26 points, or 1.37 points per game. He then received his second career Big Ten star of the week award.

Earlier this season, Hyman, who stands six foot two and weighs 205 pounds, enjoyed a five-point night (3 goals, 2 assists), including a natural hat trick, against UMass-Lowell.

Pressed to recount a season highlight, Hyman conceded he felt pretty good notching the game-winning goals against rivals Michigan State and Michigan Tech in the GLI Championship in late December.

In 19 games he leads the Wolverines in scoring with 11 goals and 15 assists, is plus-12 and has three game winners.

No doubt those performances account for the massive support he's been getting in voting for the Hobey Baker Memorial Award, given to the player voted most outstanding in U.S. college hockey. He's near the top with more than 28,200 votes (anyone can vote online at this stage), well ahead of Boston College's Jack Eichel, touted to be one of this year's top two NHL entry draft picks.

Hyman, a graduate of the Robbins Hebrew Academy and the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, admits his success was slow in coming. It took him until the middle of his third year before things started to change for him.

"I had a good finish to my year," he said. "I finished really strong."

That boosted his confidence, and when you put that together with improvements in his skating, puck handling and shot, the results have been seen on the score sheet this year.

He sees himself as not just the go-to guy when it comes to scoring or setting up his linemates, Dylan Larkin and Alex Kile, but as a 200-foot player, responsible at both ends of the ice.

His coach, Red Berenson, agrees.

"He's a senior now and he's become one of our best players over four years," Berenson said. "His game has really come to the fore this year. He's a leader and is leading in points. He scores huge goals. When the team needs a lift, Zach is the guy who gives it to us."

Berenson said he can rely on Hyman in all situations, including the power play and penalty killing.

Hyman's progress did not come overnight, the coach continued. "I think it's been a gradual process."

When he came to the Wolverines, "he was a good junior player, but not necessarily a good college player," Berenson said.

"He came to us with a lot of press clippings, and people expected he'd be ready to make an impact, but it never happened. He did not quit working or stop being a good teammate. He kept evolving. He became stronger, faster and had more confidence. Puck luck followed him."

Hyman, one of three Jewish players on the Wolverines along with Americans Justin Selman and Steve Racine, has attended the Panthers' rookie camp, which no doubt helped in his development. While both Hyman and Berenson are hesitant to look too far ahead, the legendary coach said Hyman is definitely a pro prospect.

"He could play in the American [Hockey] League tomorrow," Berenson said.

As for the NHL, it would depend on the role expected of him. It's tough to predict a college player's future, but his former teammate, Luke Glendening, was not the scorer Hyman is. Still, through hard work, he developed into a useful contributor to the Detroit Red Wings on their fourth line, Berenson said.

Modest to a fault, Hyman said a pro career is something he'll consider. "I feel physically and mentally ready," he said. "After this year, obviously I'll try my hand at the next level." ■

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

AZRIELI SHORT FILMS TO BE SHOWN AT MILES NADAL JCC

The Azrieli Series Short Films are intimate personal profiles of the five most recently published authors in the Azrieli Series of Holocaust Survivor Memoirs. The films are being screened to mark International UN Holocaust Remembrance Day, followed by a discussion about the future of Holocaust education.

Free admission; attendees receive free copies of the latest Holocaust survivor memoirs. Co-presented with Downtown Jewish Community School. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday Jan. 25, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Please RSVP to Principal@djcs.org

• • •

Recently in Print: American author **Maxim Shrayer**, a professor of Russian and Jewish studies at Boston College, has written a memoir, *Leaving Russia*, that has been called "an unforgettable, first-person account of Jewish life and Jewish suffering during the final years of Russian Communism." Like Toronto writer **David Bezmozgis**, Shrayer is an émigré from the former Soviet Union whose previously published short stories take the immigrant narrative into the 21st century. *Leaving Russia* is published by Syracuse University Press.

• • •

Film Events

• Film critic **Adam Nayman** discusses **Paul Thomas Anderson's** film *The Master* and other works in a lecture illustrated with film clips. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, Jan. 26, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop-in, students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Film critic **Kevin Courrier** delivers a series of three lectures with film clips on "Forbidden Desires: The Films of **Alfred Hitchcock**," focusing on such classics as *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Rear Window* and *Psycho*. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays, Jan. 26, Feb. 2 and Feb. 9, 1 to 3 p.m. Drop-in $12, students $6. To register, please call 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• The newly announced Toronto Smartphone Film Festival is seeking submissions of short films (10 minutes or less) shot on a smart device for inclusion in the first festival, scheduled for May. Submission deadline, April 12. www.smartphonefilm.ca

• • •

Arts in Brief

• **Deborah Stalman** and **Demetri Petsalakis** perform a Yiddish Cabaret over brunch at the Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. Sunday, Jan. 25, 10:30 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. 416-967-1078.

• The Koffler Centre of the Arts presents an evening with Pulitzer Prize-winning artist and comic-book legend **Art Spiegelman**, author of *Maus*. In his talk "What the %@&*! Happened to Comics?" Spiegelman presents a chronological tour of the evolution of comics. Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W. at Bathurst. Monday, Jan. 26, 7 p.m. General $39, students $29. kofflerarts.org

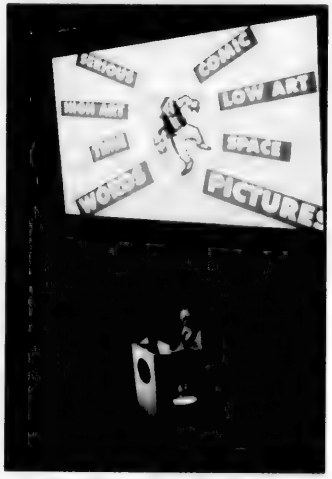
• The Miles Nadal JCC Book Club discusses **Howard Shrier's** award-winning crime novel *Buffalo Jump*, Thursday, Jan. 29, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. RSVP, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• Koffler Centre of the Arts presents *Complex*, a staged reading of a play that follows the relationship between a university math professor and a teenager growing up in Chalkfarm. Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. Pay what you can.

• • •

At the Galleries

• In *Ultra-Parallel*, Toronto artist **Kristiina Lahde** transforms ordinary objects and materials through a process of geometric re-organization. Koffler Gallery, Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St. Opening reception, Thursday, Jan. 22, 6 to 9 p.m. Free admission.



Art Spiegelman will be at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema in Toronto on Jan.26.
PHOTO BY BRYAN OLLER

• A showcase of the Tattoo paintings, "Legends and Market Scenes" by the late Canadian artist **Aba Bayefsky** remains on view in the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery until Jan. 26. ■

HELP PROMOTE JEWISH EDUCATION ... THROUGH YOUR STORIES!

Six stories that highlight the value of a Jewish education will be featured in the "first" **Focus on Education** Feature Feb. 26th, on **cjnews.com** and our Facebook page.

Stories must be no more than 500 words and include a photo.
Submit by Feb. 2nd to ***cblackman@thecjn.ca***

*Winners must have attended (or be attending) a Jewish educational program and sign a release allowing **The CJN** to use their story and photo.*

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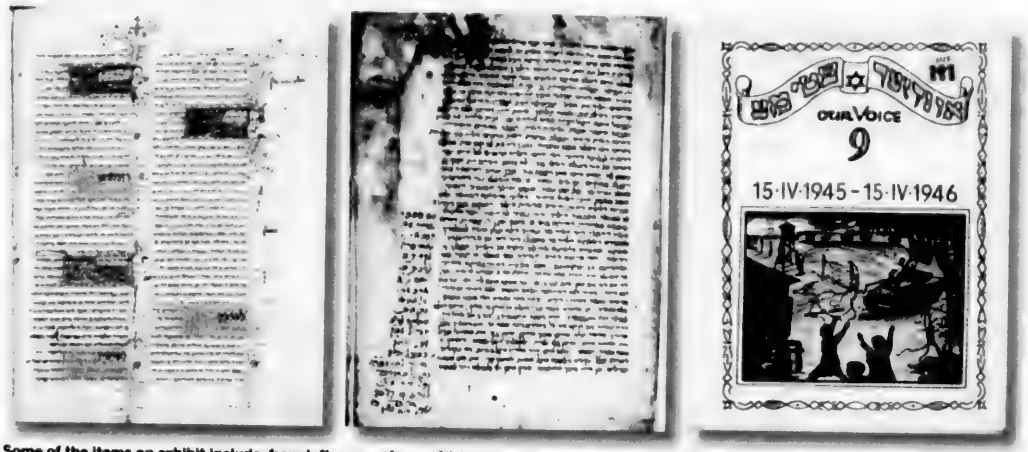
THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

U of T library hosts Judaica exhibit

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN



Some of the items on exhibit include, from left, a page from a 14th-century manuscript of the Sefer Mitsvot Gadol by Moses ben Jacob of Coucy; the first page of the 15th-century Zohar belonging to Shabbetai Tsvi and Under Shtime, the first Yiddish publication for Holocaust survivors.

A Middle Eastern Torah dating from the 10th to 12th century, a 14th-century Torah commentary by Rashi, and an early 15th-century manuscript of the Zohar that once belonged to the false Jewish messiah Shabbetai Tsvi are among the pieces on display in an exhibition of Judaica that opens Jan. 26 at the University of Toronto's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

About a third of the 110 items in "As It Is Written: Judaic Treasures from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library" come from the Friedberg Collection, donated to the library by Toronto financier Albert Friedberg and his wife Nancy in several instalments beginning in 1995, and credited with putting the library on the map as a major repository of rare Judaica.

Other items come from a collection of rare Hebraica donated to the university from the estate of the late Toronto Rabbi Abraham Price; from the Schneid Collection of Jewish Art, donated from the estate of artist and art historian Otto Schneid; and from the Druck Collection of kibbutz and secular Haggadot published from the 1930s to the 1980s.

The exhibition also includes a tribute album dedicated to Sir Moses Montefiore on the occasion of his 100th birthday in 1884; photos of Chinese Jews taken by Bishop William Charles White; and a collection of rare postcards of about 120 pre-World War II synagogues from all over Europe, many of which were destroyed.

According to the catalogue by curator Barry Walfish, the exhibition "takes visitors through more than a thousand years of Jewish history and culture." A specialist in Judaica who earned a PhD in medieval Jewish intellectual history and medieval interpretation of the Bible, Walfish began working as a Judaica specialist for the Robarts Library in 1980 and for the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in 1991.

"In putting this exhibition together, I discovered a lot of things I hadn't known about before – it's been quite an adventure for me," he said. "I tried to include items from the most important collections that we have, but I had to be quite selective because our exhibition space is quite restricted."

Still, the scope of the exhibition is impressive. Seeking a Canadian connection, Walfish included a display case of Canadiana from the 18th century to the present. The oldest item, a 1752 broadsheet listing goods offered by the Jewish merchants Nathans and Hart, is "one of the first items printed in Canada as well as clear evidence of a Jewish presence in Halifax almost from the time of its founding."

There is also an 1878 prayerbook edited by Montreal Rabbi Abraham de Sola; a mystical treatise about the Golem of Prague written in 1909 by Rabbi Judah Yudl Rozenberg of Toronto and Montreal; a volume of poetry by Montrealer Y. I. Segal published in 1921 and regarded as the first book of Yiddish poetry printed in Canada; and a wartime Yiddish pamphlet titled "In Battle against Anti-Semitism" by communist-socialist politician J. B. Salsberg of Toronto. ■

"As It Is Written: Judaic Treasures from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library" is on view at the library, 120 St. George St. at Harbord, from Jan. 26 to May 1. Consult the library website or phone 416-978-5285 for visiting hours.

Toronto Jewish Theatre

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by Jeffrey Sweet

Directed by Ari Weisberg

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AUTHORS & POETS

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

CJN

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original short stories or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 2, 2015. Not all submissions can be published, and not all those selected will appear in both Toronto and Montreal editions. We look for originality. Please don't send more than three entries. We cannot correspond with submitters.

Deadline for submissions is Feb. 27, 2015 at 3 p.m.

E-mail submissions to:

cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com

We can only accept email submissions. We prefer Word documents.

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Please notify us at least 10 days prior to your departure

Continuing the tradition of engaging with Maimonides

MARTIN LOCKSHIN

If we did not have good evidence that there was only one man named Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides or Rambam, 1138-1204), it would be tempting to think that there were two, or even more. Some of his works display an unrivalled mastery of rabbinic literature; others, mastery of Greek and Muslim philosophy. In addition, he produced voluminous medical writings.

No individual Jewish author had a greater effect on later generations than Maimonides. New scholarly books about him appear all the time, and they have to take a stand on who the "real Maimonides" was, the halachist, the philosopher or the doctor.

James A. Diamond holds the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Chair in Jewish Studies at the University of Waterloo. *Maimonides and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon* is his third book about Maimonides, yet he has still found new and worthwhile questions to investigate. Diamond is very familiar with the argument that Maimonides was a neo-Aristotelian in Jewish clothing. But the opening chapters of his book build a strong case for the Jewishness of Maimonides' thought. Diamond also provides a learned analysis of what Maimonides meant when he talked about the love of God. Maimonides argued that such love could be achieved only through philosophical inquiry, and that it was superior to the fear of God, the only purpose of which was to scare the unphilosophical masses into proper behaviour.

These chapters set the stage for the rest of the book, which exemplifies a relatively new field of study, "reception history," in other words, how Maimonides' thought was "received," i.e. accepted, rejected, appropriated, misappropriated, modified and/or twisted by later generations. Each of the eight chapters in this section concentrates on one great Jewish thinker who grappled with Maimonides' thought, from the "assault" (as Diamond calls it) launched against him by the kabbalist Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (Ramban or Nahmanides, 1194-1270) to the "reinvention of Maimonides' legal code" by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), the first chief rabbi of the modern Jewish community in Israel in the 20th century. Diamond deals mostly with the reception of Maimonides by rabbis, but he also includes two less traditional Jews, Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) and Hermann Cohen (1842-1918).

The book will be of major interest to academics, but any Jew who studies and struggles with Maimonides' thought will find it a compelling read. To give an idea of Diamond's interesting findings, I will concentrate on the chapter about Rabbi Kook and Maimonides.

It is hard to imagine two more different interpreters of traditional Judaism than Maimonides, the medieval arch-rationalist, and Rabbi Kook, the post-chassidic creative mystical thinker. Yet Rabbi Kook never explicitly opposes Maimonides' approach, he just "reinterprets" it. Diamond leads us through a number of such reinterpretations, drawing heavily on materials, published only recently, that Rabbi Kook left in manuscript form.

Rabbi Kook argued that when Maimonides claimed that love of God was superior to fear of God, he was only denigrating the type of fear of God that people have in their early stages of spiritual development. Rabbi Kook believed that the initiated could achieve a type of fear of God that was, in fact, superior, and that they could use the love of God as a stepping stone to bring them there. Thus Rabbi Kook essentially turns Maimonides around 180 degrees.

Diamond also shows how oddly Rabbi Kook reworks a famous line from Maimonides. In the first sentence of his great halachic work, the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides wrote: "The basic principle of all basic principles and the pillar of all sciences is to know that there is (*yesh sham*) a First Being [=God]." Speakers of Hebrew recognize right away that this is not standard Hebrew. Although *sham* means "there" when referring to a place, Hebrew doesn't use the word to mean "there is." The reason that Maimonides used it was already pointed out by his translator, Rabbi Samuel ibn Tibbon, at the beginning of the 13th century. Maimonides' Hebrew was that of an Arabic speaker, and in Arabic, the word *thuma* (cognate of the Hebrew, *sham*) is used in the phrase "there is."

Maimonides and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon
James A. Diamond
Cambridge University Press, 2014

> *It's hard to imagine two more different interpreters of traditional Judaism than Maimonides and Rabbi Kook*

Whether Rabbi Kook knew of ibn Tibbon's insight is unclear, but he read a mystical message into this phrase. He "interpreted" Maimonides as suggesting that only "there," on some other plane of comprehension, and not here in our rational world, could true knowledge of God be found. Rabbi Kook wrote that we reach this level only by using "that aspect of knowledge that is impossible to know," thus straying very far from Maimonides' belief that the student who follows an established curriculum of sciences and philosophy will attain the desired knowledge.

Maimonides himself was often accused of imposing a foreign worldview on the Bible, by reading it through the lens of neo-Aristotelian philosophy. Perhaps there is some poetic justice in the fact that others read his work as saying things Maimonides never imagined and never would have supported. In any case, as Diamond astutely shows, the attention paid to Maimonides' works by Jewish thinkers for the last 800 years proves that his works have become an integral part of the Jewish canon, texts that cannot be ignored and must be engaged.

Canadians should be proud that a first-rate Jewish studies scholar right here in Canada is continuing the tradition of engaging with Maimonides, and is sure to be studied seriously around the world. ■

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Cook with oranges for Tu b'Shvat

SYBIL KAPLAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Tu b'Shvat, the Jewish New Year for the trees, is on Feb. 4 this year, and the fruits that are now in season in Israel are apples, persimmons, some strawberries (although beautiful, they are expensive) and several varieties of oranges.

One usually thinks of dates, figs and carob for Tu b'Shvat, the fruits of Eretz Yisrael but, for variety, here are some recipes using oranges and other fruits.

Syrian Orange Chicken

- ❑ 1 tbsp. margarine
- ❑ 1 tbsp. oil
- ❑ 1 cut-up chicken
- ❑ 1/2 cup orange juice
- ❑ 1 cup chicken broth
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. corn starch
- ❑ 1/2 chopped onion
- ❑ juice of 1/2 lemon
- ❑ 6-9 halved, pitted dates
- ❑ orange slices

Preheat oven to 350. Spray a baking dish. Heat margarine and oil in a frying pan and brown chicken. Remove chicken and place in a baking dish.

Add orange juice, chicken broth, corn starch, onion and lemon juice to frying pan and cook, stirring, until sauce thickens. Pour over chicken.

Cover and bake in preheated oven 45 minutes. Garnish with dates and orange slices, cover, and bake at least 15 minutes or until chicken is done. Good served with rice. Makes 4 servings.

Orange Drop Cookies

- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 2/3 cup unsalted pareve margarine
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 1/2 cup orange juice
- ❑ 1 tbsp. grated orange peel
- ❑ 2 1/4 cups flour
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- ❑ 1/2 cup chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 350. Grease cookie sheets.

Cream sugar and margarine with eggs. Stir in orange juice and orange peel. Add flour, baking soda and nuts and mix well. Drop by teaspoon onto cookie sheets. Bake in preheated oven 10 minutes or until golden brown. Makes about 3 dozen.

Nectarine Spice Cake

- ❑ 6 seeded, peeled, cut-up nectarines
- ❑ 1/3 cup canola oil
- ❑ 3 eggs
- ❑ 1 cup brown sugar
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. ginger
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. cinnamon
- ❑ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1 3/4 cups flour
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 1/2 cup non-dairy creamer

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a cake pan or two loaf pans, or place mini-papers in a mini-muffin pan and spray with vegetable spray.

Place nectarine pieces, oil, eggs and brown sugar in a mixer or food processor and blend a few seconds. Add ginger, cinnamon, vanilla, flour, baking powder and non-dairy creamer and blend.

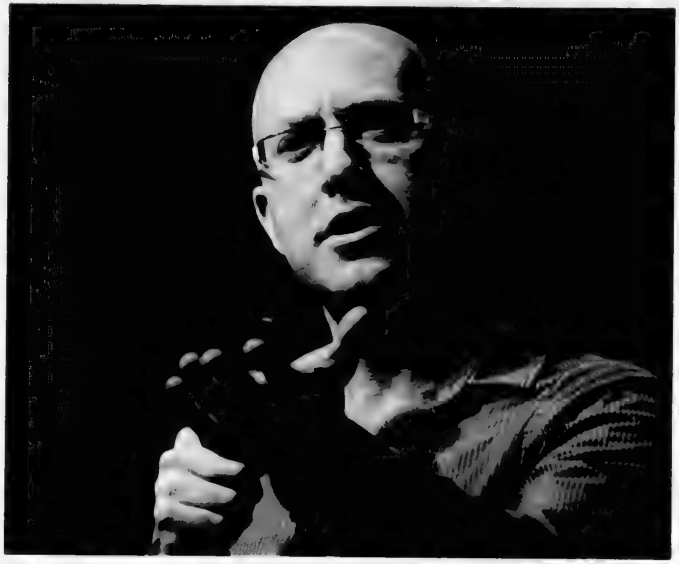
Spoon into baking pans. Bake in preheated oven 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.

This recipe can be doubled.

Orange Juice Salad Dressing

- ❑ 3/4 cup oil
- ❑ 6 tbsp. orange juice
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. sugar
- ❑ pinch dry mustard

Combine oil, orange juice, sugar and mustard in a jar. Shake well. Goes well on salad with lettuce, avocado and grapefruit.



Shaarei Tefillah's Jan. 24 comedy night fundraiser features comedian Benji Lovitt.
STEVEN WINSTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Shaarei Tefillah holds comedy night to 'raise the roof'

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Jews face a lot of tough situations, so sometimes, it's good to get together and laugh, says Rabbi Shmuli Soroka, executive director of Shaarei Tefillah congregation.

With this in mind, the Toronto synagogue decided to make its upcoming fundraiser a comedy night. The event, "Raise the Roof Comedy Night," to be held Saturday, Jan. 24, at the shul on Bathurst Street, will provide "much needed" funds to help repair the sanctuary's roof, Rabbi Soroka said. It will feature American-born comic Benji Lovitt, who lives in Israel.

Though the evening's primary objective is fundraising, Rabbi Soroka noted, "We were thinking about how to go about this, and we decided that getting everyone out laughing, celebrating Judaism and even laughing *at* Judaism, would be a great idea."

Lovitt, who made aliyah in 2006, has performed for audiences throughout North America and Israel, including at Hillel and Jewish federation events and for Masa Israel Journey and Birthright Israel trips.

Known for his witty perspectives on aliyah and contemporary Israeli life, Lovitt has been referred to as the principal English-speaking standup comedian and writer in Israel.

He has written for and been profiled in a range of Israeli and North American media, including *USA Today, Time magazine, Jerusalem Post* and the *Times of Israel*, for which he blogs regularly.

Rabbi Soroka said he hopes the event will draw both members and non-members of Shaarei Tefillah, and he anticipates that individuals from across the age spectrum will be represented in the audience.

"We're a well-established shul in the community, and, at the same time, we're experiencing tremendous growth. We're seeing a lot of young families joining," he said.

To date, about 150 people are expected to attend.

Tickets, which are $100 each or two for $180, can be purchased online at www.shaareitefillah.com, by calling the synagogue office or at the door on the night of the event. Donation receipts for $50 and $80, respectively, are available to purchasers. ■

Doors open at 8 p.m. and the show begins at 8:30. Shaarei Tefillah is located at 3600 Bathurst St.

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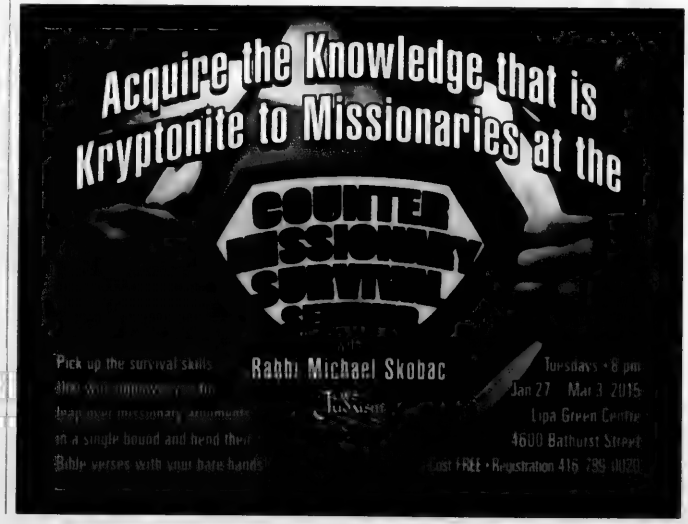
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What's New

JAN. 22 - JAN. 29

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Jan. 22

JEWISH LIFE IN SURINAME
Jacob Steinberg discusses "375 years of Jewish life in Suriname," 7:30 p.m., Lodzer Synagogue. RSVP 416-636-6665. $10.

PIZZA AND MOVIE NIGHT
Temple Har Zion Sisterhood shows the film *The Jewish Cardinal*, 6:30 p.m., 7360 Bayview Ave. Thornhill. $10.

Friday, Jan. 23

MUSIC WITH SUSAN
Music with Susan, for newborns to age 3, starts today for a 10-week session, 9:30 a.m. at Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto Congregation. Register at www.bayt.ca, or call **Rich Winkler**, 905-886-3810, ext. 135.

Saturday, Jan. 24

UNLIKELY AUSCHWITZ SABOTEURS
Sharon Abron Drache discusses "Unlikely Auschwitz saboteurs: Anna and Estusia Wajcblum," 1:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation, 187 Brunswick Ave.

THE STRUGGLE FOR JERUSALEM
Mordechai Kedar, of Bar-Ilan University, discusses "What is the struggle over Jerusalem all about?" 8 p.m., The Village Shul, 1072 Eglinton Ave. W.

LAWYER-FUNNY MAN
Alf Kwinter entertains Thornhill B'nai Brith Lodge, Rosemount Community Centre, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Thornhill. Meeting at 7:30 p.m., comedy night at 8 p.m. RSVP efzwicker@rogers.com.

Sunday, Jan. 25

SONSHINE & BROCCOLI
Sonshine and Broccoli perform at Associated Hebrew School's Kamin campus, 300 Atkinson Ave. Thornhill. Free, but space limited. Register at admissions@ahschools.com or 905-889-3998, ext. 508.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Feb. 5 is Jan. 26. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

A warm thank you

The staff at Reena's day program recently presented Sandy Keshen with a handmade quilt, as an expression of appreciation for her 41 years as founder, president and CEO at the agency. From left, Sandy Keshen, Jackie Kerr, Ola Adebayo, Gemja Beiene, Matthew Mann, Robert Clarke, Dustin Stroll and Lawn Francis. Picture on the right shows Sandy Keshen and staff member Kahara Simmonds, who proposed the idea of the quilt.

JOHN MORELLO
Club Chaverut presents **John Morello** performing a "Tribute to Dean Martin," 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. For tickets, call 905-764-8141.

JEWS IN THE NETHERLANDS
Danny Frances discusses "Jewish history of the Netherlands: How the Netherlands produced Poskim," 8:30 a.m., Bnai Torah Congregation. $5.

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP
Discover your roots at a genealogy workshop, 7:30 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Contact, office@shaarshalom.ca.

JEWISH GENEALOGY
Gregg Loane discusses "Making history accessible: illustrating and publishing your family story," with the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto, 10:30 a.m., Temple Sinai. info@jgstoronto.ca.

Monday, Jan. 26

LANIADO HOSPITAL
Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital holds its annual general meeting, 7 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. RSVP friends@laniadocanada.com

Tuesday, Jan. 27

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Real Inglorious Bastards*, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz**, 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. Feb. 3, *Zaytoun*. 416-221-3433. $5.

GREEKS AND JEWS
First Narayever Congregation and filmmaker **George Gedeon** screen the documentary *In the Presence of My Neighbours*, which looks at the attitudes of Greek society toward Jews, 7:30 p.m., 187 Brunswick Ave. 416-927-0546.

ROOM
Anne Isenberg reviews *Room* by **Emma Donnahue,** 8 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue. $10/$15. For more information, call **Beverly,** 416-499-6920.

HEBREW FOR BEGINNERS
Danforth Jewish Circle offers a 10-part series of Hebrew classes for beginners, starting tonight, 7 p.m., Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Ave. For more information, info@djctoronto.com.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses, "Understanding today's missionary threat to the Jewish community," 8 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. First of a 6-part series. Call 416-789-0020, or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

Wednesday, Jan. 28

INFLUENTIAL JEWISH THINKERS
Martin Lockshin discusses "Rabbi David Zvi Hoffman: Critic of biblical criticism," 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva.

Thursday, Jan. 29

SHABBAT SHIRA CONCERT
Cantors David Edwards and Alex Stein perform in concert, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. $18. For tickets, call 416-633-3838.

FINDING OUR WAY IN PRAYER
The clergy at Beth David Synagogue present a 4-part series on "Finding our way in traditional prayer,". Tonight: "Geography of the siddur," 7:30 p.m.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

TENSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Journalist **Mark Lavie** discusses "Why the media gets Israel, Palestinians, ISIS and the Arab Spring all wrong," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

Coming Events

MORASHA
Prof. Barrie Wilson presents "A Jewish look at the lost gospel," Feb. 25- April 1, 11:15 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. To register, call **Loretta** 416-789-7400.

GIVE BACK NOW CHALLENGE
The Give Back Now Challenge invites families to do monthly acts of kindness and win prizes. Grand prize a trip to Israel. Visit www.givebacknow.ca.

SUPER BOWL PARTY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds a '50s concert and tailgate party, **Feb. 1**, 5 p.m. $20. RSVP by **Jan. 22**, 416-221-3433.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- Mind-body connection for women: A 7-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts Jan. 28, 1 p.m. or Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Lebovic JCC.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 5-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married this year. Starts Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC. Paul Hyman** discusses brain fitness. Beat the winter blues with fun and physical exercises to improve memory, energy and reduce falls. Jan. 22, 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, Feb. 18; Manicures and facials, Jan. 22 (call for appointment); Barber, Jan. 22, 10 a.m. Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Jan. 27, **Michael Klein** discusses "Medieval Jewish Art," 10 a.m.; Jan. 28, Critter Day, 1:30 p.m.; Jan. 29, **Robyn MacPherson** discusses "Organizing and decluttering your home," 1:30 p.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30. Must reserve by calling 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabad-markham.org.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- If you love Yiddish and good conversation, join the Yiddish group, 1:30 p.m.
- Beginner and intermediate mah-jong start Jan. 21, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Reflections in the hall of mirrors," a lecture series on how movies have soaked up the political and cultural ideas of the time, Feb. 4-March 25, 1 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele," Feb. 17, 24 at 1 p.m.
- **Galya Sarna** shares recipes as she prepares an Israeli-style meal with a French twist, March 19, 6:30 p.m.
- Parent and me class for active Jewish learning for children 18 months to 3 years, starts Jan. 23 or Jan. 25.
- Red Cross babysitting course offered Feb. 13.
- Registration for preschool to kindergarten opens Jan. 26. Call **Kailah Rubin,** ext. 4351.
- Seniors exercise classes free for anyone over 65, Tuesdays and Fridays.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Katka Team for Grades 2-6, co-presented with Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, play create, debate and explore. Jan. 25, 1-3:30 p.m. Email Shaliach. Gesher@gmail.com
- International UN Holocaust Remembrance Day, Jan. 25, 9:30 a.m. Watch the Azrieli Series of short films, followed by a discussion on the future of Holocaust education.
- Lunch and learn day- Jan. 29. Book club discusses *Buffalo Jump*, 11 a.m.; award-winning makeup artist **Beverley Schechtman** is the guest speaker, 1:30 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or ext. 155.
- A symposium and celebration in honour of Shabbat Shirah, with **Aviva Chernick, Rabbi Miriam Margles, Cantor Charles Osborne, Annie Matan,** and many others, Feb. 1, 1-6 p.m. Tickets $10/$20. Ext. 0
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a weekly group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. Contact strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m., second term starts Jan. 20.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: the films of Alfred Hitchcock," Mondays, Jan. 26-Feb. 9, 1 p.m.
- The paintings of **Aba Bayefsky** are in the gallery until Jan. 26.
- **Elaine Mitchell** teaches a journalling workshop on "Dating without fear," Jan. 29, 7 p.m.
- Film critic **Adam Nayman** discusses *The Master,* Jan. 26, 7 p.m. Ext. 606.
- Fitness: MELT method full body, Tuesdays 7 p.m., to Feb. 17.; Teen boot camp, Free during January, 4:30 p.m. Emailfitnessguru@mnjcc.org.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in social innovation, community-building and entrepreneurship. Apply now for winter. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. To register for programs, call ext. 3025

- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What's so funny," Feb. 18, 7 p.m.
- **Rachelle Shubert** presents "Here's to Music! Here's to Life," March 5, 2 p.m. at Four Elms Retirement Residence.
- Book club discusses *The Little Bride* by **Anna Solomon,** Jan. 27, 7 p.m.
- Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m. ■

MARRIED WITH KIDS

I tried to be the Christmas Grinch

Lauren Kramer

Though it coincided with Chanukah this year, I couldn't help but feel grumpy about the Christmas cheer that pervaded my neighbourhood, especially when it arrived home in my Grade 6 daughter's backpack in early December.

The invasion came disguised as a notice from her teacher, declaring the class would be studying *The Grinch who Stole Christmas* and doing secret Santa gift exchanges. The book, her teacher said, contained a "universal message" from which everyone could benefit, while the gift exchange would be a "fun activity."

I wondered why, in a non-denominational school, the kids had to obtain their "universal message" in a Christmas-themed book that seems more appropriate for six-year-olds than kids age 11. But the secret Santa activity was the clincher, a place where I could finally take a firm stand without publicly embarrassing my kid. "We're Jewish," I said. "No… secret… Santa."

I wish I could say that this was the final word. Sadly, no. First, the pleading began. It's a harmless activity, she argued. A simple, inexpensive gift. And why should she be the only one not participating?

"Because we're Jewish," I answered. The pleading continued, and when she saw her mother was undeterred by appeals to price points or emotional anguish, she did what any other kid might. She turned to her Dad. When you can't get your way, it only makes sense to pit your parents against each other on the off-chance they disagree. We did.

"I think we should let her participate," my husband declared. "Our kid has a strong Jewish identity and this one activity won't change that. If her class is doing it, she should do it too."

I objected vehemently, arguing there was a great reason not to participate: the fact that we don't share the same beliefs as the families of other children in the class. Secret Santa was a nod to Christmas and an assumption that we all wanted to participate in its celebration – which definitely wasn't the case in our family. This seemed a good place to take a stand, I said. "Christmas is not *our* holiday, and missing out on the gift exchange is no big deal."

Christmas unsettles me. I dislike the incessant jingles on the radio and in every store, the focus on materialism and finding the "perfect gift" and the Christmas light competition in our street, where neighbours try to outdo each other in the volume and luminosity of their light display. But what really drives me bananas is when our "non-denominational" school becomes extremely denominational, studying Christmas-themed books, decorating offices and classrooms with festive Christmas décor and sending children home with secret Santa notices. I was grateful to escape the school's "holiday carnival" this year, since last year's, with its 20 Christmas carols and one token latke-dreidel song, only fuelled the fire of my discontent.

Since we couldn't reach an agreement, my husband suggested we call a friend, and that we both accept in advance his resolution to the issue. I knew the friend as a man with a big Jewish heart, so I accepted, thinking he would side with me.

"Truthfully I hate Christmas," he said. "But I think secret Santa is a harmless activity and one not worth fighting over. Just let her do it."

My daughter left for her last day of school before the holidays excitedly clutching the secret Santa gift she'd wrapped in Christmas paper she unearthed from a deep, dark drawer. While I understood her need to participate in the class gift exchange, I wasn't happy.

Still, we made a choice to put her in public school, and with that choice come denominational issues over which I have no control. So I send her out into the big wide world with a hope and a prayer that the Jewish home to which she returns every day will give her a strong religious foothold, one that secret Santa and Christmas Grinch books will never challenge. ■

Family Moments

Jordana Warner & Josh Slobodsky are engaged! Thrilled parents are Miriam & Marc Warner and Jo-Anne and Mark Slobodsky

Celebrating Ruth Isen's 90th birthday Jan. 28th. All our love to a fun-tastic Mother, Bubbie and Great-Bubbie who is young at heart.

Mazel tov to Jack & Fay Glazier on their 75th wedding anniversary. With love from your family.

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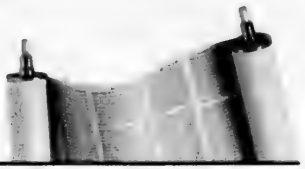
Parshah

Bo | Exodus 10:1 - 13:16



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier says if we're looking for direction from God, the signs are there
Rabbi Denise Handlarski explains why Rosh Chodesh has become a holiday for women
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen offers a reminder that redemption follows our darkest hour

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

We always look for signs that point us in the right direction. Our parshah this week begins and ends with signs. We start with God's signs to Pharaoh and Egypt, which are meant to have an everlasting effect on our impression of God. We end with the mitzvah of tfillin, which serve as a physical sign to remember that God took us out of Egypt.

The Israelites are given their first set of commandments in this parshah. These mitzvot set the tone for a community that is about to experience freedom. In many places, Chapter 12 of Exodus stresses that the mitzvah command is, in fact, given "lachem" – "for you." The signs are clear: mitzvot are not for God's sake, but for our own.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th-century Germany) explains that "this month shall mark for you" a renewal that serves as a sign for our personal renewal. (Exodus 12:1) The calendar and our way of marking time provide us with constant opportunities for self-reflection and self-improvement.

Exodus 12:13 states that the blood placed by the Israelites on the doorpost "shall be a sign for you," even though its purpose seems to be to give God directions as to which house to pass over. The midrash explains that God does not need signs. The blood was actually put on the inside of the house, as a sign to us to remind us that we should be busy doing Jewish things within our homes.

The Torah states (Exodus12:14) that the day of the Exodus "shall be for you as a memorial." It is for our sake that we mark this day and celebrate our freedom, giving us a better understanding of our history and values.

If we are looking for direction, then the signs are right there to strengthen and better our communities, our homes and ourselves. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

This parshah contains the first biblical mention of Rosh Chodesh, when God tells Moses that there should be a monthly celebration of the moon.

As Judaism evolved, Rosh Chodesh became a women's holiday. Women in many cultures are associated with the moon. Sometimes, unflatteringly, this is because the sun gets associated with logic and the moon with a "lunatic" element that's often applied to women.

Sometimes it is simply about the menstrual cycle. The time of the "red tent" (women had to be separated from the rest of the group during menstruation) would have followed the lunar cycle. As Anita Diamant makes clear in her well-known novel of that name, "the red tent" can be seen as a time for women's rest, togetherness and spiritual renewal.

The mention of Rosh Chodesh in Parshat Bo, just as the people are about to leave Egypt, also signifies renewal. Just as the moon waxes and wanes, Jewish history is made up of the textures of exile and return, bondage and freedom. Rosh Chodesh continues to be a time to think of renewal. It's like a mini-Yom Kippur that happens each month, giving us the chance to focus on our goals, on who we want to become and what we want to accomplish in the month ahead.

The Exodus story is a story of renewal and rebirth – fertility metaphors are therefore apt (let's not forget that Shmot begins with a birth, courageous midwives and a mother who puts her child's life before her own. Moses is not the only one "delivering" the people).

The parshah ends with the terrifying tenth plague – the death of the firstborns. The death of children is the ultimate signifier for destruction and death. But what follows is the ultimate signifier for birth and life. The Israelites are free and are therefore born anew. It is time for the rebirth and the renewal of the people. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

How does a Jew take strength from the horrific news that four of our fellow Jews, shopping for Shabbat at a kosher supermarket, were brutally murdered?

The answer is found in the name of our parshah – "Bo," which means "Come."

Moses was commanded to approach Pharaoh and not be afraid. To reassure him, God said, "Come," (with me), not "Go" (alone). We all must confront "Pharaoh" and our challenges. God is with us, supporting our efforts. Let us "come" and remember those murdered Jews, and proudly say: "Je suis Juif." "Je mange cacher" – "I eat kosher."

Let us show the world that after such tragedy, we come in unity and openly show our Jewishness. We are a nation of peace and morality, a light upon the nations.

It was refreshing to see that an employee of the kosher store, a Muslim, saved Jews from being killed by hiding them in a freezer. So let's also teach our fellow non-Jews, the seven Noahide Laws, including the law "to respect the sanctity of human life."

At the close of this week's Torah portion, the Torah relates how the Jews' oppression in Egypt got worse. Even Moses, devoted to God, could find no explanation for the darkness of the exile.

The Talmud states that the Jews base their calendar on the rotation of the moon, for we are likened to the moon. Its light wanes and finally seems to disappear. But it is precisely then that the new moon is born and grows.

Jewish history reflects the lunar cycle. In the exile, after reaching the lowest depths of oppression, when the long night reached its darkest, then deliverance began.

In life, too, it may seem that our situation is beyond hope. Yet we should not lose faith, but remember that the darkest hour of exile comes just before the redemption. May we see it in our days! ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is at Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto. For any comments or questions, email yirmicohen@sympatico.ca

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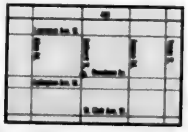

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British couple run N.S. fruit farm

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

British couple Evie Kemp and Simon Fineman grow haskap berries on their farm in Nova Scotia.

Seven years ago, Simon Fineman and his wife, Evie Kemp, had little idea where Nova Scotia was.

The residents of Oxfordshire in central England were planning a trip to Norway that was waylaid by bad weather. They decided to visit friends in Nova Scotia, "loved the music, the walking, the outdoor experience," Kemp says, and, after seeing that house prices were dramatically lower than in England, bought a home on the South Shore, purchased a farm a few kilometres away in Lunenburg County, not far from Camp Kadimah, and started a business, although they are still based in England.

Today, their company, LaHave Natural Farms, produces a series of "Haskapa" brand products made from the haskap berry, dark blue in colour, naturally delicious, unique with a sensuous taste and remarkable health properties. Among the products are juices, jams, chutneys, tangy salsas, honey, maple syrup, ice creams and sorbets.

Fineman, 54, who is president of a British timber and hardware distribution business, Timbmet, based near Oxford, built a serious business from haskap berries after trying to make a go of other farm products like tomatoes and garlic.

"I Googled 'superberry' and found University of Saskatchewan was promoting the haskap, a little-known fruit outside Russia and Japan. It has antioxidant properties and high levels of vitamin C."

Kemp, 53, is a medical doctor who practises occupational medicine at the major hospital in Oxford. "We just wanted to make use of the land," she says. "What we grew was almost incidental at the time. It was only after we'd grown our first [berry] and actually tasted one that we realized how great they were. And we realized what we could do with them."

In 2013, their Haskapa juice was named best new entrant at the World Juice Awards in Cologne, Germany. Several mainstream grocery stores, including Sobeys, are now selling the products. With 10 staff and a seasonal crew in summer, and working 60 acres of arable land, Fineman aims to triple production acreage next year. He says they produced 15 tons of haskaps this year and hope to make that 1,500 tons in five years.

With knowledgeable leadership on the farm, Fineman comes to Nova Scotia every four to five weeks to oversee the operation. Kemp visits three or four times a year. With products selling in Atlantic Canada and Toronto, they hope to spread distribution to New York, California and Europe.

The couple, both British-Israeli citizens who lived on a kibbutz and moshav from 1988 to 1993, are also looking to get a hechsher for their juice.

Kemp even uses the berry to cook Jewish staples in her kitchen at home. "I have a Haskapa matzah pudding recipe, haskap honey cake for Rosh Hashanah, and it's a great topping for cheesecake for Shavuot. It's a mixture, but I think it's got its own taste. Haskaps look like an elongated blueberry. It's purple all the way through.

"It's fabulous to see the berries grow and seeing this land, which had nothing, come to life. Maybe it goes back to our kibbutz days. It's wonderful." ■

'I'm happy it's a landmark event'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

"Judaism is important to us," he said. "It is an integral part of our lives."

As for the commitment ceremony, Scheinert doesn't feel upset that Rabbi Scheim won't perform the same service he would for a heterosexual couple.

In fact, he prefers it. The traditional service and the ketubah that accompanies it are quite legalistic and speak about one person belonging to the other.

"We're really not bothered, because the commitment ceremony is more reflective of our values," he said.

"It's important to us to have it in a synagogue," said Friedman. "We're both committed to Judaism, and it's important to us to have it in a place where the Jewish community would recognize the legitimacy of our marriage and the vows we're going to say to each other."

While he acknowledges that Rabbi Scheim's involvement signals "moving toward openness and acceptance," Friedman, said his friends, including those from the Orthodox community, "are taking our wedding as matter of fact."

For some, it might be considered a landmark event. "I'm happy it's a landmark event and definitely a conversation to have, so that all members of the Jewish community feel included," he said.

Younger people "don't bat an eyelash" when it comes to accepting gays. "It's not necessarily easy for my generation," said Rabbi Scheim, who has been a rabbi at Beth David for 34 years.

As a rabbi, he's attended weddings and funerals, and visited shivah houses. "When you see how precarious life can be, and as a rabbi you are exposed to pain, loss and tragedy, it gives me more of a sense of trying to meet the happy needs of people as well and bringing a desire for a Jewish connection when that connection is sometimes hard to find," he said.

"I have more of an incentive now for meeting a Jewish need in what is a happy circumstance.

"When two guys want the community to recognize their union in a synagogue with a kosher meal, I think that's great," he said.

"This is one of those cases where it's worth being groundbreaking." ■

Rabbi Daniel Freelander: WUPJ supports liberal Jews

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

This past September, Rabbi Daniel Freelander was appointed the new president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), the international umbrella organization of the Reform, Liberal, Progressive and Reconstructionist movements in Judaism. WUPJ serves 1,200 congregations in more than 45 countries. Formerly vice-president of the Union for Reform Judaism in North America, Rabbi Freelander was in Toronto last month to meet with leaders of the local Jewish community, including UJA Federation, and to speak at both Temple Sinai and Holy Blossom Temple. *The CJN* spoke to him about the dynamics of Reform Judaism internationally, religious pluralism and the Canadian Reform movement.

What does your role as WUPJ president entail?

The focus is working with progressive and Reform congregations worldwide. There are 850 Reform congregations in North America and about 350 elsewhere in the world. In the U.S., about 42 per cent of affiliated Jews are affiliated with Reform congregations (compared to roughly 28 per cent Conservative and about 10 per cent Orthodox). In the rest of the world, the balance is quite different. In most countries, the established Jewish religious group is Orthodox, and Reform is often the second-largest. (The Conservative movement is stronger in South America, but not as much in Britain or Europe.) Our portfolio is to build progressive congregations and to make sure there's a progressive Jewish alternative [to Orthodoxy or the Conservative movement] in every major Jewish community.

Are there countries that you feel need a boost in progressive Judaism?

Absolutely. There are places that have nascent Reform communities that need help getting organized and finding rabbis, like Bangkok, Shanghai and Tokyo – places that don't necessarily have a financial need, but require organizational or spiritual help, such as guidance in locating a rabbi, prayer books, schools. This is in contrast to places like Belarus, Ukraine, Russia or parts of Poland, where [due to political circumstances] it hasn't been natural for Jews to gather in organized synagogues. There, there's really only Chabad and Reform, there's no modern Orthodox or Conservative options. So, we've been creating infrastructure of community workers to bring people together at early childhood centres or adult centres. Some of these are evolving into progressive congregations. Over the past 15 years or so, the WUPJ has put many millions into building community centres and synagogues, training rabbis and paying rabbinic salaries and training and hiring community workers in the former Soviet Union and parts of eastern Poland.

In those places, we've needed to raise funds for these things until those communities can afford to do so themselves.

In European countries, there's often an official Jewish community representative recognized by the government. For the Jewish community, it's often a chief rabbi, and the Reform congregations are often outside of that structure. In countries like Germany, they've been receptive to Reform. In other places, less so.

I can't emphasize enough how different every country is.

In what ways is Canada's Reform movement distinctive?

I'm not an expert on that, but going on perception, I'd say the Reform community in Canada is far more traditional in ritual practice and religious decisions than the Reform community in the United States. It's also probably less liberal. It's still a liberal group, but its predilections are distinctly Canadian, and in my mind, that means more traditional or conservative than American [religious decisions].

What would you say are the main factors that contribute to this phenomenon?

Reform Judaism in Canada, while it emerged in the early 20th century, didn't really grow in a big way until after World War II. The whole classical Reform period, [which took place in the United States] from the 1880s to the 1930s, never really took place in Canada. So Reform Judaism is older and more Germanic in the U.S. Canadian Reform Judaism has a much stronger eastern European influence. The U.S. didn't see much immigration after World War II, while Canada did, and the Holocaust and Israel played a much more central role in Canada than in the United States.

Is a commitment to social justice part of the WUPJ's mandate?

Yes. Our two big social justice pieces are: 1. Protecting religious pluralism – making sure Jews can practice in any way they want, regardless of where they live. So we spend a lot of energy practising non-Orthodox Jewish rights. We're really sensitive about the fact every Jew should have the opportunity to pray as he or she sees fit.

2. We see ourselves as the progenitors of the prophetic tradition of Jeremiah, meaning we look at the greater world and try to work within the framework of the larger society to move things forward. For example, our South African Reform congregations, which funded a series of early childhood centres in black townships to help raise literacy levels, or the food bank programs run by our Australian Reform congregations. We feel that we serve human beings, not just Jews. We want our members to see themselves as part of a larger world community, not separate. We have an obligation to make things as positive as they can be in the larger community. In apartheid days [in South Africa], a lot of the white leadership involved in the anti-apartheid movement came from the Reform leadership.

Rabbi Daniel Freelander WUPJ PHOTO

> *We're really sensitive about the fact every Jew should have the opportunity to pray as he or she sees fit.*

In which places are restrictions placed on Reform or progressive Jews?

In Romania, for example, the government only wanted to grant not-for-profit status to Orthodox congregations, to groups associated with the country's official "Jewish Church," if you will. So, Reform congregations there couldn't get non-profit status. We've had some successes there. We had to work with the government. It's been a long battle, and requires us to educate non-Jewish political leaders in the varieties of Judaism.

In Poland, the Orthodox Jewish establishment owns and operates all the Jewish cemeteries in the country. They wouldn't recognize Reform conversions to Judaism so wouldn't allow the burial of Reform converts in the Jewish cemeteries. That's not a government issue, but it's an issue we're fighting.

What sorts of issues does the WUPJ address in Israel?

In Israel, we have a strong affiliate: the Israeli movement for progressive Judaism. They have a full staff of their own and are a rapidly growing, with 60 congregations. We helped create and fund them. We still fund many of the rabbinic salaries in Israel. We've created a network of synagogues there that are pretty much self-sufficient, or are getting there.

What was the purpose of your recent Toronto visit?

I came to thank the Toronto-area congregations who have been very supportive of the WUPJ – especially Holy Blossom Temple and Temple Sinai, which have helped fund rabbinic salaries in Israel and elsewhere. I also went to meet with our prime supporters, who helped build significant congregations in Israel. The new chairperson of the WUPJ is Canadian, Carole Sterling. She's the first Canadian in 20 years to be the organization's international chairperson.

What, primarily, do you hope to accomplish during your tenure as WUPJ president?

Specifically, I'd like to accomplish the creation of new congregations in places where we know there are critical masses of non-Orthodox Jews, but where the latter haven't organized yet. I was, for example, thrilled to work with new congregations in Tokyo, Shanghai, and Bangkok, where liberal Jews have been for years but are finally wanting to get organized. There's also a new Reform congregation in Rome that has just emerged, and several in North America. Getting these new congregations on their feet is a very high priority.

The second area is the former Soviet Union. There, Jews commonly become associated with synagogues through their children, which is the reverse of what we have in North America. In the former Soviet Union, young people will go to Jewish summer camp on scholarships, which are really about indoctrination in Judaism. The kids will come home very excited, and the parents won't know what they're talking about. We offer family camps so that the whole family can experience the joy of intensive Jewish living, 24/7. These kids will become the leaders of the new congregations. In Belarus and Ukraine, congregational leadership tend to be in their 30s or 40s, so it's very different from the typically older lay leadership in North American and even Israel, where parents try to convince their kids to get involved [in synagogue life]. In Belarus and Ukraine, it's the reverse, and I find that very exciting. That's where we're investing a lot of resources, to youth access. ■

No one, not even a biblical figure, is too big to fail

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN

Has there ever been a people whose heroes are so deeply flawed?

The first Jewish king, Saul, errs and is told by the prophet Samuel that his kingship is over. Instead of accepting the verdict – a divine edict since Samuel is God's conduit – Saul becomes determined to do anything to preserve his throne, including murder. He attempts to kill David, his presumptive successor, with a spear but fails. Saul instructs his servants and his son, Jonathan, to end David's life but Jonathan, the epitome of loyal and devoted friendship, warns David, who flees.

The first book of Samuel ends with the Philistine attack on Israel in which most of Saul's sons, including Jonathan, are killed. Saul throws himself on his sword and dies.

The story of Saul is an extraordinary study of the hold power has on an otherwise great man.

King David, the most renowned Jewish king, falls in love with his military commander's wife and has the commander sent to a vulnerable part of the front in the war so he will be killed and David will be able to consummate his love. David's successor, Solomon, known as the wisest of men, author of much of Judaism's wisdom literature, takes foreign wives who eventually corrupt the nation by importing their pagan gods.

Even the patriarchs and matriarchs, venerable, holy and righteous, were not perfect according to Jewish tradition. Abraham, the embodiment of lovingkindness, and chosen by God to be the first Jew, erred in leaving Canaan for Egypt during a famine and told the pagan king that Sarah was his sister, not his wife. Both actions can be justified on a practical level – he feared for his wife's safety and believed she would be less likely to be taken to the king's harem if he thought she was Abraham's sister – but Abraham is criticized by Jewish sages for not trusting God sufficiently. Sarah is the object of criticism for despairing of having a child and giving her handmaid, Hagar, to Abraham.

The criticism continues with Jacob who steals Esau's blessing, and with Moses' brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam.

When Moses is on Mount Sinai receiving the Torah, his brother, Aaron, is coerced into building the infamous Golden Calf to mollify the Israelites who are impatient to see their leader, Moses. Miriam denigrates Moses' choice of wife and is punished by God. Even Moses himself – in Jewish tradition, the greatest man who ever lived – displeases God by hitting the rock, instead of speaking to it, to make it miraculously yield water to quench the thirst of the people.

"No religious literature", writes Jonathan Sacks, former chief rabbi of Great Britain, "was ever further from hagiography, idealization and hero-worship."

One of the chief purposes of Jewish biblical writing is to convey the idea that all people, even the most illustrious religious figures in history, are imperfect but capable of spiritual growth. No one is too great to fail. The most worthy and esteemed must work every day at the details of daily life.

Conversely, no one is doomed to failure by fate or circumstances. The sons of Korach – who rebelled against Moses and was punished by God Himself – sang songs in the Temple of Solomon.

We see in the kings and the patriarchs and matriarchs, the flaws inherent in greatness, the contradictions at the heart of the human condition, the questions that remain with our best efforts at understanding. Imperfect and fallible, we are all on life's journey in which, as Sacks so eloquently puts it, "the greatest have failings and even the worst have saving graces."

So, if even role models are imperfect and the worst are capable of redemption, what is Jewish scripture teaching? Simply put, that no one is expected to be perfect but all are required to strive for moral and ethical growth.

As the English poet, Robert Browning, wrote: "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp/Or what's a Heaven for?" It is the attempt that is more important than the goal, the inner struggle more significant than any idealized destination. The quest itself is the purpose. ■

Paul Socken is a distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Waterloo.

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Dolgay, Sidney	Dec. 25, 2014	Private	Litvack, Marsha	Jan. 2, 2015	3560 Bathurst St.	Heifetz, Hilda	Jan. 6, 2015	3560 Bathurst St.
Cooper, Jean Margret	Dec. 27, 2014	5935 Bathurst St	Zaiontz, Lucy	Jan. 2, 2015	52 Edenbridge Dr.	Weidberg, David	Jan. 7, 2015	90 Prue Ave
Rusonik, Jules	Dec. 27, 2014	Private	Sweet, Adeline	Jan. 3, 2015	Private	Gangel, Steven	Jan. 7, 2015	96 Houseman Cres.
Yaffe, Leon	Dec. 27, 2014	205 Cummer Ave	Kurtz, Isaac Zvi	Jan. 3, 2015	110 Laurelcrest Ave	Golger, Nina	Jan. 8, 2015	125 Pugsley Ave
Winegust, Jack	Dec. 28, 2014	16 Brookview Dr	Vits, Dina	Jan. 3, 2015	5935 Bathurst St.	Rubinger, Gina	Jan. 8, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Corbett, Stanley	Dec. 28, 2014	204 Jaimie Rd	Rosenberg, Robert	Jan. 5, 2015	784 Centre St.	Kleyman, Yakov	Jan. 8, 2015	90 Fisherville Rd
Pekar, Sara	Dec. 29, 2014	89 Stillwater Cres	Herskovits, Tibor	Jan. 5, 2015	3560 Bathurst St.	Schaumer, Iboiya	Jan. 8, 2015	103 Constance St
Cohen, Simon	Dec. 31, 2014	7420 Bathurst St	Rosenberg, Melvin	Jan. 5, 2015	3830 Bathurst St.	Frank-Derlick, Lorraine Debra	Jan. 8, 2015	28 Mosswood Rd
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Inside

Help is available
Community leaders promote resources for Jewish victims of domestic abuse. **PAGE 12**

Ministers visit Israel
John Baird and Lisa Raitt bolster bilateral co-operation during trip. **PAGE 14**
See also comment on PAGE 6

Shabbat

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	5:01 p.m.	6:08 p.m.
Montreal	4:39 p.m.	5:46 p.m.
Toronto	5:07 p.m.	6:13 p.m.
Winnipeg	5:01 p.m.	6:13 p.m.
Calgary	5:05 p.m.	6:19 p.m.
Vancouver	4:47 p.m.	5:58 p.m.

Say what?

When it comes to free speech, does anything go? Or are some restrictions justifiable? A *CJN* debate. **PAGE 8**.

Edmonton shul hit in graffiti attack

Rabbi Daniel Friedman on the outpouring of support after his synagogue was targeted. **PAGE 18**

Auschwitz baby to attend memorial

Woman born in death camp returns to Poland for 70th anniversary of liberation. **PAGE 19**

Spotlight shines on Israeli culture

Two-month-long event showcases film, dance, theatre, music and visual arts. **PAGE 38**

Tel Aviv man allegedly hacks Madge, and *Selma*'s rabbinic omission

Madonna's newest Israeli connection

An Israeli man, 39, suspected of hacking into Madonna's computer last month and leaking songs for an upcoming album was arrested in Tel Aviv Jan. 22 after an undercover investigation by Israel's anti-fraud police. He's also accused of hacking into the computers of other global artists. The alleged hacker, whose name is protected by the court, reportedly sold the 27 unreleased tracks online. Madonna released six tracks early in response to the hack, which she called "a form of terrorism" and the equivalent of "artistic rape." The suspect is reportedly a former contestant on an Israeli reality show singing competition.

Heschel airbrushed out

The daughter of the late Conservative icon Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who marched with Martin Luther King Jr. on the third civil rights march from Selma, Ala., in 1965, says she was "shocked and upset" her father was left out of *Selma*, the new biopic about the slain U.S. civil rights leader. "I felt sad and I had moments when I felt angry," Susannah Heschel, a Jewish studies professor at Dartmouth College, told the *Algemeiner* newspaper about the omission, calling it "tragic." She said the film excised "the great coalition" aspect of the civil rights movement and missed a chance to show black youths that a rabbi marched with King. Director Ava DuVernay told *PBS* in response: "This is art… I'm not a historian."

Rabbi Heschel, right, with King on the third Selma march 1965. DUKE UNIVERSITY PHOTO

A hairy solution to anti-Semitism?

After hearing reports of anti-Semitism in Europe and tour guides there telling Jewish tourists to remove their kippot, Shalom Koresh, a hairdresser in Rehovot, Israel, devised the Magic Kippa, a skullcap made of hair that blends seamlessly with a wearer's own hair colour and texture to look invisible. Ones made of human hair sell for a pricey 79 euros ($110), while others with synthetic hair cost 49 euros ($68). He had the idea last year, well before recent terror attacks, and has had positive feedback, though not from one *Ynet* commenter, who said: "Better idea: ticket to Tel Aviv." ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Gematria

90

The age of Ontario resident Helmut Oberlander, the Nazi-era war-crimes suspect whose latest attempt to reinstate his citizenship was denied this month.

$15.6 M

The sale price of the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism's Manhattan offices. It will help pay debt and fund programs.

Quotable

"

Can the Jews leave this home – our home – to the jihadists and the National Front?

— French-Polish intellectual Marek Halter.
See full interview on page 50.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz on Tu b'Shvat and environmentalism.

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Letters to the Editor

Remembering the Shoah

On Jan. 27, the international community, Canada included, commemorates the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. Generally, we think of liberation as something glorious, something celebrated. But the response was not as jubilant as one may suspect. Many who were liberated immediately faced a plethora of challenges ranging from not over-eating (which usually resulted in death), finding safe shelter, and locating surviving relatives.

Holocaust survivor Elly Gotz often recounts his experience of liberation during his many well-received talks to schools around the globe. After being liberated from Dachau by Soviet troops, his weakened and malnourished father, Julius Gotz, responded to the news by asking when his soup ration would be available – a very genuine concern. Liberation symbolized very real and new concerns, and was not a time of carefree celebrations.

The eventual defeat of Nazi Germany was surely cause for joy in the Allied world, but the liberation of the camps was not celebrated with parades, banners, and sensuous kisses in the street. Shortly after the war, Holocaust survivors had to rebuild their lives, often in hostile environments with little support. Even in Canada, the reception of survivors was lacklustre. But as time passed and our collective memory grew, we began to acknowledge the true horror that the Holocaust represented, and that celebrating those who survived those horrors was necessary.

Currently, conditions for many around the world are far from favourable. International manifestations of anti-Semitism are apparent on our front pages daily, as well as other manifestations of hatred and prejudice.

Shortly after the war, the *Polish American Journal* wrote an article recognizing a "week of brotherhood," a Jewish and Christian initiative meant to inspire peace and religious tolerance. This was a time where regardless of faith, race, or ethnicity, people would join to focus on one another's humanity and not what divides us. The *PAJ* stated that fascism and all forms of hatred should not, and could not, be the ideology that ever prevails, not during the war, nor after. Instead, the week of brotherhood should inspire an attitude of neighbourliness not only for seven days, but all year long.

In 2015, we could use this example and apply it, not only on Jan. 27, but every day, so that "never again" represents a genuine reflection of what we stand for as a tolerant and civilized nation.

Magdalena Kubow
London, Ont.

Terror in Paris

We continuously read about the attacks on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* and the kosher market as if they were separate and unrelated incidents. The former was an "attack on the freedom of expression" and the latter an "anti-Semitic assault." In fact, both horrific acts were anti-Semitic. Two of those murdered in the *Hebdo* offices, Georges Wolinski and Elsa Cayat, were Jewish.

Cayat, in particular, is significant because she was the only female among all those women in the office who died. Survivors have said that the murderous terrorists specifically stated that they didn't kill women "except for this one," referring to Cayat. So, indeed, both attacks were founded as much in anti-Semitism as anti-cartoon.

The press, especially the French press, will downplay this relationship, but no one should be fooled. Six Jews died on those terrible days, not four, and the root cause was much more than just a cartoon about Muhammad.

Saul Glober
Toronto

No peace with Hamas

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict was never a territorial one, but an existential one. The question here is can a non-Muslim country, by definition an infidel, be allowed to exist in the Middle East? This is the core of the dilemma.

It is useless to talk of borders when the attitude is, "You don't belong here. You are a result of a catastrophe." History is being denied, including archeology: no Temple, no kings, no Judea. It is all a Zionist plot.

The pact with Hamas terrorists, sworn to destroy Israel, with a one-way sea trip for Jews, speaks volumes of their future intentions. But as long as Israel cannot be defeated, the strategy remains: Israel wins and it gives back land; Hamas wins, keeps all and Israel goes.

Max Kon
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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Violence in the name of God

In the aftermath of the terror attacks in Paris, do we demand that local Muslim leaders condemn Islamist radicalism, or does that tar an entire community for the acts of a few?

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Grushcow: Let me begin with some of the words I sent to my congregation as news was coming in about the attack on the kosher supermarket in France: first, may we stand by our co-religionists in France, supporting them in every way we can. No one should have to be afraid to go to synagogue, shop for kosher food or walk in the streets wearing a kippah.

Second, may these events not become an excuse to attack Muslims. We must come to terms with the fact that there is a strain of religious extremism and violence in Islam, as there has been in Christianity and Judaism. This is indeed a religious ideology – but it is wrong. Let us hear the voices of condemnation from so many in the Muslim world, knowing that the goal of the attackers is to divide us. Let us work even harder to find ways to understand one another, and to live together, to create a civil society shaped by shared values and respect... As religion continues to emerge as an all-too-often force of violence, may we be vigilant in remembering that these attacks are profoundly opposite to what it means to live in service to God.

Rabbi Korobkin: You're right: this tragedy was compounded because it was done in the name of religion. We should mourn, therefore, not only for those innocent journalists, officers and Jews who were mercilessly slaughtered, but also for the disgrace to God and all religion.

However, I think your response is a bit too tepid for the sheer magnitude of this violent tragedy. No one needs to "come to terms" with the fact that Islam contains a faction that is extremist and murderous. Rather, as Prime Minister Stephen Harper put it, we need to accept that "the international jihadist movement has declared war... And the reality is we're going to have to confront it." No longer can we afford to give a free pass to the Islamic leadership in our communities. Every Canadian has the right and duty to call out local imams and have them show their cards.

Rabbi Grushcow: I know that a number of my congregants will agree with you on this. However, I do not.

My eyes are wide open: there is a jihadist movement growing, which poses a real and present danger. But the fact that there is a dangerous movement within Islam does not mean that every Muslim in the world should be held accountable for their doings. Did I need to apologize when Baruch Goldstein massacred innocent Arab worshippers in Hebron?

To tar all Muslims with the same brush would be to scapegoat an entire community for the acts of a few. That approach has ended badly for us when we have been on the receiving end. I refuse to use it myself.

Here in Montreal, where so many Jews have connections to France, we feel this attack especially deeply. So what can we do? Pay attention to security. Build allegiances between people of all faiths and none, to work toward a civil society that is both safe and open. Remember the value of every human life. That is the struggle that we face as we mourn our dead and step forward into tomorrow.

Rabbi Korobkin: I agree that it's important to forge relationships with Christian and Muslim leaders. We are actively attempting to do this, but it has become increasingly difficult to find Muslim religious leaders who are prepared to unequivocally condemn radical jihad. We have very few partners here in Toronto with whom we can dialogue. Until Islamic leaders take up the cause of eradicating Islamic violence as their first priority, instead of condemning Israel and all their other perceived enemies first, it will be hard to come together on anything.

I was a young rabbi 21 years ago when Baruch Goldstein committed his horrific crimes, and yes, I did feel it necessary to condemn his behaviour and make sure my congregation knew that there is nothing in the Torah that could possibly condone his violent act. I expect nothing less from all other people of faith. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Family Picture

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

Richard and Dora Nadell with their six children in St. Catharines, Ont., around 1915. Richard (Rachmiel) was born in Vilnius, Russia (now Lithuania), in 1858. He married Dora Pack and during the late 1880s, the couple moved to St. Catharines with their eldest three children. The family relocated to seek a better life and reside close to him. Between 1890 and 1897, they had three more children. Richard began working as a pedlar and later became a metal junk dealer.

SeeJN | Winter – in Tel Aviv

ASSAF SHILO/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Sunshine and temperatures of 24C late last week brought many people out to the beaches in Tel Aviv.

From Yoni's Desk

Bibi and Bougie go to Washington

In December, a poll ranked the leading issues for Israeli voters ahead of March 17 national elections. The economy placed first at 34 per cent, followed by security (30 per cent) and social justice (14 per cent). On the other end of the list, only one per cent said foreign relations would figure in their voting decision, but you'd hardly have guessed that after a week in which Israel's ties with two of its key allies, Canada and the United States, took centre stage.

John Baird and Lisa Raitt, Canada's foreign affairs and transport ministers respectively, began the week in Israel, where they signed a handful of new agreements with the Jewish State, including plans to co-operate against "efforts to single out or isolate Israel." Ottawa also took a stand last week against the increase in hatred and violence toward Jews when Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney told a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly "Canada is deeply concerned about the alarming increase in anti-Semitism worldwide."

There was more. The federal government announced plans to fund 10 Israeli companies to the tune of about $150,000 each, with an aim to develop health, water and agricultural innovation in developing countries. (The seeds of that partnership were apparently sown a year ago, when Prime Minster Stephen Harper made his first state visit to Israel.) And later in the week, Baird again confirmed the government's support of Israel: "Israel is the only democracy in the region," he told *CJN* reporter Paul Lungen. "They are our strong friend and ally."

The mood in Washington was decidedly tenser, after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became publicly involved in a clash between President Barack Obama and the Republican Party.

Netanyahu accepted an invitation from Republican House Speaker John Boehner to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress, where he is expected to speak in favour of new sanctions against Iran, an initiative opposed by the president. The White House complained Netanyahu breached protocol by accepting Boehner's invitation without first consulting the Obama administration and announced the president would not meet with the prime minister while the latter is in town.

Experts subsequently proclaimed "a new low" in Israel-U.S. relations, and a senior U.S. official said "Netanyahu ought to remember that President Obama has a year and a half left to his presidency, and that there will be a price" for snubbing the White House.

Netanyahu's speech to Congress has since been moved from Feb. 11 to March 3, when he will be in Washington for the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Yitzhak ("Bougie") Herzog, head of Israel's Labour Party and co-leader of the centre-left bloc now known as the Zionist Camp, will also speak at the AIPAC summit.

That means two weeks before the Israeli election, the two front-runners to lead the next Knesset will be halfway across the world, looking to drum up support among people who don't have a vote. Perhaps after Paris, the calculus has changed. But ultimately, Israelis will be left to decide the value of politicians pursuing foreign friendships at a time when there are other pressing concerns at home. ■ — YONI

FEATURE

Toronto's Mount Sinai had humble beginnings as a dispensary

Bill Gladstone

When Dr. Daniel Drucker of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital receives the $150,000 (US) Manpei-Suzuki prize for groundbreaking diabetes research in February, he will be only the latest in a long parade of medical researchers at the world-famous institution to be recognized for their excellence.

A researcher engaged in a different sort of quest – probing the origins of the Mount Sinai Hospital – is struck by Mount Sinai's humble beginnings more than a century ago.

Mount Sinai's roots go back to about 1910 when nurse Dorothy Goldstick (later Dworkin), Ida Siegel and some volunteers and medics opened a free Jewish medical dispensary on Elizabeth Street just south of Agnes (Dundas) in Toronto's old Ward neighbourhood.

Toronto then had a burgeoning population of about 18,000 Jews, up from only 3,000 a decade earlier. Most were poor Yiddish-speaking recent immigrants in need of assistance.

As Dworkin reveals in a biographical essay, she became a maternity nurse in 1907 and worked with Dr. S. J. Kaufman, a doctor from Cleveland who set up a private dispensary for Jewish patients in the Ward. The clinic proved popular because Yiddish was spoken there and visits cost only 50 cents instead of the usual $1 charged at other facilities. Drugs were supplied by the Hashmall pharmacy.

Dworkin and others opened the free Jewish medical dispensary after Kaufman returned to the United States in 1909. Apart from medical reasons, a Jewish-run clinic was an absolute necessity in the eyes of its founders be-

A doctor examines a boy at old Mount Sinai Hospital, ca. 1923. ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES

cause the Presbyterian Church was also providing free medical services to local Jews from a clinic on Teraulay (Bay) Street while trying to convert them to Christianity.

Again in reaction to the missionaries, Dworkin, Siegel and others formed a Women's Auxiliary that distributed pasteurized milk at the very low rate of two cents a pint. It also founded a Jewish orphanage that was later headquartered on Annette Avenue.

Although the Jewish medical dispensary "petered out" after Dworkin left in 1911 to get married, the impetus for a Jewish hospital in Toronto remained strong. A small historical pamphlet published by the women's charitable organization Ezra Noshem (Helping Women) tells the next chapter of the story.

Founded in 1913, Ezra Noshem was galvanized into action by the heartbreaking account of a 96-year-old patient at the Don Avenue Incurable Home. Its president, Slova Greenberg, "could not bear to see the woman cry and pray that she might die among Jews," and vowed to establish a home for Jewish elderly. Founded in 1917 on Cecil Street, the Jewish Old Folks Home evolved over the decades into what is now the Baycrest Centre.

Empowered by its own success, Ezra Noshem next pushed to raise funds for a Jewish hospital, and in December 1921 purchased an existing but primitive facility on Yorkville Avenue, opening it in 1922 as a 20-bed hospital. The years brought enormous upgrades and improvements: the hospital façade that is still visible on Yorkville today was not part of the original structure, but rather the result of a 1935 expansion.

Decades of planning and fundraising went into the new Mount Sinai Hospital on University Avenue and involved the concerted efforts of many players, including Dworkin, various hospital volunteer women's groups, a board of directors chaired by E. F. Singer, and a group of Jewish doctors initially called the Toronto Jewish Medical Association.

Preserved at the Ontario Jewish Archives, the Association's minute books from the mid-1920s show that the doctors thought the hospital board much too sluggish and sought diplomatic means of persuading its members to start planning for the much bigger, modernized Jewish hospital that was already so desperately needed.

The new Mount Sinai opened on University Avenue on Aug. 18, 1953, and has become a world-renowned centre of excellence. Not the least of the wonder-

Poster for the Jewish Free Dispensary in Toronto, 1909. ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES

ful things to occur there is the birth of this reporter, along with his sister, in September 1953 as the first twins born in the new hospital. How true, indeed, is the observation that mighty oaks do from tiny acorns grow. ■

Bill Gladstone is a Toronto-based writer and frequent contributor to these pages. This is the first in a series of articles to be published periodically about Toronto's Jewish institutions, funded by the J. B. & Dora Salsberg Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. This series is in partnership with the Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre and draws on their collections: www.ontariojewisharchives.org.

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CJN DEBATE: Free speech after Paris

Offensive opinions benefit from being aired, not muzzled

MARNI SOUPCOFF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It is a truism that distasteful, unpleasant or highly controversial speech is usually the only kind of speech that really needs defending. But in the wake of the deadly Paris terrorist attacks against *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists and Jews, and the efforts to test speech limits that followed, it is a truism worth repeating.

It's not the nice, respectful commentary that riles up the censors. It's the offensive stuff, the stuff that makes you cringe, wince or shake your head in disgust, the stuff that surely everyone with a bit of sense would reject. The question is whether we're better off letting those with a bit of sense voluntarily dismiss the nasty commentary on their own or if we should have government step in and formally silence the nasty commentators.

The former strikes me as a far better course of action than the latter, and I'm joined in this view by no less eminent a thinker than John Stuart Mill.

Among Mill's reasons for valuing freedom of expression so highly was that even in cases where the received wisdom of the majority happens to be wholly true, that opinion still benefits from being earnestly debated and contested from time to time. If it's not, it will devolve into nothing more than dogma that people are told they must believe without remembering or knowing why.

The recent example of the Halifax hotdog vendor who sought to test the limits of free expression by tweeting Holocaust jokes is a good example of Mill's point.

In a nutshell, Jerry Reddick, a Muslim who sells hotdogs near the Dalhousie campus, and who is better known as "the Dawgfather," was testing us. His inflammatory tweets about Jews were accompanied by the hashtag #freespeechworksbothways, and he was seeking to make the point that if speech mocking sacred Muslim subjects – speech like the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons which mocked the prophet Muhammad – is legal, then so, too, should be speech mocking subjects sacred to other religions.

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Israelis at a Jan. 11 ceremony remembering the *Charlie Hebdo* victims FLASH90 PHOTO

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Incitement to hatred is different than blasphemy

DAVID MATAS
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Are we consistent when we say that *Charlie Hebdo* should be free to satirize Islam but that Dieudonné should be prohibited from promoting anti-Semitism? My answer is yes.

The two positions are different, because they deal with different forms of speech. There are some free speech absolutists who say anything goes – whether it is fraud or plagiarism or threats of murder or defamation or child pornography. For those who accept that some restrictions on speech are justifiable, the issue becomes which ones.

Charlie Hebdo arguably was blasphemous. Dieudonné is engaged in incitement to hatred. It is perfectly consistent to hold that the right to free speech should prevail over the right to be free from blasphemy and that the right to be free from incitement to hatred should prevail over the right to free speech.

A prohibition against blasphemy is meant to protect the believer from insult and to protect us from a breach of the peace that the outrage from the insult may provoke in the believer. A prohibition against incitement to hatred is meant to protect us from those incited.

A prohibition against blasphemy is as wide as all outdoors, because religion is any spiritual belief. A prohibition against incitement to hatred is more limited, because what is prohibited is the incitement to hatred against identifiable groups – groups that are currently or have traditionally been disadvantaged.

One reason we protect freedom of expression is to arrive at the truth. The prohibition of blasphemy impedes the search for truth. To take one example, Galileo was prosecuted in the 17th century for blasphemy for his views that the earth revolved around the sun. If we had effective global blasphemy laws had been in effect from the 17th century until today, we might still today be prevented from saying that the earth revolves around the sun.

Incitement to hatred serves no similar truth-seeking purpose. It is an absurd position to say that maybe it is true that racial slurs are true, that Jews control the world, that blacks are less intelligent than whites and so on. The mere suggestion that these utterances might be true gives credence to them, something we would not want to do.

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Anxiety in our time

Avrum Rosensweig

We don't know what we have until it is eaten away at. How could we?

Is it possible for a child who grew up in a peaceful, rational society to understand and recognize how other nations operate? Could I, as a child of the '60s and '70s, feel the oppression of such states as Libya or Congo, where its citizens are persecuted and made to feel fear by selfish dictators and self-centred autocrats? I have never double-locked my doors or looked over my shoulder in fear of uniformed men.

Yet recently I had a talk with a friend who told me she is frightened in a way she has never felt. She told me, "I am scared ISIS is coming over here," in reference to the very chilling Islamic State terrorizing Syria and Iraq. She added that for the first time in her life, she is developing anxiety and panic, believing that things are changing in our peaceful forest, Canada, and violence is coming our way.

My friend attributed her fears to what she reads in the news – journalists having their heads lopped off and children being forced to kill grown men. She is shaking at such barbarism. She cannot sleep as she used to and doesn't feel the Canadian sense of freedom she once did.

I am not certain how to calm her because I am beginning to feel the same. For the first time in my life, I too fear those in our midst, in our neighbourhoods, down the street from us, who only this past summer during the war on Gaza, walked proudly and openly with placards at anti-Israel protests calling for "Jewish children into the ovens." The fundamentalist Muslims and their allies here in Toronto are truly upsetting.

I can only answer her that most people are noble, that goodness ultimately triumphs. I also encourage her to become part of the change – to fight the bad guys, and even more, to work toward strengthening the virtuous. While I am uncertain of the future and how to battle the present, I cannot approach it in any other way.

> *The fundamentalist Muslims and their allies here in Toronto are truly upsetting*

I must be involved in this revolution and I express an invitation to you to do the same.

Embrace the Christians, the Muslims, the other, those whom you know, and create energy of peace and tolerance. As a community, let's be introspective and determine how prepared we are for the rough days by coming together and asking some key questions such as: are we doing enough to ensure the safety and security of our members; are we all playing an activist role in the strengthening of the Jewish People; do the major Jewish organizations including the Jewish federations and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) have a plan if Canada takes a European turn for the worst?

It is crucial that we, the Canadian Jewish community, recognize that we have had some very good decades, perhaps the best throughout history. It is paramount that we understand we have to strategize together to create a plan for our own future. And it is crucial for our leadership to look closely at what is occurring around us and act as role models for the rest of our members, taking the perilous events happening in every continent, very seriously.

My friend is scared. She feels that we could be in the midst of a world war, one that will require a massive response from millions. How do we contain fundamentalist Islam? How do we fight terrorists on our streets? How do we wake up our own Jewish neighbours so that each and every one of us plays a role in fighting evil forces and finding peace in our world, which is beautiful and where most people are decent?

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding. – Albert Einstein. ■

Jews and aboriginals a powerful team

Bernie Farber

Jews get it. We understand bigotry and discrimination. More sadly, we understand how otherwise civilized people and nations can target the most vulnerable amongst us. We also know what it means to be a stranger in a place you call home while simultaneously having a visceral appreciation of what it means to be an aboriginal person. As Irwin Cotler is fond of saying "Jews were the aboriginal people of Israel."

Our history is one fraught with all of these elements; exile, inquisitions, pogroms and ultimately even genocide. It's for all of these reasons that we of all people should also embrace the plight of Canada's First Nations people.

Yet since immigrating to this country over the last 100-odd years our connection to Canada's aboriginal people has been limited at best.

Don't get me wrong; from time to time there have been intersections. In the late 1980s during the ascendancy of neo-Nazi groups in Canada like the Heritage Front, we found ourselves thrown together to deal with a common enemy. The late Rodney Bobiwash was an anti-racist worker with Toronto's Native Canadian Centre during that time. Together with Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) we confronted bigots like the now deceased Wolfgang Droege, exiled Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel and others as they threatened and targeted both our communities.

And philanthropists Larry Tanenbaum as well as Dr. Michael Dan (with whom I work) have been very generous in their outreach to First Nations in Canada. However, for the most part especially in the past, our paths rarely crossed.

Two significant events changed the dynamics at the turn of the 21st century. Former Assembly of First Nations (AFN) chief and community elder David Ahenakew's unprovoked verbal attack against Jews told us that we needed to work towards a better understanding. This led to the first ever First Nations /Jewish community mission to Israel as a means by which to share our stories and histories.

Led by CJC and the AFN, it saw 18 First Nations chiefs and elders participate in a first ever visit to the State of Israel. We learned together of our common tragedies while visiting Yad Vashem where we shared stories of the Shoah and residential schools. We felt each other's pain in the wiping out of generations, the loss of culture and the failed attempts to destroy our traditions.

We have a long way to go. Happily, today's generation of young Jews have found ways to reach out to Canada's First Nations. Recently I participated in a Justice Shabbat that brought together a number of synagogues and temples with First Nations advocates to engage in a discussion of our commonalities.

Young Jewish activists and consultants work with First Nations using both their acumen and cultural history to connect. Folks like Steven Strauss and Jon Telch, young Jewish government consultants with a wealth of contacts between the two of them work closely with First Nations reserves and organizations.

Steve has been working in the aboriginal space for five years. He began working at a Toronto-based boutique government relations firm, where he predominately represented First Nations communities and organizations in Ontario. Only 18 short months ago, Steve decided he would start his own firm, Steven A. Strauss & Associates Inc.

Jon Telch joined Steve in June 2014. Jon has worked for a federal member of parliament, tasked mainly with policy research and speech writing. After a stint in politics Jon moved to London, England where he earned a master of science in politics and international relations. Jon has always been active as a community advocate, and currently sits on the board of the Jewish Refugee Action Network and as the political consultant to a campaign to end child poverty.

Steve and Jon are able to marry their skills, education and passion for community advocacy into assisting First Nations. With their added Jewish soul, their work with Aboriginal Canadians is a partnership fuelled by an added knowledge of the importance of history and spirituality. ■

A new kind of Judaism is emerging in Israel

Rabbi Dow Marmur

Some Israeli businessmen are said to have funded a campaign to get their fellow Jewish citizens to the traditional Shabbat table. Their message is commendable, but their ads that ridicule Jews who don't observe Shabbat in a traditional way have alienated many of those whom they were supposed to attract. Ostensibly non-observant Israelis are scandalized. They insist that their way of life isn't less authentically Jewish than that of those who denigrate it in the name of Judaism.

They have a point. The conventional manifestations of religious Judaism – Orthodox, Reform and Conservative – are all Diaspora creations and often very different from what the ancient sources teach. Though each movement claims authenticity, none appears to have it more than any other.

One of the challenges of the leaders of all conventional manifestations of contemporary Judaism is to accept that Judaism is likely to undergo radical changes now when Jews have a state of their own.

Each movement claims to address the challenges of Jewish statehood, but the evidence doesn't always support it. Extreme (haredi) Orthodoxy is determined to recreate the world that was lost: Ashkenazi haredim want to live in an east European shtetl, albeit with modern facilities. Their Sephardi counterparts have brought with them the Judaism they and their forbears practised in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Both are out of place in Israel.

Modern Israeli Orthodoxy claims to be more indigenous, but its embrace of the settlements in the West Bank and of reactionary politics is alienating many citizens.

Conservative and Reform congregations may try hard to turn themselves into Israeli creations, but their theologies have been shaped by America and Europe.

Hence the efforts to formulate a different and truly Israeli Judaism that, though secular on the surface, may be no less Jewish in terms of commitment to the history and the sources of Judaism, and to the love of the land.

Many Israelis may not observe Shabbat the way the ads suggest, yet they may live up to what Shabbat stands for in other less ritualistic but no less authentic ways. Understandably, they resent a campaign that denigrates their efforts.

Tel Aviv is considered to be the most secular city in Israel, yet it's there that many of the new initiatives start. Two examples:

First, in its decade-long existence, Beit Tefilah Yisraeli has fused contemporary Israeli culture with Jewish tradition. Its Friday night services in the port of Tel Aviv bring together hundreds of worshippers who wouldn't be seen in synagogues. Its study sessions attract many who don't wish to associate with any of the traditional movements.

Second, about 25 years ago, Dr. Ruth Calderon founded a secular pluralistic Beit Midrash, and subsequently Alma, an institution devoted to helping Israelis to connect to Jewish tradition.

These efforts have given impetus to similar groups in other ostensibly secular places in Israel. And beyond that, much of popular culture is suffused with traditional Judaism, reflected, for example, in the many contemporary Israeli songs set to psalms and to traditional prayers.

To denigrate and ridicule these efforts is to ignore early signs of a renaissance of Jewish thought and practice that may render the old distinctions between secular and religious obsolete.

Prof. Arnold Eisen, the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, the nerve centre of Conservative Judaism in North America, in acknowledging that a new kind of Judaism is emerging in Israel, has written that he wants "neither to romanticize nor dismiss it." In fact, he seems to want to claim it for his brand of Judaism.

So does Rabbi Meir Azari, who runs a very successful Reform congregation and community centre in Tel Aviv. He believes that it's there that the future of progressive Judaism is to be found.

Instead of judging the new manifestations of Judaism through the lens of forms forged abroad, we've every reason to refrain from criticizing it only because it doesn't conform to our ways. ■

Jennie Rosenfeld's appointment is wonderful news

Anat Sharbat

A stained-glass ceiling has been cracked.

Women no longer learn Torah solely in order to be *talmidot chachamot* (learned scholars), but are actualizing their halachic and spiritual skills as they take on official communal roles. An exciting development in this trend is Jennie Rosenfeld's recent official appointment as the spiritual leader of the city of Efrat in Israel.

This is big news in Israel. For the first time in the country, women are publicly acknowledged as religious and spiritual authorities, acting as clergy alongside their male rabbinic counterparts.

The process for modern Orthodox women to take leadership roles has been gradual. Step by step, the early *toanot rabaniyot* (halachic advocates) broke down the doors of the Israeli rabbinate as they supported women in the often convoluted and arcane divorce courts (*batei din*). *Yoatzot halachah* (halachic advisers) were the next generation, and they were granted the authority to use their knowledge of the laws of niddah (menstrual purity laws) to advise on halachic questions brought to them by women. Another step was the ability of women to take on roles as supervisors of *mashgichot kashrut* (kashrut supervisors). Now comes the next stage: women are using their knowledge to take on *public* roles in communal, religious, spiritual and halachic leadership.

In the past few years, several women in the United States and Canada were ordained by Yeshivat Maharat (N.Y.), and now serve as full and equal leaders of Orthodox congregations. Rabba Sara Hurwitz, the dean of Yeshivat Maharat, has been leading at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale. More recently ordained are Maharat Ruth Balinsky-Freidman at Ohev Shalom in Washington D.C., Maharat Rori Picker-Neiss at Bais Abraham in St. Louis, Maharat Rachel Kohl-Feingold at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Montreal and Maharat Victoria Sutton-Brelow at Congregation Beit Israel in Berkeley, Calif.

These developments mark a clear need that exists within modern Orthodox communities in Israel, as well as in the Diaspora – the need for women to lead in communities, not just for the sake of women, but for the strength of the entire congregation.

The Diaspora and Israel face different challenges, however. In North America, a single synagogue will look to rabbinic leadership for pastoral care and spiritual guidance. The model in Israel is slightly different; rabbis anchor particular geographic locales, not just one place of worship. Synagogues led by a single rabbi or a clergy team, serving only a segment of the local community, are much less common. The appointment of Rosenfeld as spiritual leader of the city of Efrat is an important choice, because she adapts to the model of rabbinic leadership in Israel serving everyone in the community.

Since religion and state are not separate in Israel, it is important to note that Rosenfeld will not be paid by the Israeli government. Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, the founding chief rabbi of Efrat, has chosen to sustain and support the role, and I hope that it will become the seed for other communities to invest in female leadership.

In order for the glass ceiling to truly shatter, women in Israel must be recognized by the state through the payment of salaries to women in positions of spiritual and halachic leadership. This is the next step.

Rosenfeld's appointment is a sign that the movements in North America and Israel are nourished by one another and are constantly in dialogue.

As it says in Ecclesiastes, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil."

I believe that Rosenfeld's appointment makes strides not only for women, but for the strength and health of our community as a whole. ■

Anat Sharbat has a doctorate in Talmud from Bar-Ilan University and will receive smichah this year from Yeshivat Maharat.

'I think we have to break down the shame'

Jewish leaders are being encouraged to raise awareness and help women access resources in the community

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

The Jewish community is no less affected by domestic abuse than the general population, but there is still a misconception that Jewish families are somehow immune to it.

The general consensus among professionals who provide resources and services for Jewish victims of domestic abuse cite the fact that many members of the community don't feel comfortable discussing it publicly because of the *shandeh*, or shame, of not having *shalom bayit*, a peaceful, happy home.

Penny Krowitz, executive director of the non-profit organization called Act To End Violence Against Women (ATEVAW), said that raising awareness about the issue and the resources offered by her agency and others throughout Canada is just as important as the services they provide.

"I think we have to talk about it and break down the shame and recognize that things happen in relationships," Krowitz said.

One of the ways that would help bring the issue of domestic abuse in the Jewish community to the forefront is to have community leaders, including rabbis, speak freely about the issue, she added.

"One of the things... we've done in the past, and I'd like to do it again, is to convene a meeting of rabbis, a training of rabbis, so that they have more of a sensitivity to this issue," Krowitz said.

Janice Shaw, Jewish Family & Child's York Region direct service manager, said her agency runs a synagogue outreach program to encourage rabbis to speak to their congregants about the issue.

JF&CS has placed posters in women's washrooms at Jewish institutions around Toronto.

"The goal of this outreach was to meet with rabbis and/or synagogue groups to ensure information and resources were shared on the issue of domestic violence with the goal of increasing safety for women and children in synagogue communities," Shaw said, adding that JF&CS recently secured funding to launch the second phase of the project next month.

Rabbi Ed Elkin, spiritual leader of Toronto's First Narayever Congregation, recalls having a JF&CS representative come to his synagogue in 2013 as part of the program.

"She came to speak one Shabbat to try to highlight the issue in our community and make the synagogue a place where people who were suffering from domestic abuse, primarily women, could feel that it is a place that the issue could be talked about and could find ways to address their situation through the synagogue," Rabbi Elkin recalled, adding that she brought posters that were put up in the women's washrooms to provide contact numbers and encourage women who were being abused not to suffer in silence.

Rabbi Elkin said he has not yet addressed the issue of domestic abuse in one of his sermons, but he said he's certainly not opposed to the idea, and he believes he and other rabbis have a role to play in lifting the stigma surrounding domestic abuse in the Jewish community.

> *One of the things we've done in the past, and I'd like to do it again, is to convene a meeting of rabbis, a training of rabbis, so that they have more of a sensitivity to this issue.*

Diane Sasson is executive director of Auberge Shalom Pour Femmes, Montreal's kosher women's shelter. She noted that the organization's centre for external services – which serves women who aren't living in the facility – employs an Orthodox counsellor.

"This Orthodox counsellor is the one who gives the centre credibility that... we will respect all forms of Judaism. We do have a number of Orthodox clients as a result of many years of working with rabbis and leaders and women to make them feel safe halachically in our environment," Sasson said.

She said that over the years, Auberge Shalom has forged relationships with rabbis and encouraged them to give sermons at their shuls.

"We're still trying to make inroads in the Sephardi community in Montreal, which is very traditional... They have the belief that the rabbi needs to be central, so in those communities, I think it is step by step, rabbi by rabbi, conversation by conversation," Sasson said.

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Canada, Israel agree to boost co-operation

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Canadians are used to the government's strong support for Israel. So it was no surprise that during Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird's recent visit there, he re-tweeted: "Canada doesn't stand behind Israel; we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with it."

Baird's trip came one year after Prime Minister Stephen Harper's first visit to Israel, when he signed a strategic partnership memorandum of understanding. Last week, Baird and his colleague, Transport Minister Lisa Raitt, signed a series of agreements for enhanced co-operation between Canada and Israel on a number of fronts:

• a joint declaration of solidarity and friendship that reaffirms the two countries' commitment to a strategic partnership and names areas of increased collaboration in diplomacy, trade and development;

• a memorandum of understanding to expand diplomatic consultation;

• a memorandum of understanding to "work together to oppose efforts to single out or isolate Israel by developing a co-ordinated public diplomacy initiative to oppose boycotts of Israel, to oppose those who call into question the Jewish state's right to exist and to work to counter the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement";

• the two countries agreed to promote bilateral trade and explore joint business opportunities in third countries.

In addition, Raitt and her Israeli counterpart, Yisrael Katz, signed three agreements on air transport and aviation security.

Meanwhile, at an informal meeting organized by the United Nations General Assembly, Steven Blaney, Canada's minister of public safety and emergency preparedness, told the 50 member states attending that "Canada is deeply concerned about the alarming increase in anti-Semitism worldwide. We have seen recent violent events against Jews at home and abroad, whether at a kosher grocery in Paris or at a synagogue in Edmonton, that convey a clear message of hatred towards Jewish people."

"Canada knows that history has shown that the enemies of freedom and democratic rights often target the Jews first. As I said to Jews I met this year in Israel, Paris and in Canada: Canada is your friend and Canada is your ally. We stand with you."

Speaking from Davos, Switzerland, where he was attending the World Economic Forum, Baird told *The CJN*, "We have a great relationship with Israel. It's grown stronger every year that Stephen Harper has been prime minister. We have some honest differences of opinion with the Palestinian Authority – obviously their unilateral actions at the UN and the International Criminal Court (ICC). We take strong issue with the decisions they have made, but we have decent relations with the Palestinian Authority."

Asked about a recent column in the *Globe and Mail* by chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, which urged Baird to apologize for Canadian policy, Baird said he hadn't read it. But, "I do know he made comments comparing the government of Israel with ISIL, which is deeply offensive."

Baird acknowledged that the ICC came up in meetings with the Palestinians. "I just outlined how problematic their unilateral action by going to the ICC is. Obviously this further handicaps the government of Israel from protecting the government and the people of Israel. We're concerned about the politicization of the ICC against Israel."

Regarding attacks on civilians, Baird said, "Terrorism is the great struggle of our generation. Far too often, the State of Israel and the Jewish People are on the front lines of that struggle. The attack on the kosher supermarket in Paris was obviously an anti-Semitic attack. People who were inspired by ISIL and radical extremists obviously pose a real threat to Israel, to Jews and to Canadians as well."

About critiques that the Harper government has departed from a more even-handed approach to the Middle East, Baird said, "Canada is not the referee for the world. My job is to promote Canadian values. Israel is the only democracy in the region. They are our strong friend and ally.

Lisa Raitt

"But we have excellent relationships with the Arab world," he continued. "I had a very good meeting [Jan. 22] with [Egyptian President Abdel Fattah] al-Sisi. We have good relationships with Jordan, with the government of Egypt, with the leadership in Saudi Arabia. We have great relationships with the Emirates, with Bahrain. So our relationship in the Arab world is very warm.

"We have an honest difference of opinion on one issue, but when it come to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, we share the same view. When it comes to [President Bashar] Assad's war against his own people in Syria, we share the same view. When it comes to ISIL, to Iran's nuclear program and its support for terrorism, we share a lot in common." ■

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Rose Henryk, 1910–1991, *Lodz Ghetto*, ruins of a synagogue on Wolborska Street, demolished by the Germans, 1940. Silver gelatin on cellulose nitrate negative series. Art Gallery of Ontario. Gift from Archives of Modern Conflict, 2007. © Art Gallery of Ontario

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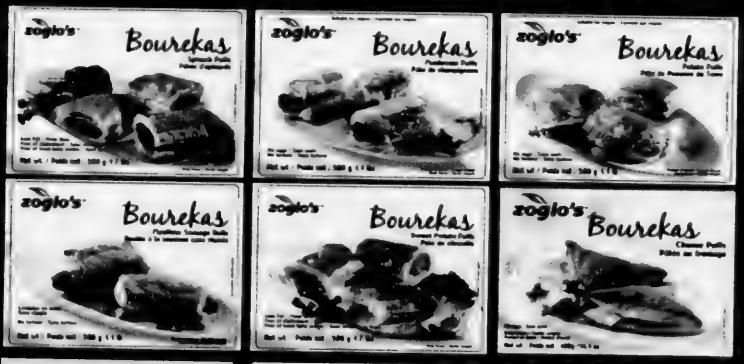

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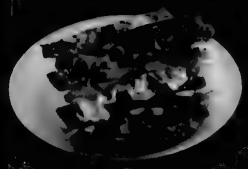

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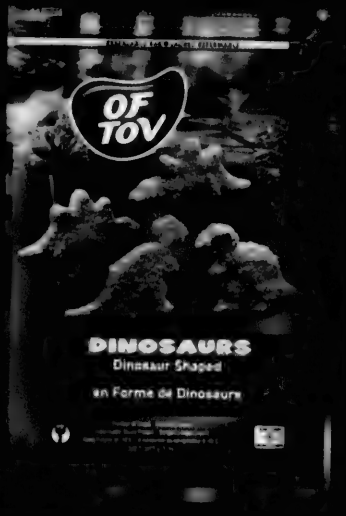

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GUEST VOICE

Anti-Semitism in Edmonton: hatred not confined to Europe

Rabbi Daniel Friedman

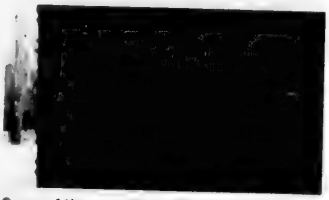
On Shabbat morning, Jan. 17, we arrived for services at Beth Israel Synagogue in Edmonton to find our building desecrated with hateful anti-Semitic graffiti. The mood in shul that day was one of shock and fear as we were awakened to the reality that baseless hatred of Jews isn't confined to the Middle East or Europe. Here, in multicultural Canada, in our thriving city of Edmonton, anti-Semitism had reared its ugly head.

It wasn't the first attack on an Edmonton place of worship in recent weeks. Previously, a Sikh temple was the target of hate. It seems the perpetrators were trying to take revenge for the Islamist terror in France and mistook the temple for a mosque. All were swift to condemn the horrible act: how dare these bigots make our Canadian brothers and sisters – Muslim or Sikh – feel unwanted in our wonderful country!

What followed, however, was the sad story of the Jewish People throughout our history. Whenever an attack is perpetrated on innocents by hateful extremists, targeting Jews is never far behind. Hitler began his reign of terror by attacking neighbouring lands, but this was merely a precursor to the annihilation of our people. Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, then began lobbing missiles at Israel. In Paris, Islamist terrorists went on a rampage at *Charlie Hebdo*, followed promptly by the Hyper Cacher massacre.

While the violation of the synagogue doesn't in any way compare to those tragedies, when the Sikh temple was attacked, we should have realized we would be next. We must always stand at the forefront of combating prejudice and bigotry directed at any minority, in Canada and worldwide – primarily because it's the right thing to do, but also because we know that extremists might begin with one minority, but history has shown we're never immune. My greatest regret is that I didn't immediately issue a public statement condemning the attack on the Sikh temple.

The good news is that the outpouring of sympathy and support has been heartwarming. I've received countless emails and phone calls from random citizens expressing solidarity, from as far afield as a pastor in Cold Lake, Alta. Federal Minister of State Tim Uppal issued a public condemnation and personally called me to offer support. A local imam reached out to me. A Muslim university student volunteered to assist with the cleanup. Words can't express how overwhelmed we feel by the love and care we've received from our fellow Canadians.



Some of the graffiti found Jan. 17

The most important thing to remember is that the evil perpetrators are individuals. Most Canadians – of all stripes – are peace-loving, tolerant people. Indeed, outside Israel, Canada is the best country in the world for Jews today, and perhaps all of history. Last January, I accompanied Prime Minister Stephen Harper to Israel. At the end of the trip, in a private moment, I told him, "Mr. Prime Minister, not since Cyrus the Great have the Jewish People had a world leader like you. You are the new Cyrus." He humbly said I was too kind. But he, along with Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney, Foreign Minster John Baird and Uppal, are leading the fight against anti-Semitism and intolerance worldwide.

And they're not just paying lip service to the cause. They take positions internationally based not on what's easiest and most comfortable, but on what is the moral, right thing to do. They understand and recognize the reality of anti-Semitism and bigotry, and are fighting the forces of evil. One of their major contributions to Canada is the National Holocaust Monument, now being built in the capital, in which they've invested millions of dollars, because they want to show Canada and the world that we're committed to ending prejudice and bigotry.

On behalf of Edmonton's Jewish community, I want to wish much strength to our Sikh neighbours and offer my blessing to Edmonton police that they find the perpetrators of these terrible acts and bring them to justice so that we can all sleep sounder knowing that we're living in the safest and most secure country on the planet. ■

Rabbi Daniel Friedman is spiritual leader of Beth Israel Synagogue in Edmonton and chair of the National Holocaust Monument Development Council.

Woman born in Auschwitz to attend liberation anniversary

PAUL LUNGEN
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Anglea Orosz and her mother Vera

It's fair to say that Angela Orosz doesn't remember much of anything about her time in Auschwitz. After all, she was barely more than one month old when it was liberated on Jan. 27, 1945. Nevertheless, she admits to feeling "terrified" about returning to the Nazi death camp.

Orosz, who turned 70 in December, will join hundreds of other Holocaust survivors, heads of state, political and religious leaders and many more to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the camp by Soviet army forces.

"I didn't want to go," Orosz said on the phone from Montreal. "My daughter pushed me. She wants to show what we became. They tried to wipe us out, and now we're flourishing."

Orosz, who has two children and seven grandchildren, with one more on the way, will be accompanied by her daughter, Katy, for her first trip back to the place of her birth. As far as she knows, she is one of only two people born in the camp to have survived. The other was born on liberation day in 1945 and now lives in Hungary, but he is not planning to make the trip.

Making the visit more palatable for her will be her post commemoration trip. Orosz will fly from Poland directly to Israel, copying the itinerary of March of the Living (MOL) participants.

As it happens, documentary filmmaker Naomi Wise will be in Poland to record the return of five Canadian Holocaust survivors to Auschwitz, including Orosz. She will tell their story, beginning in Canada as they prepare for the momentous event, and will follow them to their hometowns in Poland before accompanying them to the commemoration ceremony in the camp.

Wise said the short documentary films from the trip will be available for public viewing on the MOLarchiveproject.com website, along with previously recorded testimonies of other Shoah survivors. Citizenship and Immigration Canada provided a grant of $100,000 to make the films, along with the already completed documentary *Auschwitz-Birkenau: 70 Years After Liberation, A Warning to Future Generations.*

Orosz's parents, Tibor Bein and Vera Otvos, were Hungarian Jews who married in 1943. When the Germans invaded Hungary in March 1944, they were sent to a ghetto and were soon deported to Auschwitz. Her mother was two months pregnant at the time. With the naivete of someone unfamiliar with the camp, she identified herself as pregnant to Dr. Josef Mengele, who supervised the selections of those who would live and those who would be killed.

For some reason, Vera was spared from joining others being sent to the gas chambers and death. She was first put to work doing hard labour, working on roads. Later she was transferred to the kitchen, and finally she was sent to "Kanada," the depot where prisoners' property was sorted.

"Mengele didn't forget about her. He took her to experiment with the pregnancy," Orosz recounted.

Her mother was kept with twins and given injections for some unknown purpose. Remarkably, she survived and gave birth to Angela on Dec. 21. Two hours later, she had to join others in a roll call.

During the day, her mother left her alone on the top bunk in the barracks. Orosz was too weak and frail to cry. Despite having only water to drink, her mother was able to produce enough milk to keep her alive, Orosz said. Somehow they survived until liberation, but on Jan. 27, Orosz weighed barely more than a kilogram.

After liberation they travelled to a number of Polish cities and ended up in Slutsk, in what is today Belarus. They returned to Budapest in October 1945.

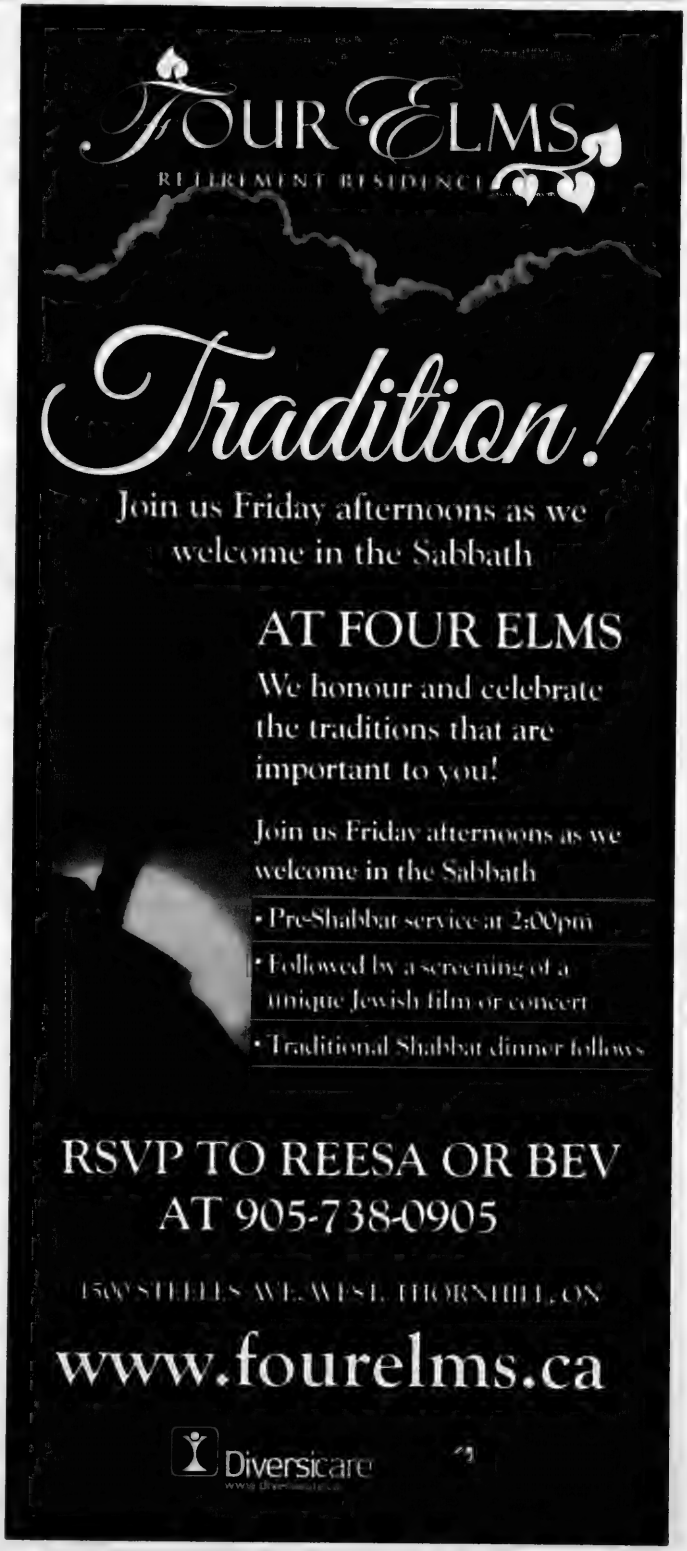
At one year of age, Orosz weighed three kilograms, about the size of a newborn. Nobody thought she'd survive except her mother and one doctor. She was always considered a miracle child, Orosz said.

Orosz and her family left Hungary because of pervasive anti-Semitism. Today she feels obliged to speak out and "to face anti-Semitism head on."

In travelling to Auschwitz, Orosz will be part of a group of about 300 camp survivors. This is likely the last such large-scale commemoration of its kind, given their ages, said Eli Rubenstein, national director of March of the Living Canada.

MOL Canada's Digital Archives Project will not only document the 70th anniversary event, but it is collecting previous recorded survivor testimonies, which will be stored on an interactive website as sn educational resource, said Wise.

Auschwitz-Birkenau: 70 Years After Liberation, A Warning to Future Generations, Wise's film, will be shown in Parliament Jan. 27 as part of an event hosted by Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney. ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 29, 2015

Jewish, Polish communities partner in remembrance

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

Winnipeg's Jewish community is marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz with three interrelated programs.

The centrepiece is a three-week exhibit (running till Feb. 13) titled *The Face of the Ghetto: Pictures taken by Jewish Photographers in the Litzmannstadt (Lodz) Ghetto 1940-1944*. The exhibit opened with the North American premiere of the Polish documentary film *Wielka Szpera* (The Great Szpera) on Jan. 25, at the Berney Theatre and will end with a community lecture by Thomas Lutz, the exhibit's curator and senior consultant with the Topography of Terror museum in Berlin, on Feb. 11.

The program was put together by the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada and its chair, Belle Jarniewski. Two years ago, Jarniewski and the Holocaust education centre partnered with a major Winnipeg church – Westminster United – to mount an exhibition, *Names Instead of Numbers, stories of former inmates – both Jewish and non-Jewish – of Dachau*. For this current exhibit, Jarniewski arranged to partner with the Polish community. The exhibit will be shown at the Ogniwo Polish Museum Society in North Winnipeg and the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto is one of the sponsors (along with the province of Manitoba, the Ridd Institute for Religion and Global Policy, University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba faculty of arts).

The connection with the Ogniwo Polish Museum, she said, was Dan Stone, a past president of the Jewish Heritage Centre and retired U of W history professor whose specialty was Polish history. He did a presentation at the museum last year.

"Dan and I discussed the idea of the exhibit with the museum representatives," Jarniewski said. "They were very excited about hosting it."

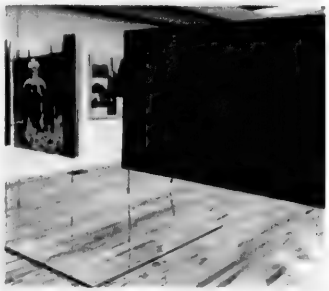
The Face of the Ghetto - pictures taken in the Litzmannstadt (Lodz) Ghetto 1940-1944 is a travelling exhibit, which was developed by Lutz and Ingo Loose for the Topography of Terror Documentation Centre – the exhibit's home base – in June 2010. The nearly five-year-old centre is an outdoor and indoor museum built on the site of the former SS and Gestapo headquarters in Berlin.

The exhibit features the work of a handful of Jewish photographers, commissioned by the Litzmannstadt (Lodz) "Jewish Council," to take photographs of almost every aspect of ghetto life. Nearly 12,000 contact prints have survived and are currently held in the Lodz state archive. Fifty large-scale photographs from the Litzmannstadt Ghetto – the name given to Lodz by the German occupiers in 1940 – are in the exhibition, making the little-known photo collection accessible to the public for the first time.

Jarniewski said the exhibit has been shown extensively in Europe, and within the last year been featured at Osgoode Hall in Toronto and, most recently, Dallas, Texas. The travelling exhibit includes statements from former ghetto residents and entries from the ghetto chronicle. A short overview of the ghetto's history, a description of the photography as a historic source, and information about the photographers provide an introduction into the exhibition.

The film, *Wielka Szpera* (The Great Szpera), she noted, is a documentary about the week in September 1942, when the Nazis forced the Judenrat (Jewish administration) in the Lodz Ghetto to select 15,000 children, elderly and physically or mentally disabled ghetto residents for deportation to the death camps.

Szpera is German for curfew. "It was horrific having Jewish police help to round up their own people," Jarniewski said .

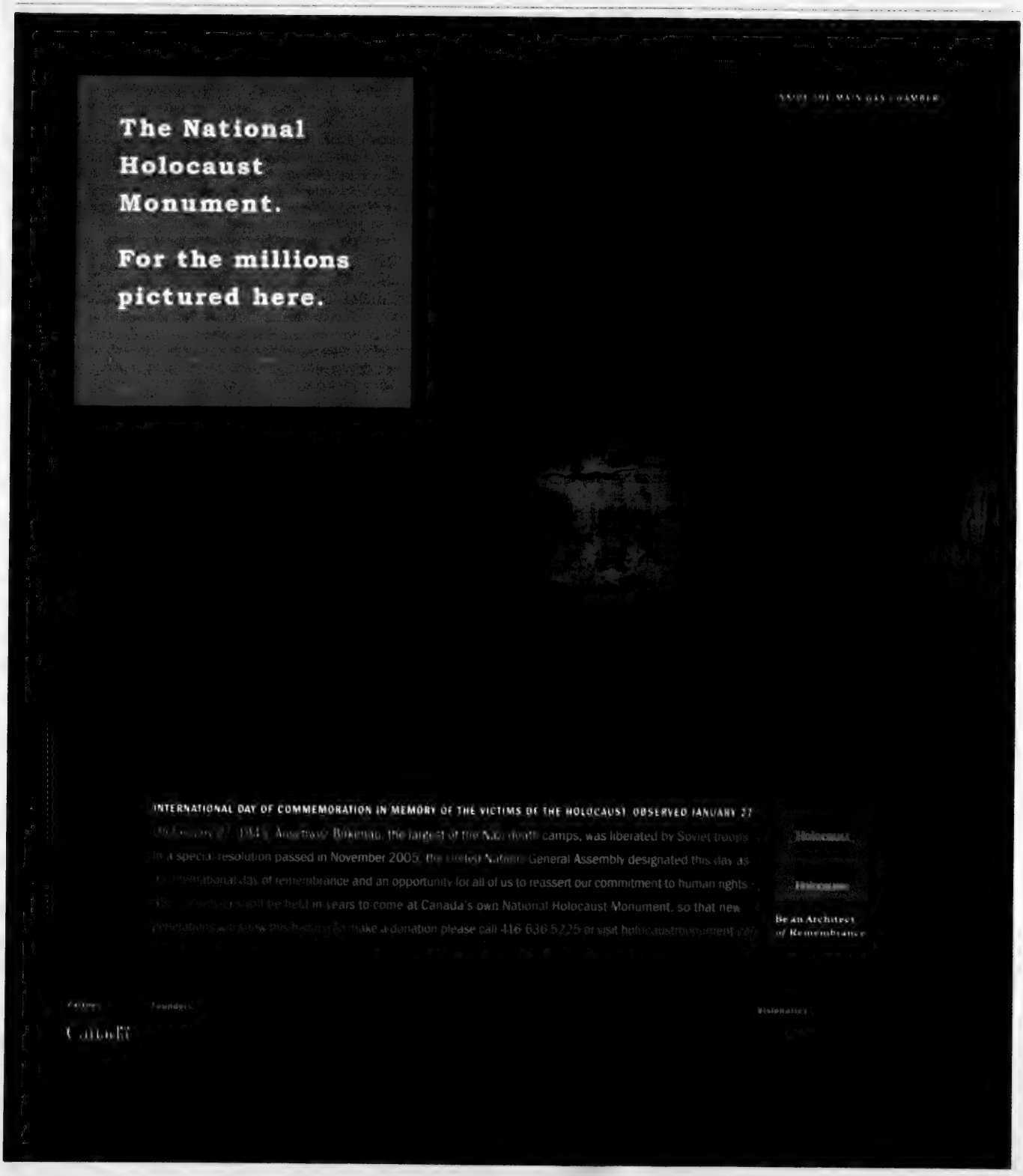


An exhibit of Lodz Ghetto photography runs until Feb. 13.

Jarniewski met Thomas Lutz in December at the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance conference in Manchester. (She was part of the Canadian delegation.)

"I found out that he gave lectures at Osgoode Hall and York University last year," she said. "I asked if he would be willing to come to Winnipeg. We got the Ridd Institute at the University of Winnipeg to sponsor him. He will be speaking at both universities here in addition to his public lectures."

All events are free. ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 29, 2015

Moishe House opens second Canadian outpost in Toronto

KORTNEY SHAPIRO
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Moishe House, an international organization that seeks to provide meaningful Jewish experiences for young adults, opened in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood earlier this month.

The residents of all 74 international houses are primarily post-college young adults who, in exchange for subsidized living accommodations, are given a budget to organize and host seven or more programs and volunteer opportunities a month in their respective communities.

The non-denominational organization began in 2006 with four friends in Oakland, Calif., hosting their peers for Shabbat dinner. The Toronto house is the second one to open in Canada, after one in Vancouver that opened in 2011.

Thornhill native Amanda Snow, who works as a fund development co-ordinator at the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, is one of five residents, all in their mid-20s, of Moishe House Toronto.

The other four residents, who will live in the house near Dupont Street and Spadina Road for one to three years, are Brett Karp, Aaron Savatti, Abigail Engelsman and Jillian Windman. The residents pay rent, which is heavily subsidized by local philanthropists.

David Cygielman

"How often do you see an event but you don't want to go by yourself? Moishe House gives you a family to do that with," Snow said.

"We're bringing people in, in a social way, and introducing them to what is available in this community through every community organization. We're trying to engage with everyone in the community who want to engage with us. We want the community to tell us what they want."

Moishe Houses can be found in cities such as Buenos Aires, Tel Aviv, Shanghai and, Sydney, Australia. Residents typically live in them for one to three years. They're currently in 17 countries and engage more than 5,200 young Jews in programs year-round.

The opening of Moishe House Toronto – which attracted more than 150 people to its inaugural housewarming event on Jan. 17 – is part of a growth strategy that aims to double the number of locations by 2017.

"About a year ago at a board meeting, a board member [asked about] the cities that have the most number of young adults [and] where we can make the largest impact of engaging young Jewish adults on a local level, and Toronto was on the top of that list," said David Cygielman, founder and CEO of Moishe House.

"I hope down the road that there are multiple Moishe Houses in Toronto," he said at the opening event. "One of the unique things about Moishe House is that it allows young adults to be the creators and leaders of the community, which is really nice… They really step up and do an amazing job when given a real opportunity to do it."

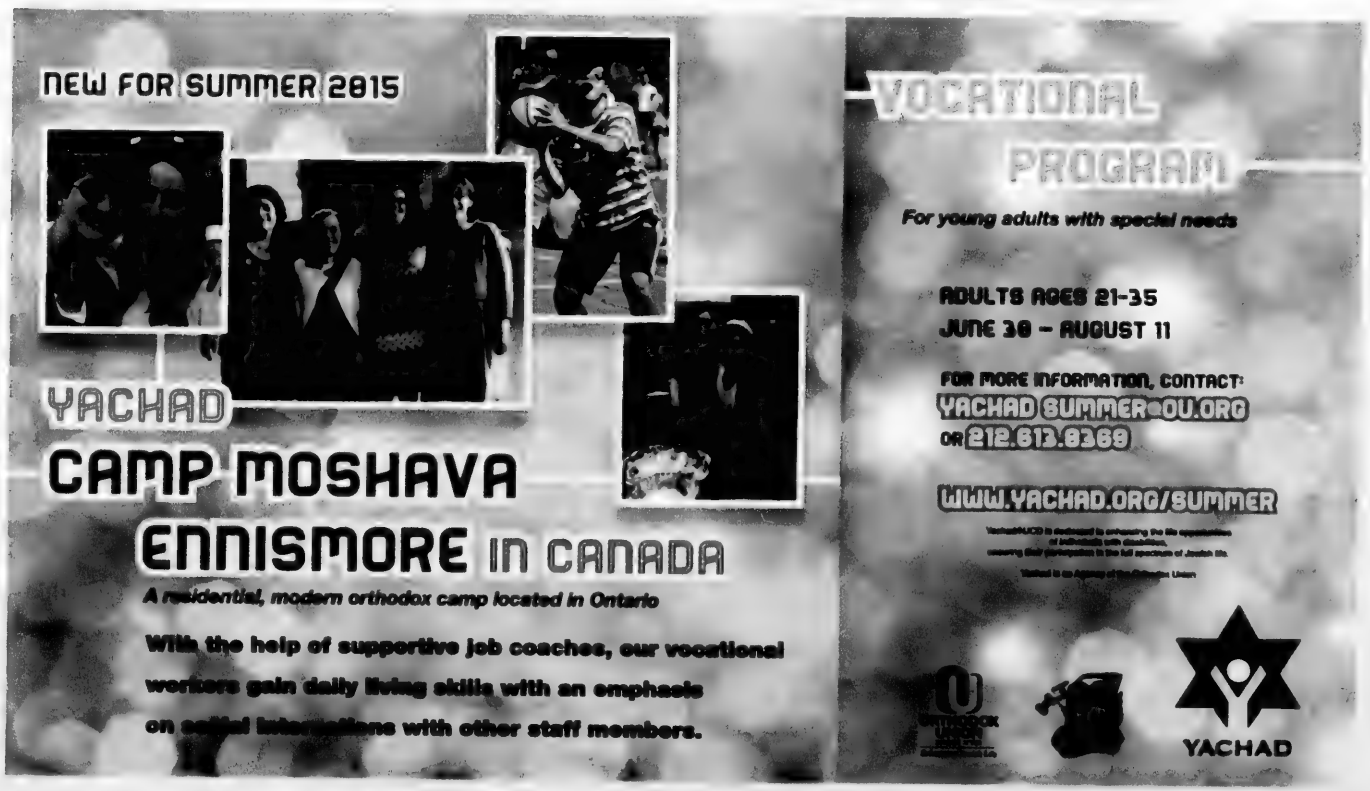
Moishe House residents and participants can also take part in learning and leadership retreats, and residents can go to an annual resident leadership conference each summer.

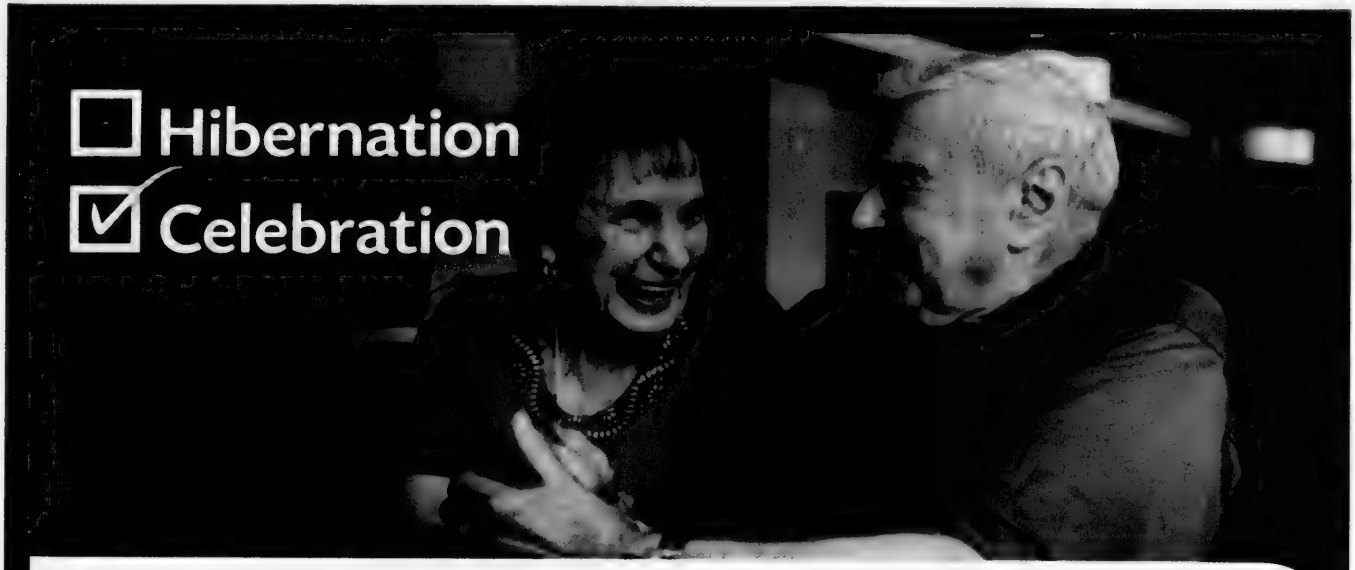
"The idea is to be able to connect to one another and your Jewish community and Jewish experience in today's world," Cygielman said. "It's even more important to be able to feel like you have that connection and network internationally."

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Community Connect (COCO), federation's young adult engagement arm, is collaborating with Moishe House in the hope of creating inspiring Jewish experiences for young professionals, said Jessica Taylor, manager of leadership initiatives with COCO.

"We feel a special connection to the Moishe House, as residents Jillian Windman, Aaron Savatti, Brett Karp and Amanda Snow are all active members of our Taglit-Birthright Israel CIE Madrichim training program, and we've already started to get to know Abi Engelsman through COCO's Live the Cause volunteer initiative," Taylor said.

"This team certainly has the skills and passion to make a great impact on our community through their work with the Moishe House." ■





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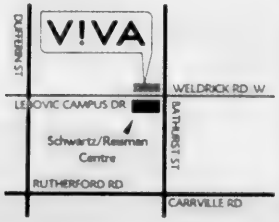

Neighbourhood shul celebrates sanctuary renovation

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Beth Lida Forest Hill Synagogue, which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary, has renovated its sanctuary and social hall.

On Feb. 3 at 7:30 p.m., the community is invited to join the members of the congregation at a reception to celebrate the completion of their renovation and to honour their major donors.

Appropriately, Beth Lida, as it is affectionately known, chose Tu b'Shvat, the New Year of the Trees, to celebrate the restoration of the shul.

Beth Lida, also known as "the neighbourhood shul," is located at 22 Gilgorm Rd, in the Eglinton Avenue-Chaplin Crescent area.

"The beautiful new sanctuary, which accommodates 124 people, will help to ensure our continuation as a warm, welcoming home to everyone in the community for generations to come," says Eshai Hirshberg, Beth Lida's president.

In 1912, immigrants fleeing from tyranny and religious persecution from an area that is now part of Belarus, founded Beth Lida on Terauley Street (now Bay Street).

As the congregation grew, 12 years later, the Orthodox shul moved to the Kensington Market area to a cottage on Augusta Avenue. In 1950, as the Jewish community in Toronto moved further north, Beth Lida moved to its present location in a former church on a quiet one-way residential street.

Seen in Beth Lida's newly renovated sanctuary are, from left, Eshai Hirshberg, president, Joe Goldman, a major donor, Joseph Bigio, interior designer and Amy Anidjar, Goldman's daughter.

Beth Lida, with 60 member families, has regular Shabbat and festival services. The shul does not have a full-time rabbi. Guest rabbis and congregants lead the services and the members deliver sermons and present shiurim with emphasis on congregational participation and singing.

"Since our founding in 1912, Beth Lida's strength has always been the generosity, loyalty and commitment of our members, who have contributed their support to the shul in a myriad of ways," says Hirshberg.

"A great deal of love and devotion has gone into this project and we're delighted with the results."

Hirshberg adds, "As Toronto's beloved neighbourhood shul, we look forward to welcoming the entire community to daven with us, enjoy the best hot Kiddush in town, and take part in great programs for singles and families – all in our new surroundings."

Interior designer and minyan regular Joseph Bigio told *The CJN* that the two-month renovation extended the bimah, updated the lighting, improved the entrance to the sanctuary, and updated the finishes.

"There were multiple challenges inherited with very old buildings," says Bigio. He adds that he decided to work with the building and fit the old with the new.

"We worked around existing features such as the Aron Kodesh wall with its Roman travertine stone cladding, the curved ceiling, and the existing wood flooring," Bigio says.

"The result is a much brighter, vibrant and elegant environment, to the great satisfaction of the members of the congregation."

Martin and Nurit Bloomberg spearheaded the donor renovation campaign.

The Schlussel family will dedicate a *shulchan* cover in memory of the late Sidney Schlussel, the shul's beloved shamash for many years. ■

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ujaevents.com/registration/maylm and 416.635.2883 ext. 5174 The Campaign Closing is our opportunity to thank

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 29, 2015

B.C. event aimed to renew Jewish Renewal movement

ALON WEINBERG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A diverse group of some 75 Jews gathered at Vancouver's Or Shalom synagogue over the Shabbat of Jan. 16 and 17 to pray and eat together, and to advance the "Jewish Renewal" movement in Canada.

The event was hosted by Aleph Canada, the umbrella group co-ordinating what longtime director Rabbi Daniel Siegel calls "the movement for the spiritual renewal of Judaism."

Aleph Canada is part of the larger Aleph: Alliance for Jewish Renewal movement started by the late Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and his students. Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi died in 2014 just shy of his 90th birthday. He was known for his attempt to bridge old-world Judaism with "Aquarian consciousness," weaving ecology and feminism into a holistic, contemporary Jewish practice.

At the Vancouver retreat, after each meal, people gathered for rounds of sharing ideas. The Shabbat lunch session was based on Rabbi Siegel having asked congregants during morning prayers to note the parts of the service they connected to and where they felt their values were expressed in the liturgy. There were at least as many perspectives shared as there were people in attendance, consistent with the Renewal methodology of breaking down the divide between rabbi and congregant, teacher and student.

Sharing ideas was the order of the day at the Aleph Canada retreat. ALON WEINBERG PHOTO

The various points of view were revisited after Shabbat, when local facilitator Michael Mann documented all that had been discussed over the course of three Shabbat meals.

Recommendations that emerged for the Aleph Canada board included holding online and telephone courses, organizing annual gatherings that alternate between eastern and western Canada, working on an "aging-to-saging eldering project," facilitating inter-generational conversations, and holding events to reach young people in less traditional venues.

The Vancouver gathering was the third in Aleph Canada's series of consultations held across the country. The first, held during the Shabbat of Sukkot, was hosted by Montreal's B'nai Or community at the Montreal JCC for Jews of Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. The second, a week later, was held at Regina's Beth Jacob synagogue, another Aleph affiliate.

Attending the Vancouver event was Montrealer and B'nai Or's spiritual leader Rabbi Sherril Gilbert, who is also Aleph Canada's associate director and playing a larger role as Rabbi Siegel seeks to take a back seat in the day-to-day management of Aleph Canada.

Rabbi Siegel is hoping to devote more time to realizing a key project of Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi: the Integral Halakhic Institute, a project of the larger, U.S.-based Aleph to be run by Rabbi Siegel from his B.C. home that aims to produce progressive halachic responsa from beyond the bounds of Orthodoxy.

Asked about challenges she faces as interim associate director of Aleph Canada, Rabbi Gilbert said she hoped to have more in-person contact with Renewal-oriented Jews and Jewish communities across Canada. She said her job is to help spread the joy, practices and ruach of Jewish Renewal in Canada.

"There is an increasing recognition [that] Renewal has made inroads into all the denominations and is starting to be accepted as a legitimate resource in progressive Judaism," Rabbi Gilbert said. ■

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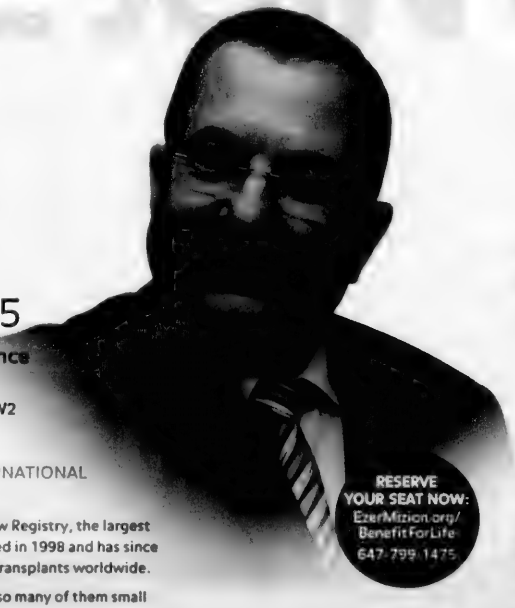

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Teens to bake 500 hamantashen for vulnerable Jews

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Tamara Weiss, a Grade 10 student in Toronto, speaks eloquently about giving back to the Jewish community, an experience that she says is characterized by "unity and selflessness, which are essential to a prosperous community."

Weiss is one of 20 teenagers taking part in the Toronto Diller Teen Fellows Program, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's 15-month leadership development initiative for Jewish youths in grades 10 and 11.

On Feb. 1, the fellows, along with university students from various Toronto campuses who are involved with Hillel of Greater Toronto, will meet at the Prosserman JCC to bake 500 hamantashen for 500 mishloach manot packages.

The latter will be delivered to Toronto Jews living below the poverty line before Purim, on March 4. The event will kick off a community-wide tikkun olam initiative in the weeks leading up to the holiday to support and raise awareness for the most vulnerable people in the Jewish community.

The Diller fellows aim to achieve this in collaboration with 11 Jewish poverty relief agencies, which will mobilize volunteers to assemble and deliver the mishloach manot packages to those in need.

The fellows will also spend the afternoon of Feb. 1 brainstorming ideas for a social media campaign they'll be co-ordinating to raise awareness in the Jewish community about Jews living in poverty.

"To be involved in a community-wide tikkun olam project focused on poverty awareness is inspiring and humbling at the same time," Weiss said, adding that "partnering with Hillel... will allow us [fellows] to learn more about leadership opportunities on campus."

The collaborative tikkun olam venture, which includes groups such as Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS), Ve'ahavta and Circle of Care: Home Care for Seniors, taps into the idea of matanot le'evyonim – giving gifts to the poor – which Raquel Binder, co-ordinator of the Toronto Diller program said, "Purim is based on."

Binder said the project was developed in response to the fact some 24,000 Toronto Jews – 13 per cent of the GTA's Jewish population – live below the poverty line.

"[Our fellows] spend a lot of time learning about tikkun olam, and this project is an incredible opportunity for our young leaders to stand up, take action and connect with the [marginalized people in the] community that they've learned so much about," Binder said.

Toronto's 20 Diller Teen Fellows are Jewish students from across the city in grades 10 and 11.

Now in its third year in Toronto, the Diller Program is sponsored by the Helen Diller Family Foundation, a foundation of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation's Jewish Community Endowment Fund. The fellowship operates in 11 North America communities and in South Africa, each partnered with a different Israeli city.

The goal, said Binder, is "to develop future community leaders with a strong Jewish identity and commitment to the Jewish People, respect for pluralism and a love of Israel."

The Toronto fellows, whose sister region is Eilat-Eilot, will get more information from a JF&CS staffer who will attend the baking event to talk to the teens about Jews in poverty. "The message is simple," Binder said. "Jewish poverty is not just a problem, it is our problem. We have a responsibility to take care of one another."

The 500 package recipients include single parents, Holocaust survivors and isolated seniors. Binder said they'll also feature items such as dried fruit, citrus fruit and canned tuna. Each will additionally contain a list of available Jewish agencies in the city that help the most vulnerable members of the community. ■

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Sephardi ex-journalist is third Tory hopeful in Mount Royal

JANICE ARNOLD
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Pascale Déry JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney introduced Mount Royal Conservative candidate hopeful Pascale Déry as a member of a younger generation whom his party would like to see representing Montreal in the government.

Déry described herself as "the new face of Conservatism," which she hopes will help change the party's image in Quebec.

Déry, 38, a political newcomer who was a journalist for 13 years with the French-language television networks TVA and LCN, officially launched her bid for the Conservative nomination on Jan. 21 at a Côte des Neiges community centre.

She is the third prominent Conservative hopeful in Mount Royal, which has been Liberal for 75 years, in the federal election that's expected to be held on Oct. 19. Political veterans Robert Libman, 54, and Beryl Wajsman, 60, announced their intentions this past fall.

Neither received the kind of high-level endorsement from the party that Déry is enjoying. At least three members of the party executive were among the approximately 200 people who attended her kickoff.

Several prominent members of the Sephardi community, of which Déry is a member, were also present, including Sylvain Abitbol, president of the Communauté Sépharade unifiée du Québec.

Déry stressed that while the Jewish community is a strong component of the riding, Mount Royal has changed, and many ethnic and religious groups, including Lebanese, Filipinos and Muslims, now call it home. Her audience reflected that multicultural composition.

Déry, a Côte St. Luc resident, said it was a difficult decision to resign from her prominent TV job and, as the mother of two young children, to enter politics.

"Some might say I am taking a big risk," she said. "Yes, but it is a risk worth taking."

The fact that she is a woman and a mother is a major factor in her decision, she said. The Conservatives are devoted to the economy and creating employment and to supporting families, and that's important for Mount Royal, because it's not the "rich riding" many perceive, she said.

"There is also a lot of inequality. The best way out of poverty is to have a job," Déry said.

Under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, she said, "Canada is recognized around the world as a model of economic and social development."

Touching on foreign policy, Déry said, "It is not surprising that Canada stands shoulder to shoulder with Israel. This should not be a surprise to anyone because our countries are built on the same values."

She noted that 20 per cent of Israel's population is Muslim.

She later told the media that, although she is proudly Jewish and admires Harper's pro-Israel stance, "that is not the only reason I am running."

Jews represent about 30 per cent of the riding's population, she said, and there is great diversity among the rest.

Asked how she'll overcame the fact that she's not well known among anglophones, Déry said "We can't have these language barriers anymore."

She said the party needs "new blood" in Quebec, where it holds only five seats and none on the Island of Montreal. Her lack of past political involvement is an asset, she believes.

Blaney, who represents the Quebec City area riding of Lévis-Bellechasse, said he hopes to see Déry serving "in the heart of government… We need to put Montreal back at the centre of decision-making."

Déry said she is prepared to debate her more politically experienced opponents. Libman is a former Côte St. Luc mayor and Montreal executive committee member, and earlier was leader and MNA for the Equality Party. Wajsman, a newspaper editor, is a former federal Liberal organizer and was executive assistant to current Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler.

Anthony Housefather, who was chosen as the Mount Royal Liberal candidate in November, said he would rather have Déry than Libman as his opponent, because he thinks her low profile among anglophones is a disadvantage. According to his figures, 78 per cent of the riding is primarily English speaking.

On hand to support Déry was her father William Déry, who in 1984, then a leader in the Sephardi community, unsuccessfully sought the Liberal nomination in Mount Royal. He noted that he was also 38 then. A few years later, he tried and failed to secure the Liberal nomination in St. Laurent. ■

Open Canada's doors to French Jews, Montreal rabbi urges after Paris trip

JANICE ARNOLD
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Rabbi Adam Scheier, right, met with Rabbi Moshe Sebbag at the Grande Synagogue de Paris. Rabbi Scheier was in France Jan. 13-15 to show solidarity with French Jews.

After a whirlwind two-day trip to Paris in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks there, Rabbi Adam Scheier is convinced that Canada, and particularly Quebec, must do more to help French Jews immigrate here if they wish to do so.

Rabbi Scheier, spiritual leader of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim and president of the interdenominational Montreal Board of Rabbis, said almost everyone he met in the Jewish community there knows someone who wants to leave France.

One of his goals was to gauge if they considered Canada an option.

"They are hearing a lot from Israel, and a little from the United States, but nothing from Canada," he discovered. "They know Canada and Quebec, and its Jewish community, think it would be wonderful, but do not know it's an option."

Rabbi Scheier said the Canadian Jewish community should overcome any reluctance it has to appearing to be competing with Israel, which is actively and openly seeking olim in France, and do more to let French Jews know they are wanted here.

The Jews of France are a "besieged community," he believes, and the community here has a "moral responsibility" to do what it can to welcome them.

"The reality is not every Jew is going to go to Israel," he said. "Where one lives is a very personal decision."

Because of common language and culture, Quebec would be a logical destination, and, of course, the Montreal community, which has been in decline for many years, would benefit from a replenishing of its numbers, he said.

In recent years, by observation, it would appear a significant number of French Jews have settled in Montreal, although no statistics are available.

Rabbi Scheier is in accord with his good friend Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld of the Ohev Sholom National Synagogue in Washington, D.C. The latter is urging the U.S. to open its doors to French Jews, citing the tragic fate of many Jews who were unable to find a safe haven at the onset of World War II because North America was closed to them.

"There is momentum in the U.S. to reactivate the 1990 Lautenberg Amendment, which facilitated immigration for the beleaguered Jews of the Soviet Union," said Rabbi Scheier. "A similar initiative should be undertaken in Canada, in particular in Quebec."

He noted over the past five years the Shaar Hashomayim has welcomed a significant number of French immigrants, and French is now heard in that synagogue increasingly.

A few weeks ago, the shul held its first Sephardi Shabbat service – in French, and there was a lecture in French.

There are an estimated 550,000 Jews in France. A record number – nearly 7,000 – made aliyah in 2014.

Rabbi Scheier's Paris trip from Jan. 13 to 15 was intended to show his and his congregation's solidarity with the Jews of France. There he joined with his rebbe and teacher, Rabbi Avi Weiss and Rabba Sara Hurwitz, both of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in New York, and Rabbi Yehuda Sarna of New York University.

He met with rabbinical and lay leadership, and many ordinary Jews. He also led an emotional prayer vigil outside the Hyper Cacher kosher supermarket where four hostages were killed on Jan. 9.

Rabbi Scheier said he asked everyone he met whether they believed there is a future for Jews in France. The answers were not simple, given the community's long history in and deep attachment to France.

"I spent time with former members of the Shaar who are now living in Paris and deeply conflicted about their future there," he said.

Overall, he described the mood in the Paris Jewish community as sad and fearful. As a pharmacist he met told him, "Everyone I know is planning on leaving – it's just too dangerous to be a Jew in France."

Rabbi Scheier concludes that, "Paris is a city on edge, waiting for the next attack to emerge from the Islamic extremist population."

Seeing about 15 soldiers carrying large guns as they guarded children at a Jewish kindergarten playing indoors because they were not permitted out in the schoolyard spoke volumes for Rabbi Scheier.

Howard Berger, co-director of Agence Ometz, the Federation CJA agency responsible for immigration services, said a meeting was scheduled for last week to discuss the situation of French Jews.

Berger said Ometz makes no special outreach to the Jews of France, but welcomes them and assists them as it would any other Jews wishing to settle here.

The agency has seen a higher than average number of inquiries lately, noticeable even in the past few weeks, about immigrating from France. "That, of course, does not mean they will come here," he said. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 29, 2015

WWII vet to receive U.S. Congressional Gold Medal

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

In 1944, during the battle of Anzio, south of Rome, Allied soldiers are said to have come across the journal of a dead German lieutenant from the Herman Goering Division. Perusing the document, they found a reference to "the Black Devils," the name given by the German officer to Allied soldiers who had painted their faces black with shoe polish.

"The Black Devils are all around us every time we come into the line," the officer had written.

Allied soldiers liked the way they had brought fear to the hearts of their enemies and soon they adopted the name, The Devil's Brigade.

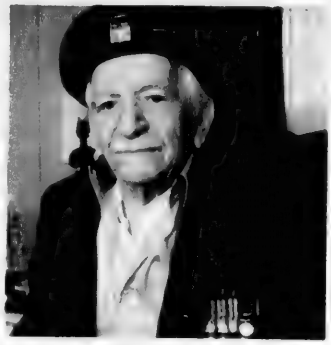
Consisting of Canadian and American troops formally operating as the First Special Service Force (FSSF), the commandos were featured in a 1968 Hollywood film, *The Devil's Brigade*.

In Toronto, veteran Morris Lazarus has a particular interest in the special forces unit. Perhaps in the movie as well.

"Have you seen the film?" he is asked.

"Seen it? I was in it," Lazarus quickly replied, referring not to the film but to the commando unit itself.

Lazarus is 95 and still quite spry. He proudly wears a navy blue jacket decorated with medals he earned as a sergeant in the Devil's Brigade. He's got a book of the unit's history and he shows off a Certificate of Recognition signed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in



Morris Lazarus PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

tribute to his wartime service.

He'll soon accept another accolade when he joins fellow veterans in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 3 to be feted by members of Congress and receive the Congressional Gold Medal.

"It was the only unit formed in World War II with troops from the United States and Canada – building on the special bond between the two countries," said House Speaker John Boehner in a statement. "The unit was instrumental in targeting military and industrial installations. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honour the United States Congress can bestow."

Lazarus was one of a handful of Jews who were part of the unit, which numbered 1,800 men in all and which suffered very high attrition rates throughout its service. It was created in 1942 and disbanded in December 1944, but during its lifespan, the unit saw action in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, in Italy and southern France. Recruits were actively sought among lumberjacks, outdoorsmen, miners and tough guys who would fight behind enemy lines.

It is credited with never losing a battle in which it fought, for inflicting 12,000 German casualties, and capturing some 7,000 prisoners. Its emblem was a native spearhead, with the names Canada and U.S.A. crossing in the middle. The unit had cards printed featuring the insignia along with the words "The worst is yet to come" printed in red which would be left on the bodies of dead Germans as a form of psychological warfare.

Lazarus, who was born in Saskatchewan, recalled his first action in the battle for Monte La Difensa in December 1943. The FSSF used the special training that they had received in winter, and mountain warfare to scale the Italian mountain and overcome the Germans at the top.

Asked about the battle, Lazarus recalls carrying 10 grenades with him – more than the other soldiers – and that it was quite gruelling to climb the mountain. His commanding sergeant, he said, "was tough as nails.

"We went in and attacked the Germans and we took the mountain. We lost a goodly number of our men, but we also eradicated a goodly number of the enemy. That was our first big battle," he said.

Though his memory isn't quite what it used to be, Lazarus also recalls participating in the battle of Anzio, the Allied landing south of Rome that was designed to outflank the Germans to the south.

He was part of a group from the FSSF who were first into liberated Rome in June 1944 and he has a special fondness for an incident involving a contessa, an Italian countess, who asked him and his mates to dinner at her castle. "My guys were not too courteous," the elderly gentleman now concedes.

Though he jokes he was barely more than 100 pounds in those days, Lazarus recalls being asked by the contessa for help in preventing a group of hooligans from stealing her car. Gallant gentleman that he was, Lazarus left the dinner, found the would-be thieves, and told them in a polite yet firm tone, "You better leave here or I'll blow you all to hell." And they did.

According to one report, there are only 46 Americans, 29 Canadians and one Australian remaining from the unit.

In a few days, Lazarus will join other Black Devils veterans to receive another award to add to his collection.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honour bestowed by the U.S. Congress. Fewer than 150 of the medals have been awarded since the first was given to George Washington. Among the recipients are the Tuskegee Airmen, Gen. Douglas MacArthur and, the Doolittle Tokyo raiders.

Lazarus was in select company in 1944. It looks like he is still in very select company more than 70 years later. ■

La Presse 'shylock' reference 'unacceptable', CIJA says

JANICE ARNOLD
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The Montreal daily newspaper *La Presse* continued to use the term "shylock" in a series of articles on loan sharking in Quebec despite an objection from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

The series "Les Nouveaux Shylocks" was featured prominently on the front page of the Jan. 19 edition and continued on pages 2 and 3. The four articles, all with "shylock" in the headline and in the text, were still available online as late as Jan. 21.

Luciano Del Negro, CIJA's Quebec vice-president, said the term is unacceptable because it is "demeaning and degrading" to Jews.

Del Negro said there is a proper French word *usurier* (usurer), which could have been used.

No apparently Jewish individuals are cited in the articles. The series investigates the pervasiveness today of loan sharking over the Internet and the powerlessness of the police to control it.

Del Negro said he is not satisfied with this explanation and says it does not befit a newspaper that claims to be the largest French-language daily in North America. *La Presse* cites a circulation of more than 200,000.

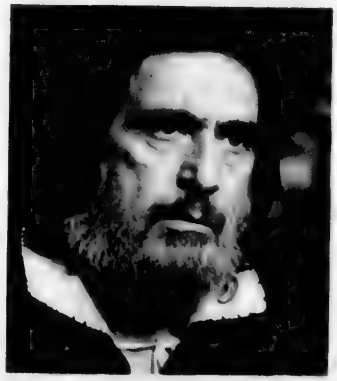
He thinks the paper is "trying to be obtuse" in refusing to acknowledge the racism implicit in the term "shylock."

He recalled a similar argument with *La Presse* over the word "nègre," in which the paper insisted this was a correct term for a black person.

"It's unsettling. It shows a lack of sensitivity to these matters," Del Negro said.

In response to a request from *The CJN* for comment, the series' author, *La Presse* staff reporter Hugo Meunier emailed that "at no time did the use of the word 'shylock' aim to hurt in any way the Jewish community.

"In fact, the word 'Jewish' did not appear anywhere in the article and the use of the term shylock has been common for a long time in Quebec to designate usurious lenders who demand astronomical rates and use rather unorthodox, sometimes violent, methods," he added.



Al Pacino as Shylock in a 2004 Hollywood adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*.

"The police use it [shylock], even the people I met in doing the reporting use it. No one, however, made a reference to the Jewish community in using it, I can assure you.

"I elsewhere indicated the origin of the term, referring to the character in a Shakespeare play. If I did not mention that he was of Jewish origin, that is above all because I had no idea, like my colleagues at *La Presse*."

The series did include a sidebar explaining the origin of "shylock," saying it comes from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and is the name of "an unscrupulous banker."

"In the play, the usurer Shylock signs a contract with the merchant Antonio authorizing him to take a pound of flesh in the event of non-payment," the article stated.

Del Negro points out that there was no mention of the anti-Semitic overtones of the character, which the Stratford Festival, for example, takes pains to put into context whenever it stages the play.

He said CIJA has made its point to *La Presse* and does not plan any further action. ■

Stifling speech lets received wisdom become prejudice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

I found his tweets, joking about Jews and ovens, disgusting. But I think his point about speech is right. The malicious and horrible nature of the Holocaust is exactly the sort of received wisdom that is too important for us to allow to become simply a prejudice that is held without meaning or conviction. Yet if questioning the Holocaust, or making light of it in offensive ways, becomes a crime – words that simply may not be spoken – then the truth of the Holocaust's horror is no longer something that must be thought about actively and defended passionately.

Yes, that's right: as Mill put it, freedom of thought for falsehoods helps keep truth alive.

Here, in Mill's words, is what happens when a true belief isn't tested: "When it has come to be an hereditary creed, and to be received passively, not actively—when the mind is no longer compelled, in the same degree as at first, to exercise its vital powers on the questions which its belief presents to it, there is a progressive tendency to forget all of the belief except the formularies, or to give it a dull and

Marni Soupcoff

> *Freedom of thought for falsehoods helps keep truth alive*

torpid assent, as if accepting it on trust dispensed with the necessity of realizing it in consciousness, or testing it by personal experience; until it almost ceases to connect itself at all with the inner life of the human being."

People reacted in different ways to Reddick's tweets. Several Dalhousie students fought the offensive expression with expression of their own. One launched a Facebook campaign urging students to boycott the Dawgfather's stand, and others gave out free kosher hotdogs with the option for takers to donate to a Holocaust education charity. These actions have generated healthy debate and discussion. Another person reacted by complaining to the police, who are now investigating Reddick for hate crimes. That action has the potential not only to shut down debate and create a martyr out of Reddick, but also to enfeeble the power of the Holocaust to make people think and evoke real heartfelt conviction.

We have a similar situation in France, where comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala was arrested and prosecuted for being an "apologist for terror" because he posted on Facebook after the Paris Unity March that he felt "like Charlie Coulibaly," a reference to one of the Paris gunmen.

Logic tells us that Dieudonné's prosecution is likely to give extremists far more inspiration than his initial post. Given that the French public will now apparently be completely shielded from Dieudonné's brand of anti-Semitic opinion, they will have lost a chance to cultivate the understanding behind the religious tolerance on which the censorship is based. As will we all. ■

Marni Soupcoff is executive director of the Canadian Constitution Foundation (theccf.ca).

Hate speech expresses an emotion, not a thought

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Sometimes we get a better sense of what is true by hearing what is false. Blasphemy can serve this purpose. A mis-characterization of any religion becomes an opportunity to explain what that religion truly is.

Hate speech serves no similar purpose. For example, we do not need to hear Holocaust denial to better understand the existence of the Holocaust or to hear that a minority controls the world to become more keenly aware of the disadvantaged situation of minorities. We do not need to hear hate speech to keep our belief in equality alive.

More generally, we protect freedom of expression to explain our ideas or to communicate information. Blasphemy can serve this purpose, thus developing religious thought. What is blasphemy for one religion is doctrine for another. Prohibiting blasphemy means stultifying the development of spiritual discussion.

Some believers, in an effort to inflate their own importance, inflate the importance of their beliefs beyond reason. Blasphemy is an antidote, a deflater, a pinprick in the balloon of the overblown egos of some believers.

In contrast, hate is an emotion not a thought. Jean Paul Sartre has written: "The anti-Semite has chosen hate because hate is a faith; at the outset he has chosen to devaluate words and reasons".

> *Freedom of expression is necessary for democracy. However, tolerance is also essential for democracy*

Freedom of expression is necessary for democracy. However, tolerance is also essential for democracy. Hate speech tears at the fabric of democracy by fomenting hatred of the majority against the minority.

David Matas

A law against blasphemy is a law against preventing offence. A system that prohibits differences which offend is a repressive system, not a democratic system.

Prohibiting incitement to hatred attempts to protect society from the lunatic fringe, those who are susceptible to incitement and prone to act out whether through discrimination or violence. Prohibiting blasphemy is directed at protecting society from a far larger group, those who hold spiritual beliefs.

Democratic society must protect itself from the lunatic fringe. In contrast, if large segments of our society, those with spiritual beliefs, are unhinged, we are beyond hope. Prohibiting blasphemy is predicated on intolerance, that those whose beliefs are blasphemed will not and cannot tolerate the blasphemy. A prohibition of blasphemy is an abandonment of the hope of tolerance. ■

David Matas is an international human rights lawyer based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He is senior honorary counsel to B'nai Brith Canada.

INTERNATIONAL

Netanyahu says he'll 'go anywhere' to speak against Iran

AVI LEWIS
JERUSALEM

In a rebuff to growing criticism from the White House, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu indicated last Sunday he would go ahead with his plan to speak before the U.S. Congress in Washington on March 3 about Iranian sanctions.

Netanyahu told his cabinet he would go anywhere to push Israel's position that sanctions against Tehran should be toughened to stymie its nuclear program.

"As prime minister of Israel, I am obligated to make every effort in order to prevent Iran from achieving nuclear weapons that would be aimed at the State of Israel. This effort is worldwide, and I will go anywhere I am invited in order to enunciate the State of Israel's position and in order to defend its future and its existence," Netanyahu said Sunday.

Netanyahu has come under fire for accepting an invitation from House Speaker John Boehner to speak about Iran and radical Islam, in what has been seen as a snub of U.S. President Barack Obama.

Administration officials have expressed anger over the visit, saying it is a politically motivated breach of protocol, coming just before Israeli elections scheduled for March 17.

The speech comes amid a battle in Congress over a bill that would ramp up sanctions on Iran. Officials in the United States, Iran and elsewhere have said that raising penalties on Tehran could derail sensitive talks over its nuclear program, and Obama has vowed to veto the measure.

According to an Israeli radio report Sunday, members of Netanyahu's Likud party were briefed to emphasize in media interviews that a supermajority vote of 67 Senate representatives has the power to overrule the U.S. presidential veto – hinting at Netanyahu's intentions to back Congress against Obama.

"In the coming weeks, the superpowers will reach a framework agreement with Iran – an agreement that would allow Iran to keep its capabilities as a nuclear threshold state – which primarily endangers the existence of the State of Israel," Netanyahu said at the cabinet meeting Sunday.

"Iran must not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons," he said.

Netanyahu's planned visit to Washington in March was not co-ordinated with the White House or State Department, in a sign of the nadir in ties between the Israeli and U.S. administrations.

Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry said they will not meet with Netanyahu when he visits Washington next month.

Netanyahu is staunchly opposed to any deal that will see the United States ease sanctions on Tehran over its nuclear weapons program, and has called previous agreements "historic mistakes."

Israel and the United States are close allies, but personal relations between Obama and Netanyahu have reportedly deteriorated over the years.

The pair have publicly clashed over Israeli settlement building in the West Bank and about how to tackle Iran's disputed nuclear program.

Obama's allies fear Netanyahu's March trip could be used by Israel and Republicans to rally opposition to a nuclear deal, undercutting years of sensitive negotiations just as they appear poised to bear fruit.

In November, the already faltering ties between the leaders were served a new blow when an anonymous U.S. official was quoted as calling Netanyahu a "chickenshit," in an article published by journalist Jeffrey Goldberg in the American magazine *The Atlantic*. The article portrayed the rift between the United States and Israel as a "full-blown crisis." ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

SeeJN | Rivlin in New York

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, left, met with Nobel Peace Prize winner and former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger, during his recent visit to New York.

MARK NEYMAN/GPO PHOTO

Arab parties unite ahead of upcoming elections

ADIV STERMAN
JERUSALEM

Israel's Arab parties, Balad and Ra'am-Ta'al, signed a unity deal and merged with the socialist, Arab-Jewish Hadash. A joint list for the future Arab-majority faction was reportedly finalized on Jan. 23.

The party will be headed by Haifa attorney Ayman Odeh, who was elected head of Hadash, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality. He will be followed on the list by Ra'am-Ta'al representative Masud Ghnaim and Balad head Jamal Zahalka, respectively, according to the Sicha Mekomit activist website.

MK Ahmad Tibi (Ra'am-Ta'al), who was considered a favourite to lead the unified slate, will be placed in the new party's fourth slot, and Balad MK Hanin Zoabi, a firebrand lawmaker who faces the prospect of a trial for insulting policemen in July 2014, will place seventh on the list.

Hadash MK Dov Khenin, the only Jewish representative of his party, will be eighth on the new roster.

Legislators from Ra'am-Ta'al and Balad have been hard at work overcoming their own deep ideological differences and constructing a shared "pan-Arab" list that might stand a better chance of passing the 3.25 per cent electoral threshold for Knesset seats (up from two per cent) which passed into law last year.

Hadash and Ra'am-Ta'al each currently hold four seats, and Balad holds three, for a total of 11 seats. Polls show the united slate gaining as many as 12 seats in the March election.

Israel's Arab-majority political parties reportedly rejected an offer by Isaac Herzog, head of the Zionist Camp faction – the joint Labor-Hatnua list – to join a potential coalition led by him should he win the premiership in March's national elections.

Channel 10 reported last Friday night that Herzog approached several leaders of the Arab parties to verify if such a deal was possible. Herzog's office confirmed that such discussions took place but said the details were "incorrect," claiming Tibi of Ra'am-Ta'al-Mada approached the Labor leader and not the other way around.

According to Channel 10, Tibi said Herzog had spoken to him and Mohammad Barakeh, a member of the Arab-Jewish Communist party Hadash, several weeks ago about the possibility of joining a Zionist Camp-led coalition. Tibi indicated that the two told Herzog it could not be done but did not rule out supporting the coalition from outside in exchange for the allocation of budgets for their constituencies.

This form of tacit support was made popular during the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's rule in the early 1990s when he increased spending on education, health and child allowances in the Arab sector and put in action a plan to boost the number of Arab citizens in the civil service. Arab parties have traditionally refused to formally join coalitions led by Jewish-Israeli parties. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

OPINION

A year in the army

Sagi Melamed

On our way to synagogue Friday evening, I asked him, "So what did you do this week?"

"Drop it Dad. Please. I am exhausted."

"Guy, I know your military service is physically and mentally arduous. You jump, dive, run and climb. You are constantly being tested and evaluated. You carry heavy physical loads. But don't forget that your family also carries a load. We're carrying a heavy emotional load every step of your way, so please understand and include us."

What was our family load this past year, since Guy has been in the army?

Few injuries and health-related issues. After his first few months in the army, he said, "Dad, I learned that in the army you acquire three things: friends, experiences and health problems."

One war in Gaza. Two friends killed in battle. The second time I got hold of him to tell him the bitter news, his first words were, "Who is it this time, Dad?"

Dealing with obsessive thoughts. Sending him positive mental energy from afar. At any moment of the day, guessing what he's doing and where he is.

At the Western Wall during the swearing-in ceremony, hearing "I swear!" declared in unison by hundreds of young, motivated soldiers. An emotional tear dropping, even from the eyes of supposedly tough fathers.

An intimate ceremony at the end of the medics' course. Parents wondering why they play the Medic's Ballad repeatedly, since in the song, the heroic medic ends up getting killed.

Chronic exhaustion. Wanting to use every spare moment to nap, but also wanting to enjoy the free time and not "waste all of the Sabbath sleeping, because I can sleep on the way back to base."

Going back to his base on Saturday night. Just starting to catch up on sleep and caloric intake, then 36 hours after stepping off the base, returning to the demanding reality of the army.

Occasional Friday morning visits to a base somewhere in the south, when his unit stayed for Shabbat and parental visits were permitted. Travelling four hours to spend one hour with him.

Wanting the keys to Dad's car before Shabbat, to visit his girlfriend. My usual question: "Did you sleep enough to drive safely?" His usual reply: "Dad, the army insists on that."

His favourite foods, prepared every Shabbat he gets home. First dibs on the ice cream.

His little sister's incomprehension of him getting extra pampering, even after hearing his stories. The army is far away, but the ice cream is right here.

Sending him kilos of dried fruit, chocolates, cakes: by mail, in his bag, with friends. Anything that can make his life sweeter. Buying supplies: knife, flashlights, batteries, navigation markers, thermal underwear, shoes, socks… whatever is needed and permitted.

Wondering where he is during the rainiest week of winter, and whether the army would train in such stormy weather, just to find out at the end of the week: "On the worst day of the storm we practised swimming in the sea and performing rescues in high waves."

At the end of his first year of training, during the week that's considered one of the toughest, we were not in Israel and had to send him our positive energies from far away. During Shabbat at my friend Robert's, Robert asked, "Do Guy and his friends understand the historic, Jewish and Zionist significance of their military service?"

"I believe so. Not all of them. Not all the time. But in general, even if not expressed in words – they understand."

A week later, we were with friends in Boston. Around the table were some American students from elite universities. Our teenage children, Eden and Ari, were impressed: "Harvard, MIT. Very impressive. And they're hardly older than Guy."

"Kids," I said afterward, "remember that to a large extent, those nice Jewish boys in Boston have the opportunity to excel and go to the best universities in the U.S., thanks to the service of your brother and his friends and, in the not too distant future, also thanks to your service." ■

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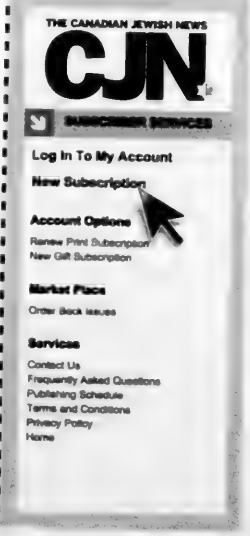

Journalist who broke Nisman story flees

JTA
BUENOS AIRES

The Argentine-Israeli journalist who first reported the death of Argentine prosecutor Alberto Nisman has fled to Israel following threats to his safety.

Damian Pachter, who works for *BuenosAiresHerald.com* and tweeted the news of Nisman's Jan. 18 death, left Argentina last Saturday after threats and being followed by people he did not know, according to *Fopea*, the Argentine Journalism Forum. Pachter was en route to Israel, where he holds dual citizenship.

"I will return when my sources tell me that the conditions changed," Pachter told an Argentine publication. "I don't think that I will be there during this government."

Nisman was found dead of a gunshot wound in his home shortly before he was to present evidence that Argentine President Cristina Kirchner covered up Iran's role in the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish centre in Buenos Aires.

Argentina's major Jewish institutions planned to boycott the country's official Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony this year in order to protest Nisman's death.

Alberto Nisman was found dead on Jan. 18.

Leaders of AMIA and several other Jewish organizations said they would not participate in the government-organized event to be held Jan. 27. Several officials who asked not to be identified cited prosecutor Alberto Nisman's suspicious death on Jan. 18 and the information in his 300-page criminal complaint as reasons for boycotting the ceremony.

According to Nisman's complaint, Argentina's government signed a deal with Iran to hide Iran's role in the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish centre in Buenos Aires in exchange for commercial and oil benefits. The complaint says President Cristina Kirchner and Foreign Minister Hector Timerman "took the criminal decision of inventing Iran's innocence to satisfy commercial, political and geopolitical interests of the Argentine republic."

Last week 3,000 people attended a protest at the rebuilt AMIA headquarters in Buenos Aires, AMIA officials reported. At the rally, organized by AMIA and DAIA (Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations), protesters demanded "truth and justice" from the government. During the rally, when DAIA president Julio Schlosser noted that 85 people had been killed in the AMIA attack, people in the crowd shouted "86," a reference to Nisman. The number 86 has become shorthand on social media to refer to Nisman's death. No one from the government or the ruling parties attended the Buenos Aires rally.

In Israel, 250 Argentine Jews, including a woman who identified herself as Nisman's cousin, attended a protest on Jan. 23 at the Argentine Embassy in Tel Aviv. Several held placards reading "Yo soy Nisman," Spanish for "I am Nisman."

The organizations said they would hold their own Holocaust memorial ceremony at the rebuilt AMIA headquarters on the morning of Jan. 27. ■

USCJ selling its Manhattan office

JTA
NEW YORK

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is selling its New York office.

The organization announced last week that it has signed a contract to sell its two-floor condo in midtown Manhattan for $15.9 million (all figures US). Proceeds from the sale of the Second Avenue property will go toward paying down its debt, renting new office space and establishing a foundation to fund ongoing programs, the United Synagogue said.

The United Synagogue is the 102-year-old congregational arm of the Conservative movement. It has taken a financial hit in recent years as Conservative synagogues have shut down, merged with other Conservative or Reform congregations, or pulled out of the congregational group for practical, financial or ideological reasons. The group now has about 600 member synagogues, down from 630 synagogues in 2013 and 675 in 2009. In 1985, it had about 850 synagogues.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

HELP PROMOTE JEWISH EDUCATION ... THROUGH YOUR STORIES!

Six stories that highlight the value of a Jewish education will be featured in the "first" **Focus on Education** Feature Feb. 26th, on **cjnews.com** and our Facebook page.

Stories must be no more than 500 words and include a photo.
Submit by Feb. 2nd to ***cblackman@thecjn.ca***

*Winners must have attended (or be attending) a Jewish educational program and sign a release allowing **The CJN** to use their story and photo.*

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Bus driver recalls stabbing attack

JUSTIN JALIL
TEL AVIV

Herzl Biton, the driver who fought a Palestinian terrorist during a stabbing attack on a Tel Aviv bus on Jan. 21 in which 17 people were injured, recalled the fierce struggle between the two as the attack was underway.

"I had no choice. I had to save the passengers. He stabbed me while I was driving and then went to the centre of the bus and began stabbing passengers," Biton said in a conversation, aired last Saturday on Channel 10, with the CEO of the Dan bus company where he works. Biton said he began swerving the bus from side to side in order to alert others outside of the ongoing 7:30 a.m. attack. His maneuvering, however, did not prevent the assailant from moving throughout the bus and hurting passengers, he said.

"I had no choice but to bring him back over to me. I slammed on the brakes and he flew towards me like a bird. I then jumped out of the chair, grabbed his left hand and started to spray him with pepper spray," continued Biton.

The terrorist, Hamza Matrouk from the West Bank refugee camp of Tulkarem, was resolute in his attack and did not stop after Biton charged him, he said: "I punched him and he punched me back."

Amidst the struggle with the 23-year-old attacker, Biton, 62, managed to get the doors of the bus open, enabling passengers to flee. "There was a pool of blood next to me and he slipped. He left the bus and started running in the direction of Yitzhak Sadeh street. I got off the bus and started chasing him," added Biton.

Matrouk chased after passengers and pedestrians following his rampage on the bus, stabbing a woman who escaped the turmoil. He was later shot and apprehended by the police. He remains hospitalized at Wolfson Medical Center in Bat Yam.

Last Saturday, a video of the hospitalized Matrouk circulated on social media, in which an unidentified person, wielding a camera phone, walks up to him and tells him to "smile for the camera, you shit." The incident constituted a serious security breach, as Matrouk is supposed to be under heavy guard as an intelligence asset to the Shin Bet (Israel's Security Agency). The Shin Bet told Channel 2 the agency was not responsible for Matrouk's security, blaming police for the breach, who in turn blamed military police.

Matrouk was reported to have illegally crossed from the West Bank into Israel several days before the attack, and told interrogators that he carried it out in retaliation for Israel's Operation Protective Edge in Gaza last summer and the recent unrest on the Temple Mount. He also said that he was motivated by watching radical Islamic television programs, and spoke of "reaching paradise."

Biton, who was in critical condition following the stabbing, underwent life-saving surgery at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, where he is currently recuperating.

Rafael Shmuel, the CEO of the Dan bus company that operates Line 40, commended Biton for his actions. "We are very proud of you and all that you have done. A simply heroic act. Have a speedy recovery. All of us here at the Dan family and myself are with you."■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Proceeds from sale go to new projects, paying off debt

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

In 2011 and 2012, United Synagogue ran a cumulative budget deficit of $6 million, and for the last two fiscal years the cumulative deficit has amounted to about $2.8 million. This year's projected budget deficit is $600,000, a spokesperson told *JTA*.

In 2013, United Synagogue said it was shutting down Koach, the movement's college outreach organization. And not long ago, the Conservative movement's network of Solomon Schechter schools, which has seen its own ranks shrink over the last decade and a half from 63 schools to about 40, dropped its affiliation with United Synagogue.

In a statement, the United Synagogue described the sale of its office as part of a strategy adopted three years ago to cut expenses, expand philanthropic support and focus on core functions to meet the needs of member congregations.

Rabbi Steven Wernick, United Synagogue's CEO, said owning real estate is not essential to the organization's core mission.

"We'll invest these resources instead in people, in innovation, and in our kehillot, our sacred communities, with whom we are reimagining Judaism for the 21st century," Wernick said in a statement.

United Synagogue spokesperson Andrea Glick, said the organization was planning to rent office space in lower Manhattan. That would put it even farther from the flagship institution of the movement, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, which is located in upper Manhattan, near Harlem.

Asked whether the United Synagogue considered moving its staff of about 50 to JTS, Glick said only that the United Synagogue explored many alternatives, including the Interfaith Center of New York and sharing space with other Jewish organizations.

"Either space was not available or did not meet our needs," Glick said.

Under New York state law, the office sale must be approved by a vote of member congregations. That will take place in February or March, the United Synagogue said. If approved, the move likely would take place in August or September.

Board members plan to spend a significant portion of the proceeds from the office's sale to create a "Fund for the Future," that will "support USCJ's congregational programs, seed innovative initiatives, and provide capital reserves," the organization's statement said.■

World governments called on to fight anti-Semitism

JTA
WASHINGTON

The first United Nations General Assembly meeting on anti-Semitism showed "a consensus in the international community" on the seriousness of the issue, according to Samantha Power, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Speaking to a telephone press briefing from New York during last Thursday's conference, called by 37 member states in the shadow of growing anti-Jewish attacks in Europe, Power called on governments and civil society to battle anti-Semitism, which is seeing "an upsurge around the world."

As part of the American fight against anti-Semitism, President Barack Obama will host a meeting next month at the White House, she said.

In a separate statement about the UN meeting, Obama cited the deadly Paris attack earlier this month on a kosher supermarket as underscoring the gathering's importance.

"Anti-Semitic attacks like the recent terrorist attack on a kosher supermarket in Paris pose a threat that extends beyond the Jewish community," he said. "They also threaten the values we hold dear – pluralism, diversity, and the freedoms of religion and expression.

Ira Forman, the administration's special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism, said on the call that the United States is in "an ongoing conversation" with its allies about security for Jewish communities.

"You can't put Europe in one box. Each has a different security situation," he said.■

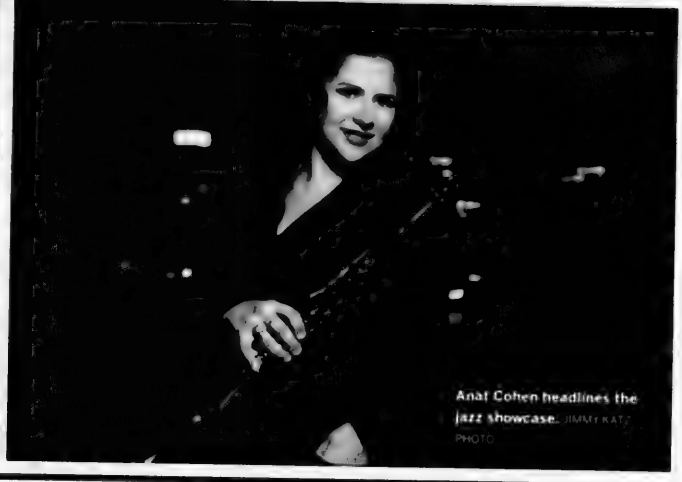
SeeJN | Remembering Auschwitz

MIRIAM ALSTER/FLASH90 PHOTO

Visitors are seen at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial museum in Jerusalem a few days before International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which was marked on Jan. 27, the date in 1945 when the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp was liberated by Soviet forces.

Jewish Life

Matchmaker is one of several Israeli films being screened.



Anat Cohen headlines the jazz showcase. JIMMY KATZ PHOTO

Two-month spotlight on Israeli culture

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Following the success of last year's inaugural Spotlight on Israeli Culture, a two-month showcase of Israeli music, theatre, film, dance and visual arts, the event has gained momentum by partnering with a number of new venues across Toronto.

"Last year was very successful. Most of the shows were sold out or mostly sold out. We had packed houses," said Cheryl Wetstein, the executive director of the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation, the group that organized the event.

"It was wonderful and it did what we wanted it to do, which was to say, here is all this Israeli culture, look how great it is and look how accomplished these performers are."

Following last year's success, Wetstein has been working with a number of organizations, including Israel's Office of Cultural Affairs of the Consulate General of Israel in Toronto, to reach out to other cultural organizations in Toronto to join them in showcasing Israeli work throughout the city this February and March.

"This year, we've broadened our presenters. There are a lot of new presenters, including the Toronto Public Library, which is doing a film series, and the [Toronto Symphony Orchestra] has joined in," Wetstein said.

Other presenters include the Aga Khan Museum, Ashkenaz Foundation, Austrian Cultural Forum, Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, International Festival of Authors, Koffler Centre of the Arts, Miles Nadal JCC, and The Rex Jazz and Blues Bar.

Some of the highlights of the two-month showcase include a performance by pianist Yefim Bronfman and Maestro Pinchas Zuckerman. Zukerman will be making his final Toronto appearance at Roy Thomson Hall on Feb. 7, as the National Arts Centre Orchestra's music director.

On Feb. 9, Union Events will present singer-songwriter and "alt-rock folk-soul musician" Asaf Avidan to promote his new album *Different Pulses*.

"Asaf Avidan was scheduled to come last year, and at the last minute had to cancel because of visa issues, so he has rebooked for this year," Wetstein said.

Ashkenaz Foundation and the Aga Khan Museum are presenting an interfaith ensemble called Diwan Saz on March 12.

The group is made up of Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Bedouin musicians who aim to promote peace and co-existence through their music which is influenced by the sounds of Central Asia, Turkey, Persia, and Israel.

The Progress Festival and Koffler Centre of the Arts will present the North American premiere of *Marathon*, a live show that combines theatre and dance.

In an attempt to portray the challenges of living life in a constant state of emergency, three people literally run in circles on stage in this physically demanding performance from Israeli artist Aharona Israel.

Marathon is running from Feb. 4 to 6, and one of the three shows will be presented in Hebrew with English subtitles.

An art exhibit called *Prayer* by Israeli expatriate Dvora Barzilai, an observant Jew living in Vienna with her husband who is a cantor, will be presented by the Miles Nadal JCC and the Austrian Cultural Forum from Jan. 29 to Feb. 19.

The exhibit, which explores the Hebrew language using materials including gold leaf, tempera, sand, cement, ashes, oils and canvas, is centred on religion and Jewish tradition.

On March 16, an Israeli film series, presented by the Toronto Public Library and the Consulate General of Israel, will screen *Aviva, My Love*, a film about a hotel cook who is an unknown, but very talented writer. *Matchmaker* will be screened on Feb.15 and on March 23, there will be a screening of *Jellyfish*, a film which chronicles the lives of three secular Israeli women in Tel Aviv.

Wetstein said she's excited about the countless events taking place throughout the city.

"I'm really looking forward to spending my winter going to see theatre, art [and] music. If I have to be in Toronto in the winter, these are wonderful things to do," she said.

"Given the political climate for the past many, many years, the focus is always on the politics of Israel and not on the amazing, cultural accomplishments that have come out of Israel," she said. "There is a huge cultural energy there. A huge vibrant energy, and creativity coming out of Israel."

The Festival officially launches on Feb. 1 at a reception in the Julie M. Gallery in the Distillery. ■

For more information, visit www.spotlightonisraeliculture.com.

Jazz singer identifies with her Jewish family

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jazz singer Sophia Perlman pays tribute in concert to the Jewish songwriters she admires.

In "The Jewish Experience on Broadway," Jan. 28, she performs with singers Alana Bridgewater, Dave Wall and pianist Marilyn Lerner at Hugh's Room in Toronto.

"The Broadway composers that meant more to me than anyone else are Gary Willis Friedman and Stephen Sondheim. I will be performing the songs from the musical theatre that they are both known for," Perlman said in an interview.

The show will also include Broadway standards by Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin and Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. Bridgewater will sing selections from *Porgy and Bess*, and Wall will sing songs from *Annie Get Your Gun* and *West Side Story*.

Although Perlman is Jewish only on her father's side of the family, she grew up in the Kensington Market area and identifies strongly as a cultural Jew.

"Like me, my father was also raised as a child of intermarriage between a Christian and a Jew, and he was raised in a Catholic school.

"I grew up as a spiritual person, learning all about the value of tzedakah, doing acts of kindness to others. Although I am uncomfortable about belonging to large organized synagogues, I was heavily influenced by the teachings of Jewish socialist Morris Winchevsky and my experiences in the summer at Camp Naivelt," she said.

A visit to the Jewish state increased her feeling of being Jewish. "I felt stronger about my Jewish identity once I visited Israel and [gained] a better understanding of the problems in the Middle East. I feel sad, as do many of us, that peace there seems to be a distant dream," said the 29-year-old singer.

> *I grew up a spiritual person, learning all about the value of tzedakah, doing acts of kindness to others.*

Sophia Perlman TRACEY NOLAN PHOTO

Perlman's socialist leanings could be traced to Ina Perlman, her paternal Jewish grandmother from South Africa, whom she paid tribute to in a 2013 concert.

"My grandmother was very much of an activist, working against apartheid in South Africa, which was the law in South Africa at the time. I am very proud of her beliefs and am inspired by her."

She picked up her love of music from both her parents, who wrote music and played piano, although they were not professional musicians.

Perlman explored the possibility of performing opera at first, and studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music through college, but fell in love with jazz after completing her jazz music studies at Humber College in 2007.

"Once I found out that there were few operas written for tenor singers, I became immersed in jazz and have no regrets. I formed my own band and think of myself as a collaborative musician, and I went forward with my career for the past five years."

She has recorded a few CDs and has started to make a name for herself in Canadian jazz circles, often touring across Canada with her husband, pianist Adrean Farrugia.

Perlman doesn't view herself as a commercial star and feels that, in spite of her success in Canada, it would be hard for her to duplicate the international success of Canadian Jewish jazz singers Sophie Milman and Nikki Yanofsky.

"Nikki and Sophie are both gifted, but also had support from influential people in jazz internationally. I view the beauty of my singing as collaborative and [try] to be improvisational in jazz. Whether my concerts and albums will make me popular outside of Canada is outside of my control. I really did not go into the music field to be rich and famous and am happy to perform and be loved locally." ■

Jazz singer Sophia Perlman teams with singers Alana Bridgewater, David Wall and pianist Marilyn Lerner for the "Jewish Experience on Broadway" concert Jan. 28, 8 p.m., at Hugh's Room, 2261 Dundas St. W., in Toronto. For tickets, call 416-531-8804 or go to www.hughsroom.com

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

SECOND ANNUAL SPOTLIGHT ON ISRAELI CULTURE

Multiple local cultural institutions are partnering with the Consulate General of Israel in Toronto and the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation to present the second annual Spotlight on Israeli Culture which features Israeli contemporary arts and artists from the worlds of music, theatre, dance, art, film and letters. Events take place across Toronto in February and March, including:

• *Brahms Concertos* performed by the **National Arts Centre Orchestra** with pianist **Yefim Bronfman** and maestro **Pinchas Zukerman**, Roy Thomson Hall, Feb. 7;

• Author **Ayelet Tsabari** converses and reads from her acclaimed book of short stories, *The Best Place on Earth*, in a program co-hosted by the International Festival of Authors and the Koffler Centre of the Arts, Ben McNally Books, 377 Bay St., Feb. 3.

Other events are described further down in this column. For a detailed schedule of events and ticket prices, please visit spotlightonisraeliculture.com

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Two New Music Prizes: The Azrieli Music Project, established to celebrate, foster and create opportunities for the performance of high quality new orchestral music on a Jewish theme or subject, has launched two new prizes, both worth $50,000.

The Azrieli Prize in Jewish Music is an international prize for a recently composed or performed work by a living composer; and the Azrieli Commissioning Competition is for a Canadian composer of any age. Both contests seek new works of Jewish orchestral music of 15 minutes duration or more, and are open to composers of all faiths, backgrounds and affiliations.

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal will perform the winning works at a gala concert in Montreal in October 2016. See the website www.azrielifoundation music for further details.

• • •

Israeli Dance: The Koffler Centre of the Arts co-presents the North American premiere of *Marathon*, a theatre-dance performance created by Tel-Aviv-based choreographer **Aharona Israel** and featuring **Ilya Domanov, Merav Dagan** and **Gal Shamai,** Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. W. Presented in English with Hebrew subtitles on Feb. 5, and in English on Feb. 4 and 6. $30, $20.

Representatives of the Canadian Friends of the Israel Museum leadership were in Berlin earlier this month for a meeting of the Israel Museum's International Executive Council. The event marked the official launch of celebrations recognizing the museum's 50th anniversary. Pictured, top left to right: Tamara Fine, Darren Sukonick, Israel Museum director James Snyder, Will Hechter, Anya Sorkin (lower step), Linda Hechter, Tamar Zenith and Lily Fenig (lower step).

Marathon later travels to Peterborough, Ottawa and Vancouver.

The Koffler Centre also presents two workshops with Aharona Israel for theatre artists and dancers: "Intelligent Body" (Feb. 6 and 7), and "Seeing Through Movement" (Feb. 9 and 10). Please visit the Koffler Centre website for registration information.

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Arts in Brief

• Film critic **Kevin Courrier** presents "Forbidden Desires: The Films of Alfred Hitchcock," a series of lectures with film clips, exploring such classics as *Shadow of a Doubt, Rear Window* and *Psycho*. $12, students $6. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays Feb. 2 and Feb. 9, 1 to 3 p.m.

• Friends of Yiddish presents "Up From the Page – The Wit and Wisdom of Yiddish Short Stories," an afternoon of lively and entertaining readings of some of the finest short stories in Yiddish literature– in Yiddish and English. $5, members free. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. Sunday Feb. 8, 2 p.m. Please RSVP by Feb. 5 to 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents Chai Tea & A Movie featuring *Gett, The Trial of Viviane Amsalem*, a French-German-Israeli feature film that was Israel's official foreign language submission to the 2015 Academy Awards. The film tells the story of **Viviane Amsalem** (played by **Ronit Elkabetz**, who co-wrote and co-directed with her brother **Shlomo Elkabetz**) who desperately craves a divorce but is at the mercy of her controlling husband and the rabbinical courts since there is no civil divorce in Israel. $15. Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. Sunday Feb. 22, 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. www.tiff.com, 416-324-9121.

• • •

At the Galleries

• Prayer, mixed media by **Dvora Barzilai**, explores the Hebrew language in liturgy, songs, contemporary Hebrew proverbs and forgotten texts brought to life in wine, sand, cement, ashes, oils, canvas and other media. Miles Nadal JCC Gallery, Jan. 29 to Feb. 19.

• The Israel Museum of Jerusalem opens its 50th anniversary year on Feb. 10 with 6 Artists, 6 Projects, an exhibition of work by Israeli contemporary artists **Uri Gershuni, Roi Kuper, Dana Levy, Tamir Lichtenberg, Ido Michaeli** and **Gilad Ratman**. The show highlights the diversity of creative practice emanating from Israel. The six projects explore themes ranging from politics, economics, technology and the environment through a variety of media, highlighting the rich artistic perspectives being fostered within Israel's dynamic environment. ■

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Tu b'Shvat laden with delicious possibilities

JUDY BART KANCIGOR
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

We are soon celebrating Tu b'Shvat, the New Year of the trees, which begins at sundown on Feb. 3. Tu b'Shvat has a long and interesting history, and, for Jewish cooks, is laden with delicious possibilities.

Tu b'Shvat translates to the 15th day of the month of Shvat. But why do we celebrate this agricultural festival in the dead of winter? In ancient times in Israel, the holiday marked the end of the rainy season and thus closed the fiscal year for calculating taxes, the tithes (*bikkurim*, or "first fruits") offered to the priests.

With the destruction of the Temple and the exile and with none of our own fruit to tithe, the holiday went into dormancy, only to bloom again centuries later when talmudic rabbis used it to calculate the age of fruit-bearing trees and thus the proper date of harvest. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, kabbalists in Safed infused the holiday with mystical significance.

It is customary to plan a Tu b'Shvat menu around the Seven Species (*Shivat Haminim*), the grains and fruits named in the Torah (Deuteronomy, 8:8), which were staples of our ancient ancestors: wheat, barley, grapes (and wine), figs, pomegranates, olives (and olive oil) and dates. (Note: The Bible actually refers to honey as the seventh of the these, meaning palm date honey, not honey produced by bees.)

Some communities observe a Tu b'Shvat seder (who can wait for Passover?), which includes the drinking of four cups of wine and readings from various Jewish sources. (For a guide to conducting your own Tu b'Shvat seder, go to hillel.org or mazon.org.)

Bread would be the obvious choice for including wheat, but the serving of couscous, popular in the Mediterranean since the Middle Ages, seems most appropriate for this holiday. Substitute bulgur for the couscous, if you like.

The pomegranate has been revered since biblical times as a symbol of fertility, good health and immortality. Celebrated by King Solomon in the Song of Songs, this tangy, many-seeded fruit with its crimson-hued, leathery shell was abundant in the Garden of Eden and is even thought by some scholars to have been the real "apple" that tempted Eve. The seeds of the pomegranate supposedly add up to 613, which represent the mitzvot (good deeds) of the Torah, but I don't know anyone who has tried to count them.

Remove the seeds under water and save your clothes. Or purchase the arils already seeded, if you can find them at some markets or online.

Pomegranate-Glazed Chicken

Pomegranate molasses (also called "paste" or "concentrate") can be found in Middle Eastern markets.

- ❑ 2 chickens, about 4 lb. each, cut into 6 pieces each, on the bone
- ❑ kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ olive oil

Glaze

- ❑ olive oil
- ❑ 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ❑ 1 medium shallot, finely chopped
- ❑ 1/2 cup pomegranate molasses
- ❑ 3 tbsp. dark brown sugar
- ❑ 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- ❑ 1/4 cup dark chicken stock

Suggested garnishes

- ❑ fresh pomegranate seeds
- ❑ chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Preheat oven to 350. Season chicken pieces with salt and pepper.

Heat a large, deep sauté pan over medium-high heat, and lightly coat bottom of pan with olive oil. Brown chicken pieces on all sides, in batches, without crowding. When pieces are well browned (drumsticks and thighs will take longer than breast and wing pieces), transfer white and dark meat pieces to two separate baking dishes.

Make Glaze: Heat a small saucepan over medium-high heat, and lightly coat bottom of pan with olive oil. Sauté garlic and shallot until lightly browned. Add pomegranate molasses, sugar, tomato paste and stock. Lower heat to medium and cook, stirring, until well combined and glaze has thickened, about 10 minutes.

Brush chicken pieces with pomegranate glaze, and roast until cooked through and a thermometer inserted into thigh registers 160, 30 to 35 minutes for white meat and about 45 minutes for dark meat. Brush chicken with glaze halfway through cooking and again when removed from oven.

Serve chicken sprinkled with your choice of garnishes. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

From *Jewish Cooking for All Seasons* (Wiley) by Laura Frankel

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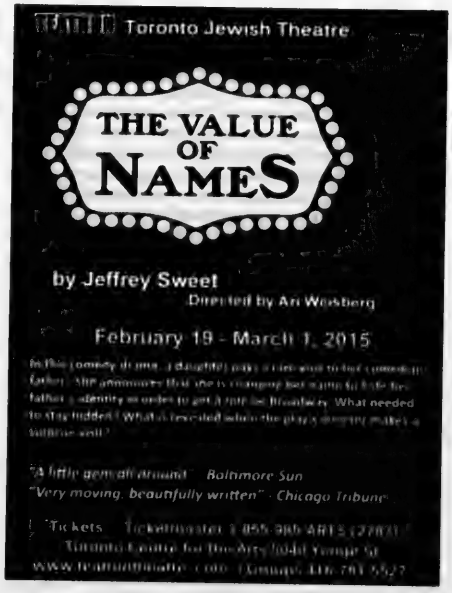
AUTHORS & POETS
The CJN is pleased to announce its
Annual Passover Literary Supplement
THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS CJN
We invite readers to submit unpublished, original short stories or poetry that explore Jewish themes.
They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 2, 2015. Not all submissions can be published, and not all those selected will appear in both Toronto and Montreal editions. We look for originality. Please don't send more than three entries. We cannot correspond with submitters.
Deadline for submissions is Feb. 27, 2015 at 3 p.m.
E-mail submissions to:
cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com
We can only accept email submissions. We prefer Word documents.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"A little gem all around" - Baltimore Sun
"Very moving, beautifully written" - Chicago Tribune

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 29, 2015

Post-apocalyptic tale depicts a dystopian society

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Max Glickman, the fictional Jewish cartoonist who is the narrator of Howard Jacobson's 2006 novel *Kalooki Nights*, freely admits that he views the Jewish People as "an immoderate, overemphatic people, much given to exaggeration," and adds: "So what? I call it giving value for money myself. You prick us so we bleed profusely."

In his most recent novel, titled simply *J*, Jacobson demonstrates his own bent for exaggeration for the sake of heightened narrative punch and punchlines. As a result, readers may find themselves "slogging through a landscape of papier-maché incredibility," as literary critic James Wood once observed about another of Jacobson's novels, *The Finkler Question* (2010).

At the heart of *J* is a terrible historical secret, a vast, unspeakable atrocity that a post-apocalyptic Britain has done its best to erase from the history books and from human memory. The thing, also sometimes scatalogically referred to as the "Great Pissaster," was apparently so bad that it has become known as "What Happened, If It Happened."

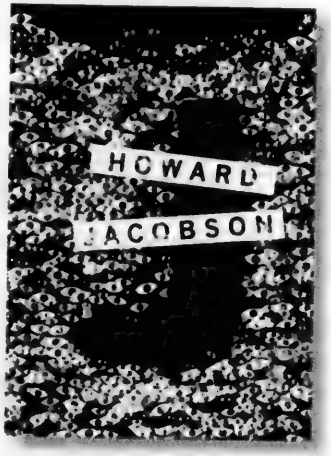
Because the letter "J" was somehow associated with this evil thing, the protagonist Kevern Coco Cohen, like his father before him, cannot pronounce that letter of the alphabet without compulsively drawing his fingers to his lips as though to suppress the sound. The impulse is also represented typographically: throughout the novel, the letter appears as a sort of self-effacing figure, with two tiny cross-hatches running through it.

In a totalitarian society reminiscent of George Orwell's *1984*, Kevern Coco Cohen, an isolated, obsessive-compulsive woodcarver, falls in love with a quirky misfit named Ailinn Solomons in the nondescript seaside town of Port Reuben. Ailinn, bothered by a reference Kevern makes to her thick ankles, retorts that he has a thick brain to match – their romance is of the low variety, which happens to match her bleak opinion of love.

Jacobson omnisciently puts us inside the minds of Ailinn and his other darkly comic characters. Ailinn thinks: "What good came of love, when all was said and done? You fell in love and immediately thought about dying. Either because the person you had fallen for had a mind to kill you, or because he exceptionally didn't and then you dreaded being parted from him."

In something called the "Great Renaming," the people of this dystopia by the sea were assigned new names – Celtic-sounding first names and family names of a distinctly Jewish timbre (perhaps so that everyone will be discriminated against with equal irreverence). A parade of cartoonish characters with fanciful half-Jewish names march across the page with Dickensian abandon: Esme Nussbaum, Ythel Weinstock, Densdell Kroplik, Edward Everett Phineas Zermansky. When Kevern Cohen is swept into a bizarre murder mystery, the victim is Lowenna Morgenstern and the sleuth is Detective Inspector Gutkind.

The world of *J* is metaphorically shrouded in mist and fog, as if truth and wisdom have disappeared from a civilization overwhelmed by guilt and horror. It is a brusque, dumbed-down world filled with babble and confusion, in which nobody knows anything worth knowing and people compulsively apologize to each other. Like Winston Smith in *1984*, Kevern and Ailinn's quest is to uncover the suppressed truth about the past, but, again like Winston – spoiler alert – they are defeated.



J
Howard Jacobson
Hamish Hamilton

Born in Manchester in 1942, Jacobson has been called England's answer to America's Philip Roth, and may even be a rough British equivalent of our own Mordecai Richler. He seems to be maintaining a tradition established by the late Victorian British writer Israel Zangwill of penning low satirical portraits of British Jews (see Zangwill's 1899 novel *Children Of The Ghetto*). Some of the Jewish characters in Jacobson's 2010 novel *The Finkler Question*, which won the Man Booker Prize, seem as self-effacing as the letter "J" in the current book under discussion.

When Jacobson writes of "What Happened, If It Happened," he gives us enough glimpses of the thing to let us know it is an event parallel to the Holocaust. And what might "J" be but the first letter of the word "Jews," another of the author's obsessions? (Tellingly, the author's name begins with the same letter.)

This near-future post-apocalyptic tale marks a distinct departure for Jacobson, in which the dark comedy is overpowered by paranoia and prognostications of doom. But if this hybrid murder mystery and dystopian fantasy is an experiment, it fails. The characters seem cardboard and there is a dearth of concrete description to anchor the reader in the dull pea-soup of fog and churning oceans of trivial detail.

Contrast this, say, with Cormac McCarthy's compellingly readable post-apocalyptic fantasy *The Road* (2006). McCarthy, a master craftsman, knows at all times where his characters are going and what is going to happen to them; their quest for survival is basic and well defined. The arc of the story is small, especially as compared to the vastness of what we don't know (and never find out) about the calamity that has almost destroyed human civilization. Although they are swathed in grey smog, the nameless father and son in *The Road* are realized with such clean lines and clarity of human emotion that they seem to transcend into myth.

Nothing of the sort happens in *J*. One wishes that Jacobson would draw more from human nature and real life (like his American counterpart Philip Roth) and less from the vast reserves of punchy stories and situations that have apparently accumulated in the "old curiosity shop" of his cluttered brain. ■

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High school portrait exhibit draws top honours

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

An innovative high school art project, which gave students the opportunity to exhibit their work in a prestigious show last spring at the Ottawa City Archives' James Bartleman Gallery, was honoured at an awards ceremony this month.

Following the Ottawa Face 2 Face art exhibit in April 2014, the project was nominated for – and subsequently won – an award from the Advisory Committee on the Arts. The awards ceremony was held Jan. 12.

Irv Osterer, head of the fine arts and technology department at Merivale High School, is also the co-ordinator of the Communication & Design FOCUS Program, which enables students to spend an entire semester in the art department and gives them a head start toward a career in graphic arts.

He used the opportunity to lead his students in the creation of a series of 50 portraits of people who had spent a significant part of their lives in the nation's capital. The only design regulation was that the work must have an Ottawa theme; other than that, the students were free to use their imaginations in terms of subject, style and medium.

Isaaca (Izzy) Rosenberg with her portrait of Rabbi Reuven Bulka

Osterer began by doing some Internet research to compile an initial list of about 100 possible subjects, from which the students chose 50.

"I tried to cover all bases and chose a diverse list of people," he said.

Among the various hats he wears, Osterer is the longtime head of the Jewish Culture Club at Merivale and was delighted to see a number of Jewish students involved in the project, as well as several Jewish subjects being chosen for the portraits.

• One of the students, Isaaca (Izzy) Rosenberg, chose to paint a portrait of Rabbi Reuven Bulka, whom she had never met. The painting, done from a photograph, bears a remarkable likeness to the well-known Ottawa rabbi, who attended the opening event at the archives gallery.

"It was really cool because he really looked like the picture," Izzy said. "He really liked it."

Rabbi Bulka also liked the artist, and said, "More important than her artistry is her persona – truly unassuming and full of life."

• Ottawan Dan Kanter is perhaps best known for being Justin Bieber's guitarist and musical director for the 2010-11 My World Tour. The son of Julie Kanter and longtime Nepean High School drama teacher Jeff Kanter, was painted by Andi Bordt, a fan who follows the Kanter Twitter feed. "He tweeted a photo of his effort to Kanter, who replied with words of appreciation and encouragement," Osterer said.

• Noah Cantor, likely the most successful football player to come from Ottawa, was drawn by Shogo Shimizu. Cantor, who won four Grey Cups in a 12-year career and was a CFL All Star in 2000, is well known in his home town of Ottawa.

• Roxanne Nash, who has performed in a number of musicals, including the National Arts Centre Cappies Gala, is a big fan of the band Arcade Fire and painted a portrait of drummer Jeremy Gara. ■

Azrieli Foundation offers $100K for new Jewish music

CJN STAFF

Two new prizes of $50,000 each are being offered by the Azrieli Foundation to the composers of any faith or background of original orchestral Jewish music judged by a jury to be named.

The Azrieli Music Project (AMP) has been established to "celebrate, foster and create opportunities for the performance of high quality new orchestral music on a Jewish theme or subject," says its chair, soprano and Jewish music scholar Sharon Azrieli Perez.

The prizes are to be awarded in two categories.

The Azrieli Prize in Jewish Music is an international prize for a recently composed (within the last 10 years) or performed work of at least 15 minutes duration by a living composer, but never commercially recorded. It is open to composers of any nationality, age or experience. The deadline for submissions is Jan. 1, 2016.

The prize of the Azrieli Commissioning Competition is a grant for the creation of a work of orchestral Jewish music between 15 and 25 minutes in length. This prize is limited to Canadian citizens or permanent residents of any age or experience.

Sharon Azrieli Perez

A written proposal of the work to be composed, plus two excerpts of three minutes each from previously completed works (score and recording), must be submitted by March 15, 2015. The deadline for the completed composition is July 1, 2016.

The Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) under the direction of Kent Nagano will perform the winning works at the Azrieli Music Project Gala Concert at the Maison symphonique on Oct. 19, 2016.

"Music has always played an important role in the development of cultural identities," said Azrieli Perez. "Whether through folk traditions, in liturgical settings or in the concert hall, music reflects history and soul. In creating this extraordinary opportunity for composers of Jewish orchestral music, we hope to sustain music's vital continuity through the long and rich history of Jewish people and culture.

"The AMP will become the medium for innovation, creation and risk-taking by today's most inspired orchestral composers."

What constitutes 'Jewish music' is, of course, open to interpretation and she recognizes that its definition is continually evolving.

Taking into account the rich and diverse history of Jewish musical traditions, the AMP defines Jewish music as music that incorporates a Jewish thematic or Jewish musical influence.

Jewish themes may include biblical, historical, liturgical, secular or folk elements. The AMP believes Jewish music should also be forward-looking, and encourages themes and content drawn from contemporary Jewish life.

Opera singer Joseph Rouleau, honorary president of Jeunesses Musicales Canada, will serve as chair of the AMP advisory council. "It is a tremendous pleasure to help launch this significant new prize, which offers such extraordinary opportunities for the two composers who will have their work performed by Maestro Nagano and the OSM, and for the public who will benefit from the creation of two new works of art on the fascinating theme of Jewish music."

Rouleau is joined on the advisory council by soprano Azrieli Perez, a director on the Azrieli Foundation board; Canadian composer Ana Sokolovi , former citizenship court judge and arts patron Barbara Seal, and classical music philanthropist David Sela.

The AMP jury will be announced at a later date. ■

Applications and further information are available at www.azrielifoundation.org.

What's New

JAN. 29 - FEB. 5

by Lila Sarick

Mitzvah day

Cassidy Diamond, left, and Dorie Dwosh, students at Adath Israel's congregational school, participated in mitzvah day at the synagogue last week. Children and adults decorated potted plants, made dog beds, wrote letters to Israeli soldiers and made sandwiches and baked challah for a number of charities.

Thursday, Jan. 29

TENSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Journalist **Mark Lavie** discusses "Why the media get Israel, Palestinians, ISIS and the Arab Spring all wrong," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

SHABBAT SHIRA CONCERT
Cantors David Edwards and **Alex Stein** perform in concert, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. $18. For tickets, call 416-633-3838.

FINDING OUR WAY IN PRAYER
The clergy at Beth David Synagogue present a 4-part series on "Finding our way in traditional prayer." Tonight: "Geography of the siddur," 7:30 p.m. Feb. 5, "Language of the siddur."

Friday, Jan. 30

SHABBAT SHIRAH
Cantor Simon Spiro and scholar-in-residence **Joshua Jacobson**, of the Zamir Chorale, celebrate a weekend of musical events and a Saturday night concert at Beth Tzedec Congregation. Call 416-781-3511 for tickets.

Danforth Jewish Circle celebrates Shabbat Shirah, 7 p.m., Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-580-6303.

Saturday, Jan. 31

SHABBAT SHIRAH
Am Shalom Synagogue, 767 Huronia Rd., Barrie, holds a musical Shabbat, with guest speaker **Frank Simkevitz,** director of JNF Canada, 10 a.m. 705-792-3949.

Beth Tikvah choir celebrates its 50th anniversary at services, starting at 9 a.m.

Cantor Eric Moses and the Beth Sholom choir celebrate at Beth Sholom, 8:45 a.m.

Cantors Charles Osborne and **Katie Oringel** premiere new songs for Shabbat Shirah, Temple Sinai, 10 a.m.

THE CARTOON CRISIS
Editorial cartoonist **Gary Clement** leads a discussion on "The cartoon crisis," 1:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation, 187 Brunswick Ave.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Feb. 12 is Feb. 2. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Sunday, Feb. 1

LEGAL ETHICS
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "The dishonest client: when a client plans wrongdoing, what is a lawyer's obligation?" 8:45 a.m., Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, 613 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. Sponsored by Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion, 647-234-7299.

TU B'SHVAT
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a Tu b'Shvat seder for families, noon. Email agol@shaarshalom.ca.

TOUR AND TEA
The DANI Centre offers a tour and tea, 11 a.m., Garnet Williams Community Centre, 501 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. RSVP 905-889-3264.

WORLD WIDE WRAP
Beth Emeth Synagogue celebrates the World Wide Wrap, men and women welcome, 8:30 a.m. RSVP 416-633-3838.

Monday, Feb. 2

VIP CLUB
The VIP Club (for visually impaired seniors) meets at Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., for refreshments and entertainment, 7-9 p.m. **Bess**, 905-508-2892.

Tuesday, Feb. 3

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Zaytoun*, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz**, 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

BETH LIDA RENOVATION PARTY
Beth Lida Synagogue holds a reception to mark Tu b'Shvat and the completion of the shul's renovation, 7:30 p.m., 22 Gilgorm Rd. 416-301-8764.

TU B'SHVAT
Temple Sinai holds an environmental evening for Tu b'Shvat, 7 p.m. $18/$25. RSVP 416-487-4161.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "The real messiah Part 1: The biblical template," 8 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. Call 416-789-0020, or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

Wednesday, Feb. 4

LEADERS OF MODERN ZIONISM
Rabbi Philip Scheim discusses "Leaders of modern Zionism," in a 6-part series, 8 p.m. Beth David Synagogue, 55 Yeomans Rd. Tonight, Theodor Herzl.

SAVING THE EARTH
Rabbi Micah Streiffer discusses "Saving the earth, one mitzvah at a time," 7 p.m., Temple Kol Ami. RSVP rabbistreiffer@kolami.ca.

REFUSING MEDICAL TREATMENT
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Refusing medical treatment: when do medical recommendations equal or override Halachah?" 8 p.m., Bnai Torah Congregation.

Thursday, Feb. 5

YIDDISH VINKL
Judy Perly, owner of The Free Times Cafe, is the guest speaker, noon, 320 College St. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

Coming Events

LGBT SPEED DATING
Kulanu holds its LGBT Jewish speed dating event at the Fox and Fiddle, 27 Wellesley St. E., Feb. 8. Registration at 4:30, event starts at 5 p.m. Register at www.bit.ly/lgbtjewishdating. $15.

JEWISH MAGIC
Mekorot offers a 3-week course with **Barry Levy** on "Jewish magic: In the Talmud, in the non-talmudic magic literature and in halachic literature." Mondays, Feb. 23-March 9, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. info@mekorot.ca.

HEBREW READING
Beth Emeth Synagogue offers a free 6-session Hebrew reading class for those who can read Hebrew slowly. Classes start Feb. 22, 9:15 a.m. Call 416-633-3838.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH
Friends of Yiddish holds an afternoon of readings of short stories in Yiddish and English, Feb. 8, 2 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP by Feb. 5 to **Sandy** 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: A 4-week group for parents, starts Feb. 2, 7 p.m.
- Life skills for today's woman: A 6-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives. Starts Feb. 2, 7 p.m.
- The challenge of anger for women: A 6-session group for women to learn to express their anger in a non-aggressive way. Starts Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.
- Living with teens: A 6-session group for parents on setting limits, letting go, dating and other subjects. Starts Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Effective parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children age 2 to 10. Starts Feb. 10, 7 p.m.
- High-conflict divorce: A workshop for parents in a high-conflict but not abusive situation. Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.
- When you're about to separate, what to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. Feb. 17, 6:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, Feb. 18; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Feb. 2, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Great Jewish painters of the 20th century," Mondays until March 16, 1 p.m.; Feb. 3, **Robert Buckler** discusses "Condo 101," 10 a.m.; Feb. 5, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "What's your 'Big Why,'" 1:30 p.m.
- **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. Feb. 18, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays until Feb. 25, **Osnat Lippa** discusses "The Great Artists," 1 p.m.; Thursdays to Feb. 26, **David Chandross** discusses "Nature, philosophy and adventure," 2 p.m.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Registration for preschool to kindergarten now open. Call **Kailah Rubin,** ext. 4351.
- New classes in the fitness centre: pilates for women, Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Insanity class, Saturdays, 11 a.m.; classes for seniors. Email cathy@prossermanjcc.com.
- Toronto delegation looking for athletes aged 13-16 for the JCC Maccabi Games this summer. www.jccmaccabitoronto.com.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Reflections in the hall of mirrors," a lecture series on how movies have soaked up the political and cultural ideas of the time, Feb. 4-March 25, 1 p.m.
- The Yiddish group meets for conversation, Mondays at 1:30 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele," Feb. 17, 24 at 1 p.m.
- **Galya Sarna** shares recipes as she prepares an Israeli-style meal with a French twist, March 19, 6:30 p.m.
- JCC book club discusses *Sima's Undergarments for Women*, by **Ilana Stanger-Ross,** Feb. 23, 1 p.m.
- Red Cross babysitting course offered Feb. 13, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

- **Elaine Mitchell** teaches a journalling workshop on "Dating without fear," Jan. 29, 7 p.m.
- Lunch and learn day – Jan. 29. Book club discusses *Buffalo Jump*, by **Howard Shrier,** 11 a.m.; award-winning makeup artist **Beverley Schechtman** is the guest speaker, 1:30 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or ext. 155.
- Shabbat family party (ages 0-4), Fridays at 11:15 a.m. Shabbat club (ages 3-5) meets Fridays 12:30 p.m. Call ext. 388.
- Israeli family Tu b'Shvat seder, Feb. 1, 11 a.m., Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St. Call ext. 321 or lizar@mnjcc.org.
- A symposium and celebration in honour of Shabbat Shirah, with **Aviva Chernick, Rabbi Miriam Margles, Cantor Charles Osborne, Annie Matan** and many others, Feb. 1, 1-6 p.m. Tickets $10/$20. Ext. 0.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: the films of Alfred Hitchcock," Feb.2, Feb. 9, 1 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a weekly group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
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- *Prayer,* the art of **Dvora Barzilai,** is in the gallery until Feb. 19.
- Tu b'Shvat seder, Feb. 5. Doors open at 1 p.m., program 1:30-3 p.m. RSVP by Jan. 30, lisar@mnjcc.org or ext. 0.
- Making meaningful bar and bat mitzvahs, Feb. 8, 9:30 a.m.
- Fitness: MELT method full body, Tuesdays 7 p.m., to Feb. 17. fitnessguru@mnjcc.org.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in community-building and entrepreneurship. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
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- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What's so funny," Feb. 18, 7 p.m.
- **Rachelle Shubert** presents "Here's to Music! Here's to Life," March 5, 2 p.m. at Four Elms Retirement Residence.
- Book club discusses *Sima's Undergarments for Women* by **Ilana Stanger-Ross,** Feb. 24, 7 p.m.
- Beginner bridge starts Feb. 5, 7 p.m.
- Infant massage workshop, Feb. 12, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. ■

SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

End-of-life care discussion should be a given

Dr. Michael Gordon

As a physician living and practising in Canada for almost 40 years, and having completed medical school in Scotland, and having worked in a number of countries with universal health-care systems, I found a *New York Times* commentary on the sad state of contemporary American medicine ironic.

The Aug. 30, 2014 article, "Coverage for End-of-Life Talks Gaining Ground," started with the following: "Five years after it exploded into a political conflagration over 'death panels,' the issue of paying doctors to talk to patients about end-of-life care is making a comeback, and such sessions may be covered for the 50 million Americans on Medicare as early as next year."

Those of us who follow the American political scene may recall the absurd contention by Sarah Palin, the vice-presidential Republican nominee, that the "government" was planning "death panels" that would decide which Americans, including elders, would be allowed to get medical care or forgo it for budgetary reasons. Her contention had no truth, but it sidelined the question of funding from federal Medicare payments to physicians to support end-of-life and advance care planning conversations.

Here we are now in 2015. Very slowly and incrementally, the American public, physicians, and bureaucrats in the public and private sectors are beginning to develop funding mechanisms for what is now recognized as a very important, humane and respectful process for discussions that are helpful to individuals and their families in dealing with something that will ultimately affect all people: their end-of-life wishes.

In most jurisdictions where the negative stigma of end-of-life planning has been overcome and what is often called "advance-care-planning" exists and is supported, there is ample evidence that it serves patients, their families and physician and allied health-care professionals well.

I have not practised in the United States for many decades, but I have had to deal with American family members going through end-of-life situations, and I was taken aback by the focus on invasive and technologically prioritized treatments in contrast to palliative care philosophy-based decisional options where clearly the medically effective treatments are likely to be futile.

This is a sharp contrast from my experience in Ontario where I currently work and have had those conversations for many years in both the geriatric medicine and the palliative care domains. The active discussions about advance care planning and end-of-life preferences and options are supported by billing codes for such communications with patients and families.

The most important message is that these conversations are crucial, and I see this played out when patients are admitted to the palliative care unit, where most of them, although not all, understand what the stakes are, and are prepared to make the best decisions, along with the dedication of the health-care professional staff, to focus on symptom management and psycho-social issues, rather than being mesmerized by elusive technological treatments during this last period of life.

In contrast to the current situation in the United States, which it seems might be ready for a dramatic change, I and other physicians are reimbursed for the time and effort that goes into these end-of-life and advance care planning discussions.

This should be the standard of practice in this century – as it must be unless you believe in immortality. Modern medicine has many "tricks" up its ever-expanding technological sleeve, but as physicians, we must help our patients and their families know when it is time to say "enough," and prepare them for the time when not even the best of medicine can change the trajectory of the end-of-life process. That end should be as dignified as possible and supported medically with proper symptomatic care. ■

Family Moments

Happy 11th birthday Emma-Belle. Your energy, athleticism, sense of humour and compassion amaze us every day. We are so proud to be your parents. We love you.

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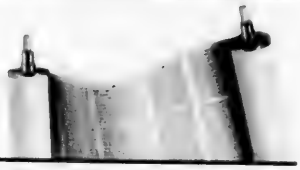
Happy 90th birthday to our very special and loving Jack Garellek – zaidy, father, uncle, cousin, and friend to so many!

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Beshalach | Exodus 13:17 - 17:16



Yacov Fruchter says partnering with God can make even the most bitter situation sweet
Rabbi Shalom Spira remembers a rabbi who worked in the birthplace of rock and roll
Rachael Turkienicz explains that there is a time for prayer, and a time for action

Yacov Fruchter

After all the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt, culminating with the splitting of the Red Sea, we would expect B'nei Yisrael to be in an elevated spiritual state of gratitude. Instead, it takes but three days without finding water for everything to fall apart.

Desperate for water, they arrive at a place called Marata. Their excitement quickly turns to dismay as the water they find there is too bitter (*mar*, in Hebrew) to drink: thus the appropriate name of the location.

The Baal Shem Tov has a surprising commentary on Shmot 15:23: "And they could not drink water from Mara because they were bitter." He explains that the "they" in this sentence is actually referring to the Children of Israel, not the water itself. They could not drink the water because they were too bitter to appreciate it. He adds that when people are bitter, they see only the negative and can't appreciate the good.

We all know this to be true about human nature. When someone is bitter, it is very easy to "poison the well." But shouldn't we expect better from this group of former slaves who just experienced miracles?

In reality, these former slaves were in a fragile state of transition. Having been freed from the shackles of servitude, they were also stripped of the constancy they relied on. Habits, even if they are imposed through force, offer comfort. The bitterness was simply a growing pain related to their newfound freedom.

They expected the opposite of slavery to be abundance of physical pleasure without the requirement to work for it in any way. Yet, instead, they found themselves searching desperately for water, the most basic sustaining nutrient. Rather than simply giving them water, God invites them to become a partner and shows them how to cure the water of its bitterness. God was teaching us that in partnership, we can make the most bitter of situations sweet. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

Last week marked the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt, head of the beit din in Memphis, Tenn. Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 394:2 rules that we do not eulogize after 12 months. Still, our parshah, Beshalach, offers the opportunity to express appreciation.

We read: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exodus 13:19). The Gemarah explains that the ark of Joseph voyaged alongside the Ark of the Law. When asked why, the Jews would answer, "This one fulfilled what is written in that one."

Indeed, Rabbi Greenblatt strove to fulfil what is written in the Torah, including himself writing the responsa *Teshuvot Rivevot Efraim*, named after the blessing that Moses gives Joseph in Deut. 33:17. Interestingly, one of the responsa appears to take the equation between the two arks quite literally.

Rivevot Efraim (7:235) allows only men to carry a sefer Torah, similar to the custom that governs pallbearers as derived from the Gemarah, Sanhedrin 20a. (On the other hand, rabbis Aryeh and Dov Frimer, in Tradition 32:2, report that Rabbi Moshe Feinstein would, under some circumstances, authorize women to carry a sefer Torah.)

In the introduction, *Aruch haShulchan*, a major decisor of Halachah, finds a further message in Exodus 13:19. It alludes to the multicultural enterprise where "Moses took the essence of Joseph with him" in order to publish the Shulchan Aruch. This insight, as well, reflects the life of Rabbi Greenblatt, who worked with Rabbi Yuval Noff to publish *Rivevot v'Yovlot*.

"Then Moses will sing" (Exodus 15:1). The Gemarah, Sanhedrin 91b, elucidates this as a reference to the future resurrection. May Rabbi Greenblatt, who spiritually enriched the "birthplace of rock and roll," participate in that ultimate musical performance. ■

Rabbi Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

This week's Torah portion, Beshalach, is filled with moments of danger, redemption, salvation, nurturing and trust. Israel leaves Egypt, but the Egyptians pursue and corner them with the Red Sea behind them and the Egyptian army in front.

The nation turns to Moses with the ancient voice of Jewish sarcasm: "There weren't enough graves in Egypt that you needed to bring us into the desert to die? I told you this would happen!"

In response to Israel's allegations, Moses turns and cries out to God. The text doesn't tell us what Moses' prayer is, but it does tell us of God's surprising response.

God replies to Moses by asking, "Why are you yelling at me? Speak to the Children of Israel and get them to move!"

Our surprise is that the very first lesson Israel learns about survival is that you must participate actively and not wait for God to save the day. For the ancient Israelites, the plagues in Egypt demonstrated that God would fight their battles. Their moment of action comes just before the 10th plague, when they must paint their doorposts with the blood of the sacrifice. They are beginning to learn that they must participate in their own destiny.

When all seems lost, one would think the correct spiritual gesture would be to turn to God. Yet, at this crucial moment, the all-important message is that there is never a moment when all seems lost. We must always be active in our own destiny and our own security. God is teaching Moses that there is a time for prayer and a time for action. We participate with God in our destinies and do not passively await what might occur. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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GUEST VOICE

'I felt trapped in my own home'

Lisa Rubin*

Growing up, I spent my summers at my parents' cottage on Lake Simcoe. I have fond memories of this, since it was the summer vacation and I spent my time with my best friend who lived three cottages down from me.

I liked to swim, and one day while at the beach, I met my now ex-boyfriend. I was in the water and he swam up to me and began a conversation. I was only 15 and he was 14. Although we had just met, I immediately had a feeling that this person was not right for me. I was totally disinterested in getting to know him, and although I was polite, I quickly made up an excuse as to why I had to leave.

My parents' cottage was a block away from the beach, and I went home. At the time, I was totally unaware that this boy was following me. Later in the day, I decided to go to my friend's cottage, and when I stepped out, I saw him standing there waiting for me. I was flattered but felt a little uneasy. After a few times of him coming around and waiting for me, I tried to discourage him by saying that I already had a boyfriend. This did not deter him though, and he kept coming around and pursuing me. At the beginning, he was very nice and we started hanging out together.

I saw him for several years in the summer, and during the school year, we corresponded by mail. Eventually, he moved to Toronto to be close to me. We started dating, and after awhile, he asked me to marry him.

I declined his proposal because there were many red flags. He was rarely honest with me and we had many verbal disagreements because of this. He was never able to save any money, he was very prejudiced and in trouble with the law for various reasons. Even so, I remained friends with him. It went on like this for many years, and twice more he asked me to marry him. Eventually, I gave in and we got engaged.

I was naive, and in order to save money for our marriage, I suggested that we open a joint bank account, which he promptly emptied. This led to our breaking up and we went our separate ways for a year and a half. We had no contact whatsoever, but all of a sudden, he contacted me the day before Valentine's Day. Right from the beginning, he lied to me, saying he was in another relationship and just wanted to see how I was doing. I later found out that this was not the case.

> *Every time I asked him to leave, he told me he wouldn't go unless I forced him with the police*

Now, for the second time, I caved in, and we again started seeing each other. I kind of felt it was easier to be with someone I already knew than to start over with someone else. Again we stayed together for many years, but this time, it was worse. Our arguments were more frequent, and now there was a physically abusive element to our relationship as well. I was very intimidated by him. At this point, we were living together in my house, and although I asked him to leave several times, he would not. Every time I asked him to leave, he told me he wouldn't go unless I forced him with the police. He refused to go peacefully.

I felt trapped in my own home, and eventually, through a counsellor, I got involved with a group for women in abusive relationships. This counsellor also referred me to an agency called Act to End Violence against Women, where I met some amazing people who helped me from start to finish to extricate myself from this abusive partner.

It's now almost a year since I left my ex-boyfriend, and although he lives down the street from me, it is by far the best decision I have ever made. I feel so much freer and in control of my life. In total, my relationship lasted almost 38 years, and although I thought I would never get out, thanks to the wonderful support of this agency, I now have a future. ■

** Lisa Rubin is a pseudonym*

Talking 'gives people permission to come forward'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

She said that when the issue is talked about freely in the community, "it gives people permission to come forward."

Sasson said she would also like people to understand that her organization values the family unit and does not push women to leave their husbands.

"A woman doesn't come for help and is encouraged to divorce. The way we work is centred on the woman, centred on her story and centred on her reality. We do not impose our values, or our advice. We work with her to make her own decision, and she is free to stay in the relationship. We're here to offer her safety measures, safety planning, and help her make decisions for herself," Sasson said. In addition to its shelter – a 12-bed facility with full time staff – Auberge Shalom's counselling and resource office provides consultation and guidance to women, whether they're living with a partner or not.

"It could be for women who are contemplating leaving and eventually come to the shelter. It could be for a woman who chooses never to leave and she needs the counselling and support while she is living in this relationship, or it could be after," Sasson said. "We provide individual counselling, group counselling, we have a shelter, and we have a transitional housing support program for emergency housing for women who are leaving dangerous situations in their home."

Janice Shaw

Rabbi Ed Elkin

> *[JF&CS'] legal information service helps women navigate the family law system.*

In Toronto, Krowitz said that in addition to alternative short-term emergency housing for Jewish women and their children, which is operated by ATEVAW in partnership with JF&CS, her organization recently launched a legal information service for Jewish women who have experienced abuse.

"The purpose of the legal information service is to help women navigate the family law system, with everything from helping them get legal aid to appealing legal aid refusals... to helping them find the right lawyer," Krowitz said. "We have vetted many lawyers and talked to them about their knowledge of domestic abuse and violence against women. We help them get their documents ready for a lawyers appointment or for court... We help them take the emotion out of it."

In addition, she said ATEVAW does programming with youth and has visited the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto to talk to the older students about healthy relationships, and to university campuses to talk about sexual violence.

JF&CS also offers a number of programs to support women victimized by domestic abuse, as well as their children, such as Here to Help, a group program funded by Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Shaw said JF&CS also runs programs with Orthodox day schools through its school social work program.

Social workers work with Jewish day schools and public schools with large Jewish populations to provide early detection and intervention in cases where children might be at risk. ■

To access these and for other resources and services, contact ATEVAW's main line at 905-695-5372; JF&CS at 416-638-7800; or Auberge Shalom's support line at 514-731-0833.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
JANUARY 29, 2015

Marek Halter: Jews should stay in France

ELIAS LEVY
elevy@thecjn.ca

Noted intellectual French-Polish author Marek Halter believes that the appalling massacre perpetrated by two jihadists at the office of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and the hostage-taking in a kosher store in the Paris area, which ended with the killing of four innocent Jews, will finally make the French take note of the "huge menace" for France and other democracies that "the scourge of Islamist terrorism" represents.

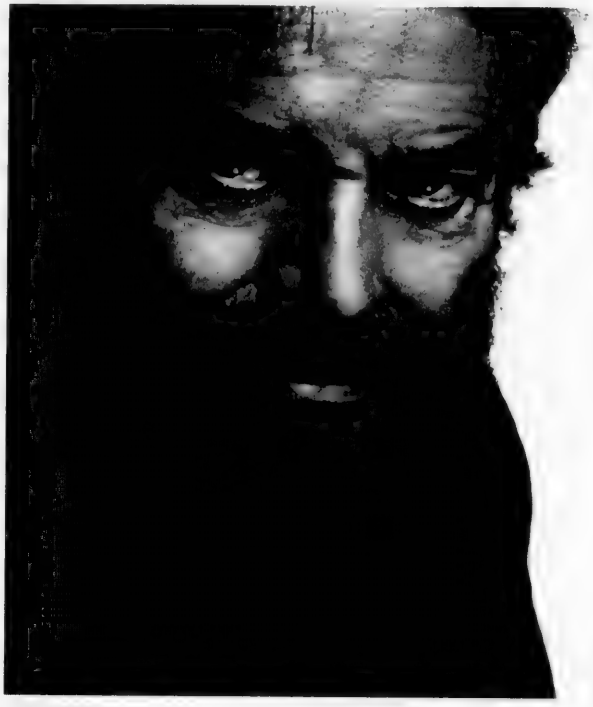
In an interview from Paris, Halter, an internationally known author whose books include the bestseller *The Book of Abraham*, is a tireless advocate for rapprochement and dialogue between Jews and Muslims. He spoke to *The CJN* about the aftermath of the two attacks.

The Jews of France have recently once again lived through some very dark days. What is their current state of mind?

Until now, when French Jews were killed or severely attacked by violently anti-Semitic jihadists, the French were upset for a day or so. The sinister anti-Jewish attacks were quickly forgotten. Since the murders at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, the French seem to have finally become aware of a fact that has long escaped them: the Islamist terrorists also want to kill the values that made the French Republic what it is, first of all our freedom of expression.

Hasn't there been less importance attached to anti-Semitism in France in the last few years?

In France, when only Jews are attacked, no one is really happy, but, unfortunately, there are still many people who say, out loud, without the least embarrassment: "When a Jew is attacked, everyone is shocked, but when a black, an Arab or and Armenian is attacked... nobody talks about it." Or, "A Jewish life is considered more important than a Christian or Muslim life." Since the horrible murder of the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists, the French have finally realized that the Islamist jihadists have two great macabre intentions: to kill the greatest number of Jews possible and to attack the basic values of the French Republic, especially freedom of expression. Goethe, the great German poet, said that "the Jews are the thermometer by which you can measure the degree of humanity in humanity." Our pollsters today who ask about prejudice and racism forget to take into account that illustrious German thinker. History has proved that those who attack the Jews subsequently attack other minorities: Arabs, blacks, Gypsies.



Marek Halter

You recently published a letter in the French daily *Le Monde* addressed to the Jews of France. In it, you urged the Jews not to leave their native country out of the fear because of the new outbreak of anti-Semitism and the upsurge of jihadism in France. The letter had a huge impact on the Jewish community of France and led to a lively debate.

This year again, aliyah to Israel from France will reach a record high. In my letter in *Le Monde*, I told my Jewish French brothers and sisters that I perfectly understand those who want to move to Israel for religious reasons. In my opinion, that's a logical and very legitimate reason. On the other hand, I also told them that Jews should not leave France simply because they are afraid. France also belongs to the Jews. Fleeing from France is not a solution. Anti-Semitism, like all forms of racism, is a universal illness, an epidemic that kills all over the world.

> *One thing is certain: we are not in a war between civilizations, but right in the middle of a war between religions.*

Moreover, is it so easy to leave a home that you have spent so much time building? Jews have lived in France for more than 2,000 years – since the Roman period. Jews were subjects of the kings of France when the Normans were not yet French. Jews have been in France for almost 16 centuries. On the façade of the most prestigious cathedral in France, and maybe even in the world, Notre-Dame de Paris, are 28 statues depicting the 28 kings of Israel.

But we have to recognize that many Jews no longer feel at home in France.

Why do you want the Jews to leave France, to give in to those who hate us and specifically want to see us leave our country permanently? Can the Jews leave this home – our home – to the jihadists and the National Front? One day, I asked the chief rabbi of Frankfurt, Nathan Levinson, who is of German origin and returned from exile, in an American uniform, after the war, why he stayed in Germany. His answer was straightforward: "To deprive Hitler of his ultimate victory – a *Judenrein* Germany [one that is free of Jews]."

Are you afraid the Islamist terrorist attacks that recently harmed France will lead to an increase in Islamophobia in French society?

Unfortunately, yes. It is imperative that France begin to show appreciation for its Muslims, the majority of whom are also strongly opposed to Islamic fundamentalism. In France, until now, they didn't understand the stakes involved in this very important issue, because the French Republic has never officially or legally recognized the communities that live in the country.

In France, the many communities that live together have different cultures and traditions, something the French leaders have not yet understood. Sooner or later, they will need to admit this striking reality.

Do you think France and the West will be able to win the harsh war they are fighting against the Islamist fundamentalists today?

One thing is certain: we are not in a war between civilizations, but right in the middle of a war between religions. Until now, we have ignored the prophecy of author André Malraux: "The 21st century will be religious or it won't be at all." I am absolutely convinced that the democratic western world will win the battle against obscurantism and religious fanaticism, hideously epitomized today by the Islamist terrorists. If I believed that we were going to lose this crucial battle, I would not be out there fighting it with all my force. Sunday, Jan. 11, more than four million French people came out into the street to fight the major battle where the stakes are so gigantic: the future of our democratic values and our "holy" freedom of expression. ■

Significance of Holocaust memorial dates

Backstory

CARL S. EHRLICH

Jan. 27 is a significant date for music lovers, for on this day in 1756, one of the greatest creative geniuses of all time, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was born in Salzburg, Austria.

But, this date is also significant from a Jewish perspective. On Jan. 27, 1945, the Soviet army liberated the Nazi death-camp at Auschwitz, where so many Jews and other innocents had been brutalized and brutally murdered.

While a significant date for Jews worldwide and the subject of commemorative activities, Jan. 27 is but one of a number of dates that have been proposed for Jewish commemorations of the Holocaust.

For Jewish refugees from Germany, Jan. 27 is not the usual day chosen to commemorate the Holocaust, but Nov. 9. On that day in 1938, the Nazis unleashed a two-day orgy of death and destruction against the Jews and their communal institutions in the German Reich, ostensibly in response to the assassination of a low-level German diplomat in Paris by a young Jewish man from Poland who was upset about his parents' deportation. While politically correct German Jews in the modern world refer to this event as the November Pogrom, the name that has taken hold is Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, alluding to the contemporaneous observation that the shattered glass from Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues glittered like crystal.

Once again, however, this date, while significant in Jewish history and consciousness, has not become the official day on which the worldwide Jewish community commemorates the Holocaust. The most commonly accepted date to commemorate the Holocaust for Jews globally has become the modern State of Israel's choice of date, the 27th day of the Jewish month of Nisan, which falls in April or May.

This date was chosen because in 1943, it fell in the middle of the fabled Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, when a few hundred poorly armed Jews decided to take their fate into their own hands and rose up in a doomed revolt against the Nazis' plans to liquidate the ghetto. As of the 10th anniversary of the uprising, this solemn holiday, named Yom Hashoah, has been observed in Israel and has slowly but inexorably become the most widely recognized Jewish commemoration of the Holocaust (the only holdouts being haredim who cannot countenance the addition of a modern holiday to the Jewish liturgical calendar, and those who continue to observe various local traditions).

The different dates for these commemorations of the Holocaust are not arbitrary decisions reached by diverse communities, but reveal much about the people and organizations choosing each date. The United Nations' choice of the date of the liberation of Auschwitz on Jan. 27 expresses a certain level of empathy for the Jews as the passive victims of a brutal regime that no longer exists. The UN is markedly less comfortable with the contemporary Jewish state, which refuses to "go gentle into that good night."

German Jews' choice of Kristallnacht to commemorate the Holocaust echoes their specific experience and marks an important and tragic step on the way to the "final solution," but the November Pogrom affected what was ultimately a relatively small minority of the Jews victimized by the Holocaust.

Finally, Israel's decision to tie in the commemoration of the Holocaust with the event of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is also ideologically motivated. In Hebrew, the holiday is termed Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah, Holocaust and Heroism Day. Rejecting the image of the Jew as the passive victim of brutality, the modern State of Israel has deliberately chosen to commemorate the Holocaust by remembering the heroism of those who fought against their impending doom. In this manner, Yom Hashoah became paradigmatic for the fate of the young State of Israel, surrounded by enemies and fighting for its survival.

In emphasizing the heroism of Jews during the Holocaust, Yom Hashoah turns the traditional image of the Jews as passive victims on its head and provides both Israel and Jews throughout the world with active role models to emulate. ■

Carl S. Ehrlich is director of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies and professor of humanities at York University, Toronto.

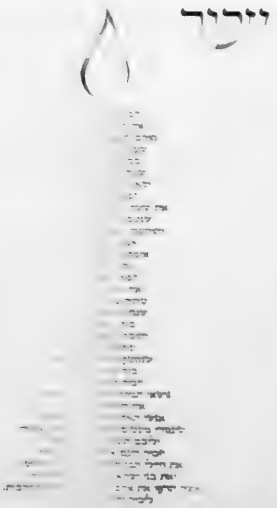
OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Irvin Raxlin	Jan 12/15	1 Clark Avenue West
Edward Levine	Jan 12/15	4005 Bayview Avenue
Pola Schlenger	Jan 12/15	7 Townsgate Drive
Fanny Pillersdorf	Jan 13/15	83 Collinson Blvd.
Samuel (Szmul) Potok	Jan 13/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Phyllis Fox	Jan 13/15	98A York Downs Drive
Sally Kirszbaum	Jan 13/15	13 Torresdale Avenue
Josie Peretz	Jan 15/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Flora Bannet	Jan 12/15	1111 Steeles Ave. West
Fanny Tolensky	Jan 14/15	10 Trench Street
Jaye Kornblum-Rea	Jan 16/15	256 MacPherson Avenue
Max Bornstein	Jan 15/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Ronna Winkler	Jan 17/15	21 Burkebrook Place

HEDREW BASIC

Harold Paul Bloom	Jan 10/15	1201 Steeles Ave. West
Abraham Schwarzberg	Jan 11/15	91 Tangreen Circle



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Inside

Philanthropist and city builder
Joseph Rotman remembered for his leadership and vision.
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Gov. Gen. David Johnston's tribute,
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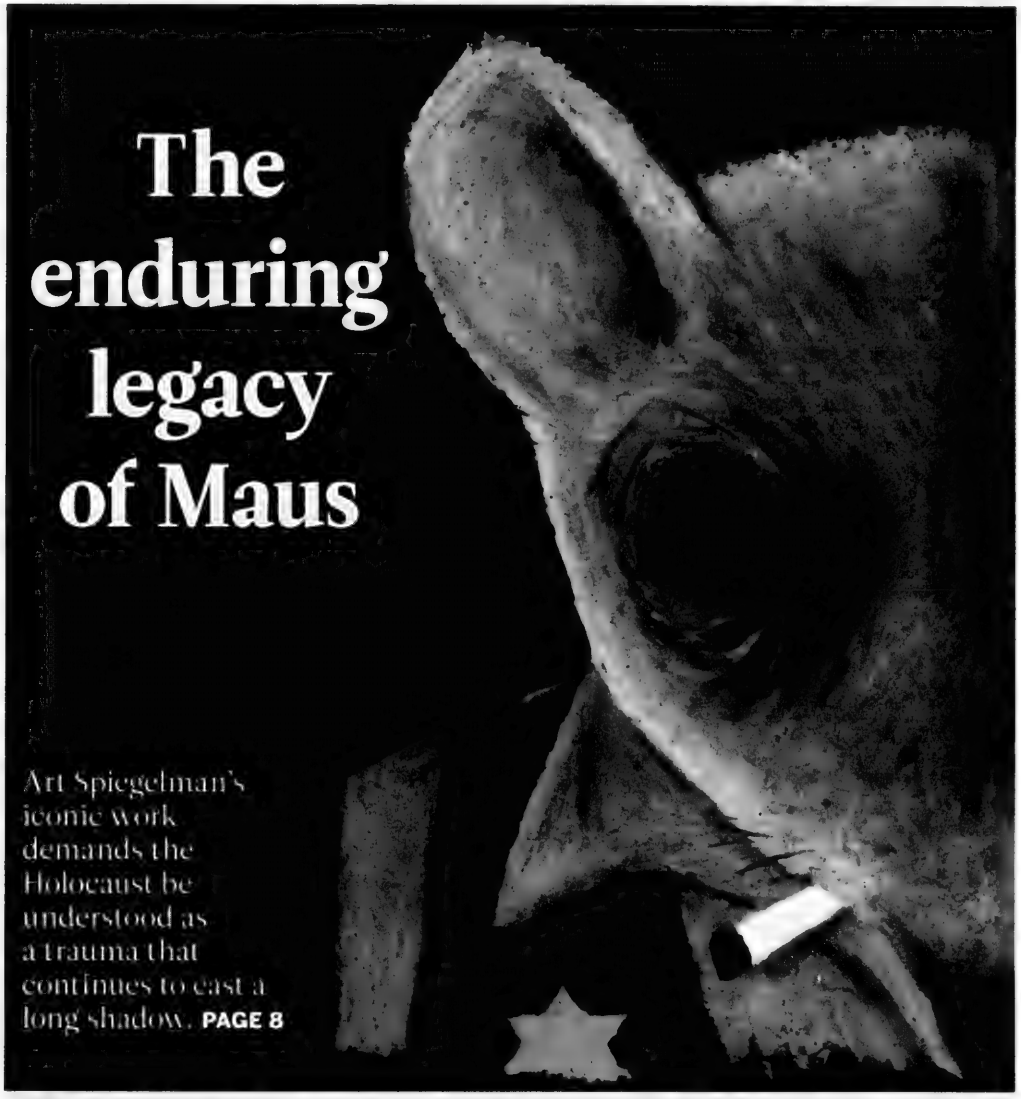
Back to Pier 21
Shoah memorial likely to return to Halifax after repairs in Toronto. **PAGE 21**

Yiras

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	5:11 p.m.	6:17 p.m.
Montreal	4:49 p.m.	5:56 p.m.
Toronto	5:17 p.m.	6:22 p.m.
Winnipeg	5:13 p.m.	6:24 p.m.
Calgary	5:18 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
Vancouver	4:59 p.m.	6:09 p.m.



The enduring legacy of Maus

Art Spiegelman's iconic work demands the Holocaust be understood as a trauma that continues to cast a long shadow. **PAGE 8**

6 27843 39403 7

It's never too late to be who you are, and a QB's mystery menorah

Actor comes out at 82

Actor Joel Grey, 82, who won an Oscar and a Tony Award for playing the MC in *Cabaret*, came out as gay Jan. 28 in a *People* magazine interview."I don't like labels, but if you have to put a label on it, I'm a gay man," he said. Grey, who was married to actress Jo Wilder for 24 years and is the father of actress Jennifer Grey, was already out to friends and family, but hadn't spoken publicly about his sexuality. His original surname was Katz, and his father, Mickey Katz, was also an actor. He told *People* that growing up in Cleveland, he was attracted to both sexes, but heard "the grownups… in the next room, my mother included, talking derisively about 'fairies.'"

Joel Grey in *Cabaret*

A very Brady Chanukah?

In the lead-up to Sunday's Super Bowl, it was revealed that New England Patriots star quarterback Tom Brady has a menorah displayed in his home. In a Jan. 26 *New York Times* profile, a reporter said he noticed the chanukiyah in Brady's house: "We're not Jewish," Brady said when asked about it. "But I think we're into everything… I don't know what I believe. I think there's a belief system, I'm just not sure what it is." Brady was raised Catholic, and his supermodel wife Gisele Bundchen, is a non-Jewish Brazilian, but perhaps the Jewishness of his brother-in-law, ex-Boston Red Sox star Kevin Youkilis or Patriots owner Robert Kraft have rubbed off on the superstar pivot.

Freundel (still) in the house

The Washington, D.C., synagogue that fired Rabbi Barry Freundel after he was charged with voyeurism is trying to evict him from his shul-owned residence. On Jan. 28, Kesher Israel launched a case with the Beit Din of America to oust the rabbi, who was arrested last fall on charges he spied on women, among them his students and converts, who used a mikvah next to the Orthodox synagogue. The shul is contractually obligated to take disputes with Rabbi Freundel to the beit din, which it did after informal talks broke down. Rabbi Freundel is reportedly granting his wife, Sharon, a religious divorce, or *get*. ■

Gematria

15,000

The number of Gazans aged 15-21 who graduated Jan. 29 from week-long paramilitary training camps called "Pioneers of Liberation."

62%

Percentage of religious Israelis in a new poll who said keeping Israel's Jewish majority is more key than controlling the West Bank.

Quotable

We're concerned that Zionism right now is considered to be equal to the political right

— World Union of Meretz head Dario Teitelbaum. Full interview on p. 54.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz keeps digging into Tu b'Shvat

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Dealing with Iran

As we remember the horrors of Auschwitz and the Shoah, one lesson stands out in dealing with today's threats from Iran: if someone threatens to wipe you out, you need to believe that they mean it.

Hitler's plan outlined in *Mein Kampf*, was published in 1922 and translated into many languages. World leaders ignored his threats through 1933 (when he was first elected, following the collapse of the Weimar Republic) and Neville Chamberlain's infamous appeasement at Munich in 1938. It took Winston Churchill to wake the world up and deal with Hitler decisively.

Today, Iranian leaders routinely threaten to wipe Israel and the Jews "off the map." In attempting to keep Iran from manufacturing nuclear weapons, world leaders need to be tough with Iran. Sadly, there are no Churchills in Europe, the White House or anywhere in the world today — only Chamberlains.

Steve Koroinek
Montreal

Domestic abuse and men

I was disappointed to read the one-sided view of women being portrayed as victims and men as abusers when the understanding has advanced far past that social myth ("Domestic abuse is a Jewish issue, too," Jan. 22). Men are equally likely to be battered and abused in the same and similar ways to women. Yet not a single sentence was devoted to advancing any real discussion, let alone solution, to the overall problem of domestic violence, which doesn't discriminate on social, religious, financial, geographic or gender grounds.

Thousands of men and their children suffer the pain of being abused by spouses or intimate partners. A general climate once existed for ignoring the sorry plight these men find themselves in. However, that has dramatically changed, and all shelters and women's programs now at least acknowledge male victimhood and that there are large numbers of male victims, even if these agencies are unequipped or prepared to offer solutions or simply shelter. The fact that men and their children find no systemic safe haven is further cause to make their suffering better understood, not a reason to hide them.

Dave Cote
Toronto

Welcoming the intermarried

I am writing to express my dismay and disappointment at views expressed by some of our rabbis and spiritual leaders in the press, and from the bimah in the recent months, regarding interdating and intermarriage.

I am the trained keruv consultant for the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs in Ontario, and have served in this capacity since 2000. The Keruv program was proposed to recognize the issue of intermarriage and provide a "path forward" for those affected by it. I set up a monthly support group for families and friends struggling with their issues, facilitated by a qualified social scientist, and this effort was supported by many rabbis in Toronto.

Our kids meet others at school or at work, find common interests, and ultimately get together.

Now, let's understand: the Jewish kid is not abandoning his or her Judaism. In fact, they frequently would like their partner to join the "tribe." If we push them away and ostracize them from our families, friends and communities, and worse, our houses of prayer, how likely is that to happen? It is distressing to hear of rabbis and/or synagogues denying memberships to even the Jewish partner in interfaith unions, as a consequence to the Jew "marrying out." Is it any wonder that 70 per cent of the children of interfaith couples no longer remain Jewish. How and why can they stay Jewish if we bar them from our schools, synagogues and society?

We must learn to accommodate our kids' choices, not to encourage intermarriage, but to support the inevitable decisions our kids make and encourage them to remain faithful to the faith of our parents.

And what should we do about our Jewish widows and widowers, who in their loneliness decide to acquire a new partner who is not Jewish? Do we now bar our doors to them and reject their new partners?

Our kids are not trying to test us when they interdate or intermarry. They are just trying to be happy. Let us not make that decision a curse for us all.

Moe Horenfeldt
Thornhill, Ont.

Correction

A Jan. 29 letter incorrectly said Dachau was liberated by Soviet troops. It was liberated by the American forces. ■

Letters to the editor are welcomed if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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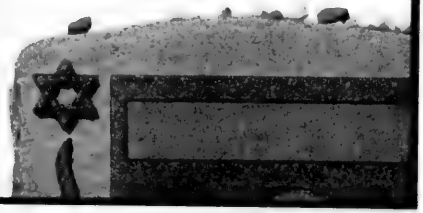

RABBI-2-RABBI

The power of the sermon

In the era of social media, there may be more effective ways of communicating important messages, but there's no substitute for one-on-one interaction with congregants.

RABBI ARI ISENBERG
SHAAR SHALOM CONGREGATION, HALIFAX

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Ari Isenberg: Last week, a congregant asked if I remember the sermons delivered by my childhood rabbi. "A terrific question," I remarked, and paused to reflect.

The rabbi of my youth was the late Rabbi A. Bernard Leffell of Shaare Zedek Congregation in Montreal. Though I was still young when he retired, I remember that he would always deliver his sermons from the lectern with conviction and eloquence. His messages were expository in nature – he would identify a complicated issue or text, analyze and explore it from several points of view, and then guide the congregation to its resolution.

But once every few weeks, Rabbi Leffell descended from the pulpit and facilitated an informal Q&A with the congregation. These are the instances that I recall with vivid excitement. To watch him navigate the aisles was thrilling. Like an orchestra conductor, he wove a selection of voices and opinions into one congruent tapestry.

What do you recall about the rabbis of your youth?

Rabbi Scheier: I don't think I have one strong model for sermons that inspires me in my preaching, but one impression I inevitably had as a child was that the sermons were generally quite long. On my first Shabbat at Shaar Hashomayim, just moments before my first-ever sermon to the congregation, a synagogue member handed me a small piece of paper. It said, "A good sermon is a short sermon."

One principle I try to incorporate into my teaching is that it must be interesting – not only on a Torah level, but also on a human level. I keep in mind the quote attributed to Rabbi Joseph Lookstein, who taught homiletics at Yeshiva University for many years: "If you haven't struck oil within the first 20 minutes, stop boring."

There is a larger question, though. A few weeks ago, I noticed that a post I wrote on Facebook had been shared and viewed many, many times. The number of people who saw this particular post rivaled the number of people who hear my sermons on a regular basis. In the era of social media, is the sermon still the most effective way of communicating important messages to our congregants?

Rabbi Ari Isenberg: A similar thing happened to me last year leading up to Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Remembrance Day, when I posted a message on Facebook reminding people of the day's significance and the ritual of lighting a yahrzeit candle in commemoration. I was awed by the response. Beyond those who viewed and shared my post, I noted that many people heeded the message, lighting yahrzeit candles of their own. Without Facebook, might they have missed the day altogether?

The most effective teacher is one who can convey a message in different styles and formats. If we utilize all that the social medial world has to offer, not only will our rabbinic voices reach wider audiences, we'll reach more diverse audiences as well. But as we do more of our communication and teaching online, is there a risk of us becoming more impersonal and less accessible? Are there situations where an in-person rabbinic presence is critical?

Rabbi Scheier: The journalist Jeffrey Goldberg once critiqued *Newsweek*'s list of 50 Most Influential Rabbis by observing that it seemed to "slight congregational rabbis (the ones who interact with, you know, Jews)." I believe that this is essentially correct. The greatest rabbis are the ones we might never hear about, because they aren't publishing or posting or self-promoting in a very public way. Instead, they are the hospital chaplains, the bar and bat mitzvah teachers, the Jewish school teachers. Unfortunately, we have a tendency to interpret "influential" as "well-known," which isn't always a measure of quality.

If we aspire to change lives for the better – to inspire the members of our community – then there is no substitute for the one-on-one "I care about you, and I'm listening to you" personal contact. Yes, sermons have their power and impact, and social media posts have their use, but I recall a teaching I heard many times in rabbinical school: "If the rabbi made the hospital visit, then even the worst sermon will be received as a great sermon. But if s/he was absent, then even the most brilliant sermon will fail to inspire." ■

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From the Archives | Tuning up

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The Frank Shaws String Quartet in Kirkland Lake, Ont., circa 1939. The photo was taken by Morris Duke and features Frank Shaws with Harry Magder, on right, and two other men sitting behind a piano, holding their instruments.

SeeJN | Early migrant

HADAS PARUSH/FLASH90 PHOTO

Archeologist Ofer Marder holds a recently discovered human skull in the Manot cave in the western Galilee on Jan. 28. The 55,000-year-old human skull is the earliest fossilized evidence of an anatomically modern human skull outside Africa and sheds light on human evolution, proving that modern humans migrated from Africa to the rest of the world, through the Middle East.

From Yoni's Desk

Speaking out against domestic abuse

This edition of *The CJN* marks the conclusion of reporter Sheri Shefa's three-part series on domestic abuse in the Canadian Jewish community. It has been an eye-opening experience, and many readers have been shocked to learn that one in four Jewish women experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, on par with the rate of occurrence across the country and beyond our community.

But that statistic comes as little surprise to those fighting against abuse in the Jewish community. "For most people in our community, they don't believe [domestic abuse] happens to us," says Penny Krowitz, executive director of Act To End Violence Against Women (ATEVAW). "They believe the Jewish community is immune to such things."

The question is: what can we do to combat domestic abuse in our midst?

The first step is education and awareness. In order to recognize abuse, we have to know what it looks like, in all its manifestations – verbal, physical, and emotional. On that front, there is room for cautious optimism: according to Diane Sasson, the veteran executive director of Auberge Shalom Pour Femmes, Montreal's kosher women's shelter, "Even in the more Orthodox world [which tends to be more traditional and insular], there is more of an understanding that there are many forms of abuse."

The next step, experts agree, is for community leaders to speak out against domestic abuse. In particular, religious authorities have the power to lead on the issue. "We would encourage… rabbis to do a sermon about [domestic abuse]," Krowitz says, "because the minute the rabbi does a sermon about it, he gives credibility to the issue." Sasson agrees: "We have the tools to work with, Jewishly, and I think our leaders and our rabbis need to speak about it, need to know it exists, need to talk about it, need to make internal policies in the synagogues." Krowitz and Sasson both hope more religious leaders will take up their challenge.

Perhaps most of all, though, we need to be willing to confront difficult issues like domestic abuse, instead of pretending they don't exist. "I think we have to talk about it and break down the shame and recognize that things happen in relationships," Krowitz says. When we address the issue, Sasson adds, "it gives people permission to come forward." But when we don't, we may perpetuate the shame that keeps women from admitting there is a problem. That's why silence is not an option.

Without a doubt, domestic abuse is a difficult subject to discuss – but that's all the more reason to be open about it. And that's why we felt it important to print alongside Shefa's series three personal essays from women who have experienced abuse first-hand. These brave women, all of whom have written pseudonymously, told their harrowing stories of abuse so that the rest of us might better recognize it ourselves.

Their stories underline what experts like Krowitz and Sasson are trying to tell us – that the Jewish community is not immune to domestic abuse, that abuse comes in many different forms, that help is available for those who need it. And finally, that we all have the power to do something about it. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

The last Nazi standing

Bernie M. Farber and Eric Vernon

And then there was one.

Seventy years after the end of World War II, Helmut Oberlander bears the dubious distinction of being the last of Canada's all-too-few cases from that era to be resolved. He is the last Nazi standing.

It was 30 years ago that then-prime minister Brian Mulroney established the Deschênes Commission to investigate the presence in Canada of perpetrators of Nazi war crimes and their collaborators. While no punishment could ever be commensurate with the magnitude of their heinous crimes, Justice Jules Deschênes understood that such actions were necessary both as a matter of fundamental justice and to protect the integrity of Canadian citizenship.

Were he alive today, Deschênes would be profoundly disappointed by how little was accomplished on these cases. In particular, one mechanism that he put forward, denaturalization and deportation, has been a spectacular failure.

Jan. 27 marked 20 years since the federal government informed Oberlander that it intended to revoke his citizenship, because of his "false representations or fraud or by knowingly concealing material circumstances in that you failed to divulge to Canadian Immigration and Citizenship officials your membership in the German Sicherheitspolizei und SD and Einsatzkommando 10A (EK 10A) during the Second World War and your participation in the executions of civilians during that period of time".

Because the granting of citizenship is a civil act, its revocation is as well, and the burden on the Crown was not to prove that Oberlander had committed war crimes or crimes against humanity, but that he had lied upon entering Canada and obtained his citizenship fraudulently. They did so, but Oberlander, who cheated his way into Canada, has continued to enjoy with impunity the privilege of our citizenship for decades.

Failure to disclose his involvement as a translator with Einsatzkommando 10A, one of the most notorious of the Nazi mobile killing squads that cut a murderous swath through eastern Europe killing thousands of Jews and other innocent civilians, should have been sufficient to close the deal on his denaturalization and deportation. One Federal Court decision made the point unassailably clear: As a member of EK 10a Oberlander could not have been unaware of the function of the unit. "Its purposes," the Court said, "he served."

In fact, translators were critical cogs in the Einsatzgruppen machinery of murder. One can hear the echoes of their voices as they rounded up human targets with local informers and collaborators: ("How many Jews were in this village? Where would they be apt to hide?"); assisted with interrogations ("Where are the others? Do they have weapons?"); and ordered victims to places of execution while maintaining the German obsession over control and order ("Line up over there in front of that ditch. Remove your clothing. Be silent.")

After the war, surviving Einsatzgruppen killers acknowledged that auxiliary members of the units like Oberlander were critical to the lethal success of their efforts. They were, in essence, Hitler's elite enablers.

Last month, the Federal Court upheld the most recent attempt to denaturalize him but Oberlander has indicated that he will appeal that decision.

For decades after the war, successive Canadian governments were indifferent to the presence of Nazi war criminals and enablers in Canada and justified their inaction with the convenient fiction that no remedies existed to resolve these cases. Once cases were finally launched, a great deal of delay was court-driven.

Oberlander's supporters have variously claimed that he has not received sufficient due process or that his Charter-guaranteed legal protection was violated. In fact, the precise opposite is true and Jewish advocacy strove to make the case that due process had to be commensurate with the urgency of natural justice, especially since too many other accused Nazis had died in mid-course.

Instead, Canadian courts often thwarted justice on the Oberlander file and were complicit in the unconscionable delays that have made his case a never-ending story. Over the two-decade history of Oberlander's case, Canadian courts routinely permitted lengthy continuances; took years to deliver decisions under reserve; allowed layers of appeals at every level and accepted and reviewed ungrounded legal and constitutional applications. In one instance, the Court partly based its decision on an argument that Oberlander himself had not seen fit to raise in his own defence.

Meanwhile, Jewish organizations fought a rearguard action in the court of public opinion.

To counter claims that we were seeking vengeance, we pointed out that these cases involved the pursuit of justice against those involved in the most heinous crimes in human history for which there were no statutes of limitations. To those upset that he had never been charged with committing war crimes, we offered the counter view that such civil cases as Oberlander's served to protect the integrity of precious Canadian citizenship from fraud and misrepresentation. They also provided the moral authority and judicial precedents to help ensure that Canada not be seen as a haven for war criminals and genocidaires.

Helmut Oberlander in uniform
ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE #2013.8.2

To those calling for clemency or consideration for Oberlander's advanced years and model behaviour while in Canada we argued that neither the duration of an individual's residence in Canada nor the goodness of his conduct since landing should preclude denaturalization and deportation where warranted. Our mantra was that "longevity should not be rewarded" and we implored opponents of these cases not to blinker their focus on the aged and feeble men in the docket but to cast their minds back to when the accused were young and hale and acting as cogs in genocide.

Sadly, Oberlander will probably die in Canada. One day when the full story of Canada's poor record of dealing with Nazi war criminals and their enablers in our midst is written, there will be some heroes but mostly shame enough to go around. ■

Bernie M. Farber and Eric Vernon worked on the Helmut Oberlander case and other Nazi war crimes cases for over two decades along with their Canadian Jewish Congress colleague Len Rudner.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 5 2015

The messiness of history, told by a Maus

ANDREW HUNTER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

"Art Spiegelman's great contribution to the medium of comics was to prove that comics could be real art. Before him, it was a debatable notion. After Maus, *it was an undeniable fact."*
—Seth, Canadian Cartoonist

That Art Spiegelman's groundbreaking comic *Maus* changed comics and is now recognized as one of the absolutely essential artistic and literary accomplishments of the 20th century is undeniable. Widely known today as a pair of bestselling graphic novels, the narrative originally unfolded as a series of chapters published in the highly influential magazine *RAW* from 1980 through 1991. (Spiegelman had founded *RAW* with his spouse, François Mouly, who went on to become the arts editor of *The New Yorker*.)

Pantheon Books subsequently brought the serialized *RAW* instalments together into two companion volumes, *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* (1986) and *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (1992). Primarily the story of one Polish Jew's "survival" of the Holocaust, the work is built around a series of strained conversations between father (Vladek Spiegelman) and son (Art Spiegelman). It is a relationship that echoes the fundamental struggle in a wider culture to come to terms with one of the greatest tragedies in human history, a tragedy that did not just happen (like some recurrent natural disaster), but was a methodically planned act of extermination on a grand scale.

The great strength of *Maus* is that it directly engages with the messiness of history, that it makes it deeply personal and does not shy away from exposing even the unflattering characteristics of the victims (Vladek's racism for example). It is absolutely clear that history is mired in the failings of memory and personal perspective, deeply subjective and often flawed, and Spiegelman demands that the Holocaust be understood as trauma, a trauma that continues to cast a long shadow with deep impact far beyond 1945.

"My father bleeds history," Spiegelman stated as the subtitle for *Maus I*, and this statement stands as a visceral acknowledgment that the violence did not end with the Allied victory and the liberation of concentration camps in 1945, but lingered as a wound that would mark subsequent generations. To be a survivor was to not experience closure but to carry the wounds with you (and pass them on to the next generation), and for many, that lingering wound was fatal. For Spiegelman's mother, Anya, who committed suicide in 1968, the wound bled slowly and painfully.

***Maus* is recognized as one of the essential artistic and literary accomplishments of the 20th century.** PICTURES COURTESY ART SPIEGELMAN

The absolute beginning of *Maus* was actually a short comic Spiegelman produced in 1972 for a commissioned collection edited by cartoonist Justin Green called *Funny Animals*, for which Spiegelman (and other cartoonists) were asked to produce a three-page strip using animals as central characters. The anthropomorphized animal has been a staple of comics and cartoons (with deep roots in the history of art and satirical graphics). A particularly powerful example was Walt Kelly's *Pogo* (a political strip that had a profound influence on *Doonesbury* and *Bloom County*) and, of course, Charles Schultz's Snoopy. While the animal substitute allows for a certain distance, it is also an opportunity to heighten characteristics. It is a risky but potent narrative strategy.

Following an initial idea to deal with racism, Spiegelman developed an intense short story featuring Nazi cats and Jewish mice called *Maus* in response to Green's request. As he has often noted, his choice of mice was a response to the Nazi categorization of Jews as "vermin." In this early comic, the renderings of the characters feel very much of their time and evince the underground comic esthetic of the radical San Francisco counter-culture Spiegelman was immersed in, surrounded by such contemporaries as Robert Crumb and the circle of innovators around Harvey Kurtzman's *MAD* magazine.

When he returned to the *Maus* subject matter, a few years later and after he'd moved back to New York, and began interviewing his father, he reworked the look of the characters. What emerged was graphically stark, high contrast and bold, a clear nod to early modern graphics and image narratives of Lynd Ward, Frans Masereel and German Expressionism. As always, Spiegelman worked with deep admiration for earlier cartoonists, and he has cited Harold Gray's *Little Orphan Annie* as a key influence. In turn, *Maus* would have a profound impact on comics to follow. It would be hard to imagine Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2000), Joe Sacco's award-winning war correspondent reportage (such as *Footnotes in Gaza*, 2009) or Chester Brown's *Louis Riel* (2004), without *Maus*.

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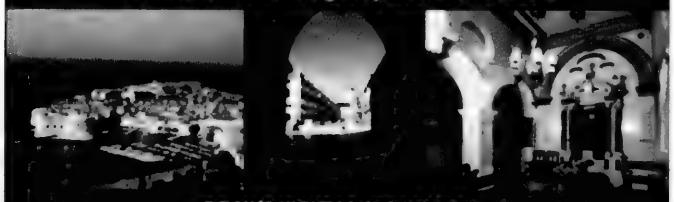

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Made-in-Israel success stories at IDC

Gil Troy

This past semester, I taught in an Israeli university for the first time, teaching American history at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya, while on leave from McGill University. Best known for hosting an annual anti-terrorism conference, the IDC is the Start Up Nation's startup university. This 20-year-old initiative mixes a cutting-edge entrepreneurial spirit with a friendly, communal tone.

The campus characterizes this fusion. The renovated, low, barracks-style buildings in the middle, remnants of the anti-aircraft air force base it was, generate a nice kibbutz-y feeling. New, beautifully maintained buildings surround the older campus, putting modern Israel in conversation with traditional Israel.

This being an Israeli university, for the first time in my teaching career, I had a student whose wife gave birth during the semester. I had another student request a last-minute extension, because a terrorist attack on a Tel Aviv bus keep him busy where he works at the Kirya, the defence headquarters in Tel Aviv.

In a school with 1,700 foreigners from over 80 countries among the 6,500 students, my class sometimes felt like what my mother calls, a "regular United Nations." My small seminar had two French students, one Brit and one Turk, amid the expected mix of North Americans and Israelis. During our final class, the traditional debate about whether elites or the masses should shape foreign policy expanded into a debate about whether wisdom resides with the many or the few. Two Americans questioned the electorate's judgment. We were all moved when our Turkish student discussed democracy's fragility, and the importance of protecting it, given how easily it can be subverted.

The IDC is Israel's first privately funded, not-for-profit institution of higher learning. In the entrepreneurial spirit that courses through the place, significant fundraising has welcomed thousands to the school on scholarships. The Israel at Heart Ethiopian Scholarship Program is particularly impressive. In addition to subsidizing tuition, it coaches Ethiopian-Israelis from freshman year through the post-school job hunt. My friend from Montreal, Michal Cotler-Wunsh, who now works as the school's director of international external relations and is organizing a new IDC outreach initiative in Canada, notes, "Every year, we see kids go from immigrant homes with illiterate parents to jobs at Herzog, Fox, Neeman or other leading Israeli firms, in one generation. It's amazing."

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Operation Moses, the start of this unique non-racist moment in western history when a majority white population willingly, voluntarily, happily brought in tens of thousands of willing black African immigrants, these are the kinds of made-in-Israel success stories IDC represents and the media overlooks. Moreover, the freedom-oriented democratic values the IDC and Israel represent explain the special, growing bond linking Israel with Canada.

On his recent Middle East visit, Foreign Minister John Baird was greeted in Ramallah with a not-so spontaneous demonstration pelting him – and implicitly all Canadians – with shoes and eggs, reflecting Palestinian contempt. The demonstrators – and by extension the Palestinian Authority – were dissing Baird, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Canadian people and the democratic values that unite Israel and Canada.

By contrast, Israelis welcomed Baird warmly. Fulfilling the IDC's old-new vision, Baird's itinerary included high-tech centres and Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda market, known as "the shuk," for a good, old-fashioned falafel.

Just as we should be sure to make the IDC headline about the birth of a new generation of students, not the terrorists who disrupted my student's routine; just as we should make the Israel headline about daily life at the IDC, the shuk and the high-tech world, not the rare violent disruptions; we should make the headline about the Baird visit, the love he felt in Israel, not the hatred he experienced in Ramallah. ■

After Auschwitz

Sara Horowitz

Last week marked 70 years since the liberation of Auschwitz. In Canada, Israel, Europe and the United States, ceremonies marked the end of the torment and murder there. Survivors shared their recollections of that notorious place, and the impact of the traumatic loss of family and community on their subsequent lives.

Because seven decades have passed, living survivors of Auschwitz are overwhelmingly those who were children or adolescents during the war. Many found themselves impossibly bereft, negotiating their freedom without the guidance of parents, support of family, and familiarity of mother tongues and motherlands. The political philosopher Theodor Adorno famously wondered whether "after Auschwitz," can you go on living. Most survivors of Auschwitz and other camps and deportations, did, indeed, go on living, building richly rewarding lives, establishing families and laying new roots.

By "after Auschwitz," a phrase that became popular in postwar thinking about the Shoah, Adorno and others meant not only the nefarious labour and death camp complex near the town of Oswiecim in southern Poland, but the Holocaust in its entirety. And in marking the liberation of that camp and making space to listen to its survivors, we are, by extension, remembering the unbearable toll of the Shoah more broadly, and also the subsequent lives of all who escaped the genocidal net.

The voices of those who were children at the war's end remind us of the chaos and confusion that defined the moment of liberation. Looking at Holocaust survivors today, often surrounded by generations of extended family established after the war, we can forget that liberation was not pure relief, but brought waves of anxious existential questions. Who else is alive and how can I find them? How will I get along alone? Where will I live? What will I live on? Many organizations stepped into the breach and helped resolve those issues. But it's easy to underestimate the disorder and unknowingness of the mid-1940s.

One thing that gives us a sense of those fraught postwar years are the tape-recorded interviews of displaced persons conducted by David Boder, beginning in 1946. Boder, a Latvian-born Jewish American psychologist, visited DP camps in western Europe, preserving his conversations with European Jews from a range of countries using what was then state-of-the-art technology, wire tape recordings.

Boder's audio recordings allow us to hear people whose future lives had not yet been resolved, who did not yet know what would become of them or what had happened to their parents, wives, husbands, siblings and children. We hear how they crisscrossed Europe, looking for the child deposited with non-Jewish neighbours, for the wife reportedly sighted in her hometown. We hear people thinking through where to go and what to do next. We hear raw trauma, and we hear amazing resourcefulness.

We hear, as well, the shock felt by those who did not experience the Shoah themselves, as revelation after revelation surfaced about what the Jews of Europe were subjected to. In one tape, for example, Boder talks with a survivor of Auschwitz who describes the process of selection – the way in which Jews were divided into those who would be used for slave labour and those who would be killed immediately. The speaker describes the line of people walked toward the gas. Boder does not understand the reference. "*Die Gasse*?" he asks? The street? The lane? What street? He does not immediately understand that the speaker has not said "*die Gasse*" but "*das Gas*," the gas. Listening to the tape, we feel his horrified struggle to absorb that information.

About 15 years ago, the Illinois Institute of Technology began the process of digitizing Boder's tapes, eventually putting them online at the Voices of the Holocaust website: http://voices.iit.edu/voices_project. Taken together with the voices of living survivors among us, we see the chaos and bereavement and also the miraculous rebuilding of survival. ■

Justin Trudeau's deplorable comments

Michael Taube

We live in difficult times. Vicious terrorist groups like ISIS, al-Qaeda and Boko Haram threaten our safety and security. Last year's tragic Ottawa shootings stunned the entire nation. The senseless murders at the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*'s building, followed by two hostage situations, shocked everyone who truly believes in democracy, liberty and freedom.

It's at times like these that we expect our leaders to make strong statements to ensure that the wars, conflicts and political battles were not fought in vain. To ensure that the principles and values we cherish will be defended at all costs. To ensure our way of life will not be threatened by the totalitarian states, rogue nations and terrorist thugs who seek to destroy it.

In my view, that's what makes Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's recent comments about Canadian military action downright deplorable.

Trudeau was recently in London, Ont., to attend a Liberal party caucus. While in town, he engaged with local media – as most political leaders do – to drum up support.

In particular, he had an interview with AM 980 radio host Andrew Lawton. For those who aren't familiar with Lawton, he's a young, intelligent and well-spoken conservative pundit. He's quickly established his name and reputation with strong political positions and religious convictions (Christian, and firmly pro-Israel), thoughtful commentary, and solid writing and speaking skills.

For a while, the interview was uneventful. The radio host threw out typical questions, and the Liberal leader provided straightforward and/or predictable answers.

Until they moved into the issue of war and military action. Take a look at this exchange.

Andrew Lawton: So, under what circumstances as prime minister would [military action] be warranted in your eyes?

Justin Trudeau: I think it's warranted if there is a reasonable chance of success, if there's a way that Canada can offer expertise the rest of the world is unable to provide.

Andrew Lawton: Just to clarify, are you saying there's no chance of success with the fight against ISIS?

Justin Trudeau: Oh, I'm saying, this is going to be a very long, long challenge against ISIS, and Canada's role in engaging with that needs to be best suited to what we can do better than other countries.

Read it again. Trudeau, if he ever became prime minister, would send the Canadian military into battle only if he thought they could win. When Lawton gave him a second chance to clarify his statement, he dug the hole a bit deeper.

I'm a fiscal and social conservative. I have no love for the political left, including the Liberals. Yet, I can't think of any previous Liberal leader who would have ever said or believed such a foolish thing.

Would Trudeau have stayed out of the War of 1812 and World Wars I and II? All of those wars were before his time, but there was no guarantee of a "reasonable chance of success" in any instance.

Would Trudeau have enacted the War Measures Act during the FLQ crisis in October 1970? His father knew there was a huge risk, and it could have been unsuccessful. Yet, he went through with it. The son would have cowered during this difficult moment.

Let's also consider it from a Jewish perspective.

Would Trudeau have agreed to send in troops to help Jews escape from the Nazi concentration camps? Would he have fought off the enemies of the State of Israel? Or, if he was hypothetically the French prime minister, would he have sent in the military to break up the Hyper Cacher kosher market hostage situation if the police had been unsuccessful?

You get my point.

We don't fight wars and conflicts that we could win. We fight them to win.

That's really not hard to figure out, Justin. What is hard to figure out is why anyone still has faith in your political leadership. ■

Michael Taube is a Washington Times *columnist, and a former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.*

A bus tour that teaches tolerance to young people

Avi Benlolo

Following the recent terror attacks at the kosher supermarket and the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris, there seems to be a slow but inevitable awakening among western media to the reality of terrorism, and how it is gradually and insidiously infecting democratic societies. I hope this long overdue recognition will lead to an eventual change in the West's response to terror. But I am not holding my breath.

At Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC), our work is grounded in the lessons and legacy of the Holocaust, and the understanding that hatred can have tragic and horrific consequences. We cannot wait for the hatred that underlies terrorism to dissipate on its own. We must create the circumstances that foster the opposite of hatred: tolerance, respect, understanding, and a deep and abiding reverence for the values of freedom, democracy and human rights.

This is why we have developed a series of workshops devoted to teaching students and community leaders about the Holocaust, genocide, bullying, leadership and heroes. To bring these workshops beyond the Greater Toronto Area, we built a mobile classroom called the Tour for Humanity. It was launched at the end of 2013 and has, to date, visited more than 100 elementary and secondary schools, and provided programs to over 50,000 students across Ontario – from Niagara Region to Ottawa and all points in between. Importantly, 99 per cent of respondents surveyed agree the Tour for Humanity is useful in promoting awareness of important issues such as racism, tolerance and human rights

As anti-Semitism continues to rise, the Tour for Humanity provides an alternate viewpoint to impressionable young people. Dorothy Shoichet, one of the Tour for Humanity's major supporters, has noted, "In today's world reality, the Tour for Humanity stands out as one of the most creative and principled ideas for fighting anti-Semitism. In my many years of dealing with anti-Semitism, I have not come across an idea which has more potential for success than this travelling bus, which will target young minds before they are polluted by intolerance and racism."

To my knowledge we are the only organization committed to outreach to diverse populations on this scale. Every day we meet with students from a cross section of the communities that make up our multicultural province – including Mennonites, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Jews and others – as we deliver content focused on the Holocaust, genocide and heroes to communities eager to hear our message of tolerance and respect for diversity. Our workshop on the Canadian experience, highlighting Canada's less-than-perfect past in dealing with native and immigrant communities, is in high demand.

I am thrilled with the achievements of the Tour for Humanity, and believe its continued success speaks to a profound need for more education on the civic values which define our society and country. The ubiquitous nature of technology has brought our global village closer together, with a resulting clash of values and belief systems. The beliefs of those who would force their ideologies on others through violence and terror have a willing audience. Tour for Humanity is the counterpoint, providing a narrative of optimism, and the conviction that everyone has the potential to make a positive difference in the world.

Like the Nazi ideology that preceded it, terrorism has sparked a global war it cannot win. History has proven time and again that respect, compassion and a profound belief in freedom will always triumph over tyranny and hate. This conviction informs the work of the Tour for Humanity.

As western leaders are drawn unwillingly into a battle they would rather avoid, I remain committed to following the advice of Anne Frank, whose wisdom continues to inspire students in the Tour for Humanity classroom: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." ■

Avi Benlolo is president and CEO, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

News

Shoah, Auschwitz liberation marked in Ottawa

JORDANNA TENNEBAUM
SPECIAL TO THE CJN OTTAWA

Leading dignitaries commemorated International Holocaust Remembrance Day Jan. 27 at Ottawa City Hall, along with Holocaust survivors and more than 300 guests who gathered to observe the annual event, which this year coincided with the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp.

Organizer Floralove Katz focused from the outset not only on remembering the horrors that transpired during the Shoah, but also on their enduring legacy. "Anti-Judaism has witnessed an unprecedented world growth spurt of about 30 per cent in the past year," Katz said.

B'nai Brith Canada CEO Michael Mostyn shared Katz's sentiment, emphasizing the importance of remembering one of the darkest chapters in human history and noting the growing numbers of anti-Semitic incidents.

"A new and insidious form of hatred has taken root... Jews are once again being murdered simply for being Jewish. We saw this in Jerusalem, where four rabbis and a Druze policeman were butchered," Mostyn said, referring to the November attack in the Israeli capital's Har Nof neighbourhood.

Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak connected those deaths with recent events in Paris in which four Jewish hostages were killed at a kosher supermarket.

"Ten years ago, the United Nations passed a resolution declaring Jan. 27 as the international day to commemorate the Holocaust... Seventy years after the liberation of Auschwitz, anti-Semitism has not disappeared from the streets of Europe," Barak said.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka listens as retired Ottawa Cantor Moshe Kraus recites a prayer on Parliament Hill. HOWARD SANDLER PHOTO

In response to these and other attacks worldwide, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said Canada must work to implement the Ottawa Protocol to Combat Anti-Semitism, an international inter-parliamentary action plan signed in 2011 by the government of Canada. The document aims to eliminate anti-Semitic activity, which it views as an international threat to the Jewish People as a whole.

Federal Minister of Employment, Social Development and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney also reaffirmed a continued commitment to the Ottawa Protocol, as well as the need to remember the Holocaust.

"Elie Wiesel, the great chronicler of the Holocaust, wrote that, 'For us, forgetting was never an option'... so today, we as Canadians join together with representatives of governments of all faiths to remember in this moral act," Kenney said.

He reiterated the urgency of remembrance at a Parliament Hill assembly later in the day, where the March of the Living Digital Archives Project screened its latest production, titled *Auschwitz-Birkenau: 70 Years After Liberation: A Warning to Future Generations*. The short film incorporates the voices of students and five Canadian survivors who reflect on the 70th anniversary of the release of Jewish prisoners from Auschwitz-Birkenau.

"As time passes and as we mourn the passing of many members of the generation that witnessed and survived the Nazi era, it has become even more imperative for moral societies like ours to remain firm in that commitment to memory," Kenney said.

He was joined by Canada's Ambassador for Religious Freedom Andrew Bennett, British High Commissioner to Canada Howard Drake and Rabbi Reuven Bulka of Ottawa's Congregation Machzikei Hadas. Together the guests listened to March of the Living participant, University of Ottawa student Jaclyn Friedlich, who vowed to preserve stories of the Holocaust for future generations.

"It is the responsibility of my generation to keep history alive and ensure that the hatred and intolerance that led to the atrocities of the Holocaust are never repeated," Friedlich said.

The commemoration finished with the Canadian and Israeli national anthems and a candlelighting service honouring the lives of all those who died during the Shoah.

The House of Commons also observed the commemoration as all parties participated in a moment of silence and issued statements marking Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.■

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Solutions have to be systemic and ongoing

One in four women experiences domestic abuse in their lifetime, and it occurs among Jews at the same rate as in the community at large

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Diane Sasson

For more than 25 years, Penny Krowitz has been heading Toronto's shelter for abused Jewish women and working tirelessly to advocate for victims of domestic abuse.

But she wishes she didn't have to.

"In 1989, we opened the first kosher shelter in Toronto for abused Jewish women. It is open to this day. We'd like to close it, but unfortunately, we can't," said Krowitz, executive director of the non-profit organization Act To End Violence Against Women (ATEVAW).

Krowitz and other service providers across the country who work on behalf of Jewish domestic abuse victims said raising awareness and working toward lasting solutions is the only way to eradicate domestic abuse.

"We are very committed to education and awareness. It is an important point because, for most people in our community, they don't believe it happens to us," Krowitz said.

According to the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, one in four women experience domestic abuse during their lifetime, and abuse occurs in the Jewish community at the same rate as in the community at large.

Janice Shaw, Jewish Family & Child's York Region direct service manager, said we can't hope to solve a problem without acknowledging it first.

"At any given time, we have approximately 300 and some odd cases open... for every one that closes, three open sometimes... In spite of it all, there is still a myth that Jewish men are not abusive. And clearly our services and other services indicate that this is not that case," Shaw said.

"It is very important that there is lots of outreach and communication amongst Jewish leaders in different capacities in schools, in shuls, etc."

JF&CS runs a synagogue outreach program to encourage rabbis to speak to their congregants about the issue, and Krowitz also sees the value in using Jewish community leaders as a resource.

"I want to set up meetings with several rabbis in the Conservative movement, in the Orthodox movement, the Reform movement and go talk to them one on one about the issue and what they can do if they have a woman in their congregation who comes to them," Krowitz said.

"We would encourage... rabbis to do a sermon about it because the minute the rabbi does a sermon about it, he gives credibility to the issue."

Diane Sasson, executive director of Auberge Shalom Pour Femmes, Montreal's kosher women's shelter, also thinks having community leaders speaking out on the issue is part of the solution.

She said that over the past 15 years, she has noticed that Jewish leaders are more receptive to the goals of her organization.

Sasson referred to an article in *La Voix Sépharade*, a Quebec-based Jewish magazine, which highlighted religious sources to show how Judaism is meant to protect women from violence and abuse.

"We need to use the sources we have in our community, and we need to use those positive sources and really try to protect women and honour what we're supposed to honour," she said.

"We have the tools to work with, Jewishly, and I think our leaders and our rabbis need to speak about it, need to know it exists, need to talk about it, need to make internal policies in the synagogues."

Shaw agrees that for real, measurable progress to be made, the solutions have to be "more systemic than clinical.

"Overall, we really need to start educating, not only our daughters, but our sons, much, much earlier on about acceptable behaviour. And that's the systemic piece, and that's across the board. The same message needs to be given across the board."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

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Air, rail and security on Raitt's Israel agenda

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It didn't take long for the recently initialled transportation agreements between Canada and Israel to pay off.

Sometime last week, at a location that can't be revealed, people in the security field, or maybe not, took part in an exercise that can be considered security-related, or maybe not, to prepare against threats that may or may not have to do with transportation.

At least, that's what can be gleaned from reading between the lines of an interview with federal Transportation Minister Lisa Raitt, fresh from a recent visit to Israel.

She was part of a delegation of Canadian officials, including Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, who signed several agreements enhancing commercial and security relationship between the two countries.

The agreements initialled by Raitt include an air transport agreement, a declaration of intent on aviation security and a memorandum of understanding on transportation. The deals were signed less than a year after Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited Israel and concluded a memorandum of understanding that contemplated further agreements to enhance trade and other relations.

Raitt was reluctant to reveal too much about security co-operation, but did acknowledge that "there was a security exercise carried out and Canada and Israel both took part in it. It was with our officials from Transport Canada in a real-time situation. I can't tell you what the exercise was, but I can tell you it did happen and it's that kind of co-operation that the second agreement that we signed will help facilitate and draw us all closer together."

Was the exercise in Canada?

"I can't tell you."

Staying on the security theme, Raitt said she visited the port of Ashdod and saw how security was balanced with "the need to be productive. Fascinating to see how technology is being used."

"There's a lot there our ports can learn from," and Israel can also learn from processes at the port of Vancouver, she said.

Rail was another area of transportation that was discussed during her visit. "People [in Israel] want to see mass transit though rail," she said.

Her visit took her to Sderot, near the Gaza border, where she toured a fortified train station. "It's interesting to see that every facet of your life, including transportation, you have to think about security," Raitt said. "We're getting to a place here in Canada where we have to think about security more and more as well. We're not immune. This terrorism is hitting all shores, and we have to make sure we don't take it lightly. We need to do what we can."

Raitt also met with representatives of Bombardier, "which has a great book of business in Israel," she said.

The air transport agreement could see more commercial flights between the countries, Raitt continued. It "allows for greater flexibility for flights from Tel Aviv to Canada in general, and from Canada to Tel Aviv. That was important, as we know there can be greater demand for air travel back and forth. We're liberalizing and making it easier to do so."

She said more direct flights to Israel from other Canadian cities would depend on the airlines and whether the flights are warranted. "I know there's a lot of interest in a Montreal flight. Our purpose is to make sure we've opened up greater flexibility for carriers to provide those services."

Raitt said she visited an Israel Aerospace Industries facility and discussed its development of drones, adding there may be Canadian applications for the unmanned aerial vehicles, "utilizing them... for the northern part of our country, in terms of observing spills, if there are any, and doing search and rescue."

Lisa Raitt gives Israeli Transport Minister Yisrael Katz a jersey from Canada's world junior championship team.

Raitt was impressed with the vitality of Israel high-tech industry. "We ended up going to visit a start-up place, an area where people with small start-up companies go to get help to get them off the ground," she said. "And the energy, the entrepreneurship and the innovation that is happening is fascinating. That is an area we can certainly learn from in Canada and it's something we should welcome investment in and investment back, too."

Raitt's visit to Israel was her second. In 2004, she was part of a UJA mission, that focused in large part on the security challenges facing Israel at the time. ■

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B'nai Brith's *Jewish Tribune* suspends print edition

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The *Jewish Tribune*, a weekly newspaper published by B'nai Brith Canada, announced Jan. 29 that it would be suspending production of its print edition.

Sam Eskenasi, a B'nai Brith spokesperson, said "the *Jewish Tribune* will be temporarily suspending publication of its print edition, but continue with its online offerings to re-examine the best ways the print edition can service the community. During this phase, the *Tribune* will continue to offer top notch content on their website at www.jewishtribune.ca.

"This decision was made by the *Tribune* management with the best interest of the paper in mind, and readers will be updated with information as soon as it becomes available."

According to *JTA*, the suspension of the print edition will last 13 weeks.

Frank Dimant, former B'nai Brith CEO and publisher of the *Tribune*, who stepped down last fall after 36 years as head of the Jewish advocacy organization and was replaced by Michael Mostyn, said he was saddened when he heard the news.

"I'm always saddened when any institution in the Jewish community ceases to operate, even for a little time. I'm hopeful they will be able to restructure, because I believe that multiple opinions in the community that are legitimate have a place," he said.

Dimant said that the newspaper, which was originally called *The Covenant*, has been in print since 1964. It has been known as the *Jewish Tribune* for about 20 years.

A number of community newspapers in Ontario have suffered a similar fate over the past few years, citing financial difficulties due to a lack of advertising revenue.

In 2013, the *Town Crier*, a chain of community newspapers serving several Toronto neighbourhoods, announced that it would be suspending publication of its newspapers indefinitely. The *Corriere Canadese*, an Italian-language paper and one of Canada's oldest community publications, also suspended its operations in 2013.

In April of that year, *The CJN* announced that it would be shutting its doors, citing financial difficulties due to a drop in advertising and subscriptions, but an outcry from the Jewish community spurred *CJN* management to restructure and redesign the paper. Production resumed a few months later.

Commenting on the Tribune's suspension of its print edition, Suanne Kelman, professor emeritus of journalism at Ryerson University, said, "As a journalist, I'm concerned about our problems finding viable business models for traditional media. As a Jew, I find it sad that the sense of community seems to have declined so rapidly."

Efforts to reach Mostyn by *The CJN*'s deadline were unsuccessful. ■

The newspaper has been in print since 1964.

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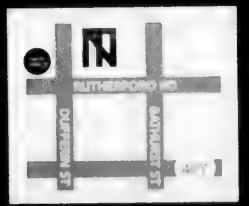

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Art Gallery of Ontario

Shoah memorial likely returning to Halifax's Pier 21

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The search for a home for the Wheel of Conscience may be over.

The museum piece, designed to remind spectators that in 1939, Canada turned away the MS St. Louis and its 937 passengers fleeing the Nazis, may be returning to its old home at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax.

Bernie Farber, former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, said Jan. 27 "the museum is taking it back."

"It's going to be given pride of place, recognizing how important this is to Canada."

But Martin Sampson, director of communications for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said it's a little premature to say the Wheel of Conscience is going back to Pier 21. "The partners working on this are not ready" to confirm that, he said. "We're very encouraged, but discussions are still ongoing. We're not ready to make a final announcement yet."

For the past few months, the Wheel of Conscience has been housed in a warehouse owned by its fabricators, Soheil Mosun Limited, where it was shipped for repairs.

Last November, museum CEO Marie Chapman said the sculpture had been prone to breakdowns. A black dust formed on its gears and a burning smell arises from it.

Nate Leipciger with the sculpture at the Soheil Mosun factory in Toronto in November 2014

Farber said "It's working perfectly now. There's absolutely nothing wrong with it."

Farber credited a campaign by Holocaust survivors, including Canadian Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Descendants, and senior government officials, with influencing the apparent decision to restore the wheel to what he called its rightful place at Pier 21. The survivors group was sent an email this week saying the Wheel will return to the Halifax-based museum.

"I feel very strongly that it should stay in Halifax at Pier 21," said Nate Leipciger, a survivor of Auschwitz and past co-president of the survivors group.

It was designed with that venue in mind and "the government agreed to commemorate [the St. Louis] at Pier 21, so that's where it should stay," he said.

Last November, news reports indicated the wheel had been in storage in Toronto since the summer and that Halifax's salt air might have been contributing to its frequent breakdowns. An alternate venue for the exhibit was being contemplated.

But Farber rejected suggestions the sculpture could be housed elsewhere.

"It belongs at Pier 21," he said. "It is the only public symbol of Holocaust remembrance in the country."

"I am very hopeful it is going to go back. There are still some details to be worked out," Sampson said.

In 1939, the Canadian government refused to allow the St. Louis to land at Pier 21. The governments of Cuba and the United States also turned it away. The ship was forced to return to Europe, where its passengers were disembarked in a number of countries. It's estimated that 254 of them were killed in the Holocaust.

Canadian Jewish Congress spearheaded an effort to commemorate the historical incident. It obtained a $500,000 grant from the government of Canada and commissioned renowned architect Daniel Libeskind, himself the child of survivors, to design the piece. The sculpture was installed at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax in 2011.

The museum is currently undergoing renovations and expansion. It is expected to reopen in May. ■

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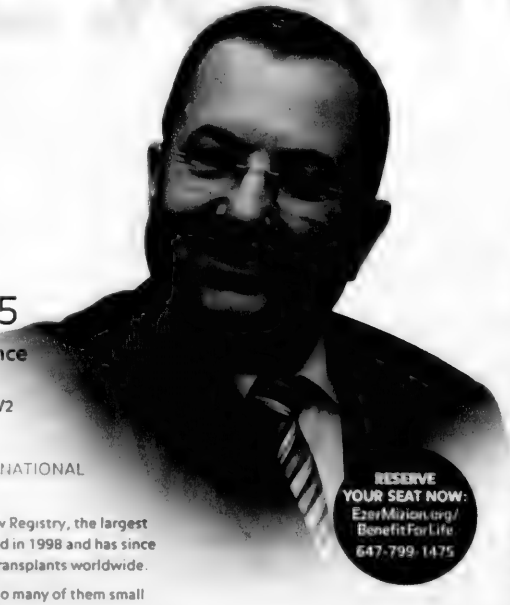

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CJN Zeifmans

Toronto couple honoured by NCSY for their dedication

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

David Woolf remembers being 21 years old and taking a job, along with his wife, Fran, teaching Jewish studies and Hebrew at the Talmud Torah in Windsor, Ont., where he was doing an MBA.

"We were newly married," Woolf said, "and somebody there advertised an NCSY Shabbaton happening in Cleveland. NCSY [the international youth movement of the Orthodox Union] wasn't doing much at the time in Canada. So we went, and were blown away by the informal education that was happening there at a much faster rate than we could do formally in the classroom, in terms of making kids proud of their Judaism and heritage."

Some 50 years later, David and Fran Woolf are being honoured by NCSY at its 20th annual Ben Zakkai Honor Society's national scholarship reception, Feb. 8, at New York City's Jewish Heritage Museum.

The Fran and David Woolf Legacy Fund, which will provide scholarships for NCSY programs, will be inaugurated at the reception, and the Woolfs will receive the Enid and Harold H. Boxer Memorial Award, named after the original NCSY founders.

David and Fran Woolf

In a statement released by NCSY Canada, the couple is being recognized for their "lifetime of dedication to the Jewish future."

In 1971, after moving from Windsor back to Toronto, where both grew up, the couple worked to help establish Toronto as a full-time region of NCSY, which was founded in the United States in 1954 and divided into different geographic regions throughout North America, and to contribute to the expansion of NCSY Canada, which now spans the country.

They helped develop programs including Torah High, which offers Jewish studies courses for Jewish public school students.

"There were some programs [in Toronto] but it wasn't a full-time, dedicated operation," David said. "We took it to the next level... [NCSY Canada] has become much bigger than we thought — and has had a tremendous effect on teenagers – a very difficult time in one's life to address things like heritage."

David, who worked for 36 years as a sales manager for Royal Group Technologies, became chairman of the board of NCSY Canada, a post he recently retired from, after 40 years.

Rabbi Glenn Black, CEO of NCSY Canada, referred to the Woolfs as "pioneers in the kiruv [outreach] movement... In all walks of life, they have clearly demonstrated their devotion to traditional Jewish values, and they stand as exceptional role models to our young people."

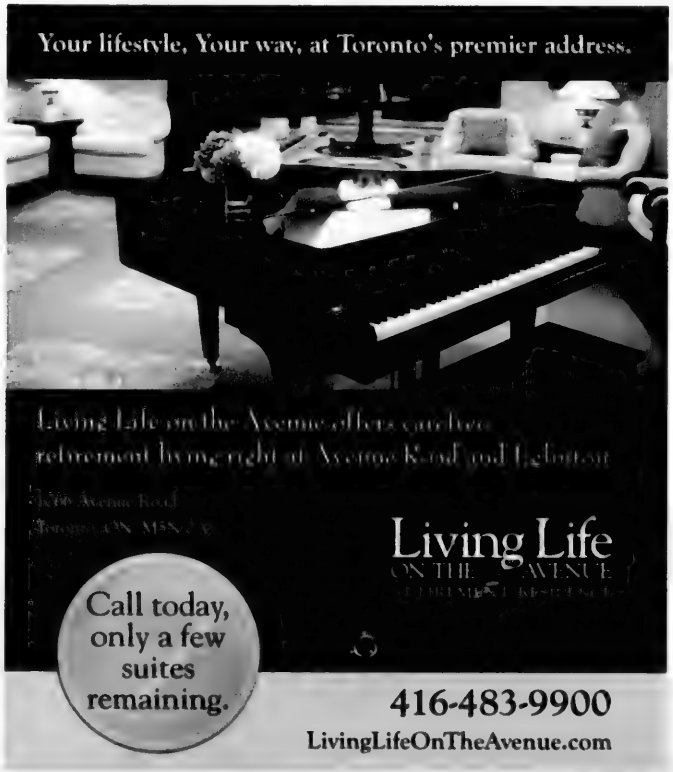
David, who was born in England and came to Canada in 1950 with his parents, attended Eitz Chaim Schools, Ner Israel Yeshiva and William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute, and did his undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto.

His involvement with the Jewish community has included a tenure as vice-president of the board of JF&CS in the mid 1970s, executive board membership at COR and active involvement at his synagogue, Congregation B'nai Torah.

Fran, who was born to Holocaust survivors in the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp, attended Associated Hebrew Schools and The Anne and Max Tanenbuam Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

She subsequently worked as a teacher in the Windsor public schools system and at the Talmud Torah in Windsor's Shaar Hashomayim Congregation. She has also taught cooking classes through COR kosher certification and at Ulpanat Orot High School, as well as privately.

"It's sort of humbling," David said of their being honoured. "We did work hard, but we weren't the only ones doing it. It's a big honour for us that they've singled us out, and if it's a way to encourage others to get involved and work toward a goal, then it's worth it." ■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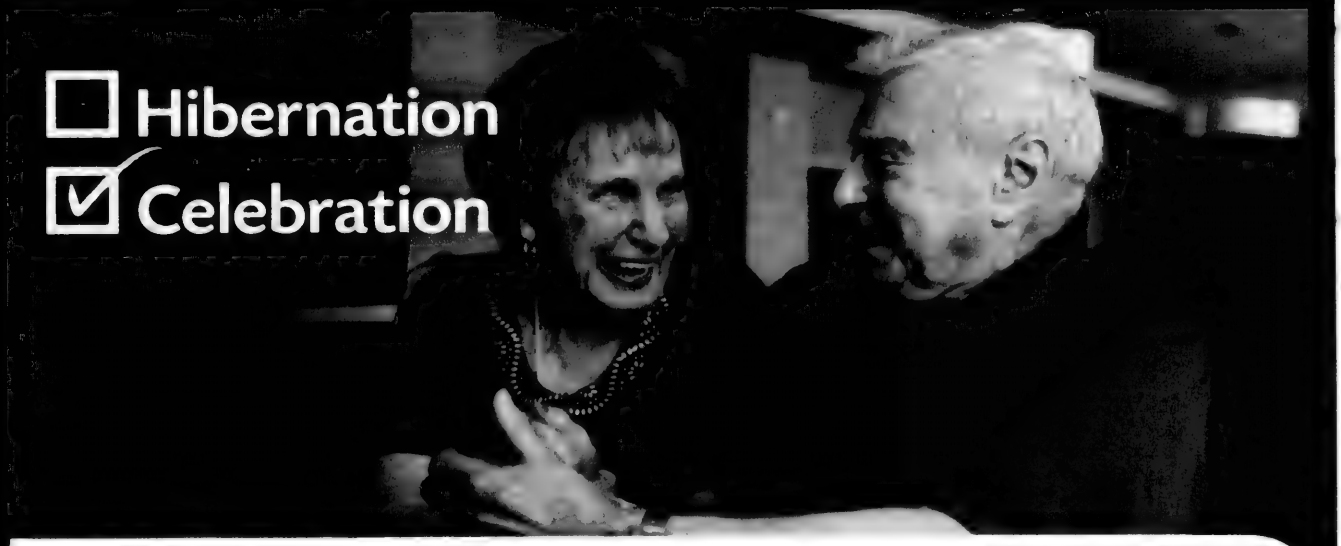

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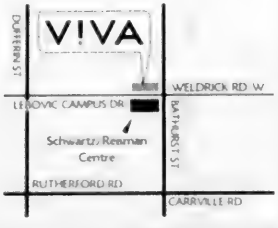

UNBUNDLING: IS IT SAVING MONEY OR PERFORMING SELF-SURGERY?

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

Sisyphus is a figure of Greek mythology who was condemned to repeat forever the same meaningless task of pushing a boulder up a mountain, only to see it roll down again.

A spouse who seeks justice from Ontario's Family Courts often feels like Sisyphus, except at least the Greek hero didn't have to cash in his/her RRSPs to fund legal fees in order to roll up that boulder. The Judges are not at fault. They work very hard for a system that is overtaxed, often with people that come to them without legal representation and without the assistance of a sufficient number of other Family Law judges to share the caseload. For instance, in Newmarket Family Court, there are now fewer Judges than ever to handle what appears to be an increasing case load.

So Sisyphus just keeps pushing that boulder when a competent lawyer might have dissuaded him not to bother or to have it settled on reasonable terms given the lawyer's knowledge that Sisyphus doesn't possess. Many simply can't afford any lawyer and don't qualify for legal aid. We need to find a solution to help such people without forcing them to represent themselves. Duty counsel currently can only provide limited assistance at first appearances. Then again, there are others who can afford a lawyer but would rather buy a nicer looking car or take a trip to Vegas than retain experienced counsel. These are the self-represented litigants who waste the Court's time with their lack of legal knowledge and procedure.

Alternatively, many have now turned to a new fad called "*unbundling of services*." Moreover, the Court's Rules have recently changed to permit "limited retainers" to permit such practices. So what is 'unbundling' of services" actually mean? In short, if you don't have all the money needed to hire a lawyer you retain him (or her) for part of the work you can't do yourself, such as legal research or having the lawyer in court speak on your behalf once or twice, but not for the whole case. Or you might just hire this professional for advice and to draft all the paperwork, while you actually represent yourself in open court. With the right counsel, unbundling can save a litigant a great deal of money. However problems have come up. Many people can be given written materials prepared by a lawyer, including a book of cases (legal precedents) and written legal principles to argue, but then not have the foggiest idea how to present them or how to defend themselves when challenged by the Court or opposing counsel. Court can be a frightening experience to someone who is not legally trained. It can be akin to being given a scalpel to some and told to conduct surgery on oneself after being given a few diagrams. Then again, certain articulate clients may feel quite comfortable and competent to present their own arguments, especially if the matter is straightforward. I wouldn't judge all such cases and have seen both disaster and successful results. Secondly, if you are only having a lawyer speak on your behalf on one or two occasions, there are so many limitation periods, time traps, rules of procedure, and mandatory filing requirements that the layman must obtain a great deal of advice beyond hiring the lawyer to speak. So is unbundling a good idea? It may be a very risky way to proceed. It is always better to retain competent counsel.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit

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Veteran journalist says Mideast reporting can be unreliable

PAUL LUNGEN
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Mark Lavie spent 40 years as a journalist in the Middle East, including two years living in Egypt, and he suggests consumers of the media should be cautious about accepting at face value what they read or hear.

There are big stories that go untold, as reporters pursue a narrative that more readily fits their worldview, and there are intimidation and threats that prevent full reporting from trouble spots like Gaza and the West Bank. What you get is not necessarily what's really happening in these regions, he said.

Lavie, who has worked as a radio correspondent for CBC, Associated Press (AP) and NBC-Mutual Radio, is retired and living in Israel. But in his long career, he's seen it all: how journalists are threatened not to report items that might embarrass Hamas, and how they ignore important stories.

Reporters covering the Middle East, for instance, often adopt a good guy/bad guy narrative. The Palestinians are seen as the underdog, and hence the good guys, and the Israelis are left with the role of bad guy. It takes a strong-willed reporter to put that view aside, he said.

In addition, Hamas makes it clear that journalists might not be safe if they cross certain lines. Journalists in Gaza have been kidnapped, and during last summer's Operation Protective Edge, Hamas thugs visited *AP* and "tore up the office" after a rocket attack was launched from next door. "The message was very clear."

Few western news agencies reported on rocket attacks from civilian areas, even though reporters knew what was happening. Almost everyone was on board with the Palestinian narrative that only civilians were casualties of Israeli attacks, he said.

Lavie said during the conflict, cameras outside al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza filmed civilians as they were brought in for treatment. But the had to stop recording when Hamas military personnel were brought in.

Illustrating how the media can skew a narrative in one direction, Lavie noted how *AP* ran a story 16 times about an Orthodox Israeli woman being seated in the back of a bus, but ignored the widespread "oppression" of women in Egypt.

He pointed to incidents of sexual harassment, "groping and worse," suffered by female employees on their way to work at the *AP* office in Cairo. "In a two-block walk, my colleague faced four [incidents] of harassment," said Lavie, author of *Broken Spring*, a look at the rise and fall of the Arab Spring.

Mark Lavie

Another untold story is the state of the economy in Egypt, which has left 40 per cent of the population living on less than $2 a day, well below the poverty line.

Asked about the upcoming Israeli election, scheduled for March 17, Lavie said it would likely be decided on domestic issues, such as the economy, inequality, the role of the ultra-Orthodox in society and the country's faltering eduction system.

Israelis don't put much stock in negotiations with the Palestinians, especially after two offers for statehood were turned down by the Palestinian leadership, he said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's planned address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress won't hurt his electoral chances, even if it has angered the Barack Obama administration, he said.

"It will help him. Most Israeli people agree with his policy. Most Israelis believe Obama is hostile to Israel, despite evidence to the contrary. They like to see the prime minister flex his muscle."

As for the recent flare-up with Hezbollah, Lavie does not believe it will lead to a wider conflict. "It's clear neither Hezbollah nor its Iran backers want this to spiral out of control," he said. "But you never know. It takes one incident – a rocket attack on a school – and there you go. You're playing with fire, and you never know how it's going to end."

Lavie's Toronto visit was co-ordinated by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. It included a public lecture at Temple Sinai sponsored by CIJA, Temple Sinai and ARZA Canada.

His Toronto visit was part of a larger speaking tour that includes stops in Baltimore, Washington, Michigan State, Kalamazoo College, Fort Wayne and Pasadena. ■

GUEST VOICE

University free speech can be unsettling

Martin Lockshin, Sara R. Horowitz, Michael Brown and Carl S. Ehrlich

Universities are disquieting places. Inevitably, university students hear new and challenging approaches to politics, economics, sexuality and religion that challenge their values.

And that's just from their professors! From classmates, they hear an even wider range of viewpoints, without the filter that most professors employ. As Canadian universities strive to make education accessible to a broader swath of the population, students encounter classmates from segments of society they never met before.

In some schools, such as ours, York University, many are the first in their family to attend university. Others come from families familiar with higher education. In any case, students come to university with diverse sets of values and biases.

No statement by a student or professor reflects the values of the university. In fact, it is difficult to identify the values of any secular university, other than the free exchange of ideas.

A telling example of unsettling free speech on campus was a poorly written and argued editorial entitled "In response to *Charlie Hebdo*" that appeared recently in the York student newspaper, *Excalibur*. The writer decried religious extremism, offensively lumping together "ultra-Orthodox Jews" refusing to sit beside women on airplanes with the "gunmen" (not terrorists, and not identified by religious or ethnic affiliation) who "killed 12 individuals" at the *Charlie Hebdo* weekly. The author also omitted the murder of Jews two days later at the Hyper Cacher, buying food for Shabbat.

What reaction is appropriate to an article like that? The best reaction has already taken place. Current and former York students have written cogent, forceful responses, highlighting the contemptible nature of the editorial. Good speech is the best way to fight bad speech. In fact, web searches for this editorial this week are more likely to yield the students' reactions to the editorial than the editorial itself. That's great!

Can concerned people outside the university do anything to help? There is no simple answer to this question, but some things they *should not do*. They should not ask the university administration to censor the student newspaper. Universities are neither elementary schools nor houses of worship. Authority figures cannot tell students what to write. If the newspaper has not broken the laws of Canada, it is irrelevant that it has broken the standards of good taste. Student newspapers offend regularly all over the world.

Universities are neither elementary schools nor houses of worship. Authority figures cannot tell students what to write. If the newspaper has not broken the laws of Canada, it is irrelevant that it has broken the standards of good taste. Student newspapers offend regularly all over the world.

Nor does it make sense to look for a university in Canada where offensive editorials will not be found.

Anyone who thinks that the student newspaper at York occasionally offends Jews because York is the problem does not realize the extent of antipathy towards Israeli policies, and often toward Israel itself, among young people (mostly non-Jews) in our country. This is a serious problem that cannot be solved by finding another university. Anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment is not concentrated in one location. We ignore that reality at our peril! It gets noticed more here because of York's large cohort of vocal, Israel-friendly students (and faculty) who challenge offending articles, and because of York's location in Toronto. At universities with fewer committed Jews and no large Jewish community nearby, no one sounds the alarm.

Anywhere students go these days, including Israel, they will hear professors and classmates calling Israel an apartheid state, supporting boycotts, divestment and sanctions, and spreading calumnies about Israeli genocide. The most reasonable thing for the community is to encourage students to attend universities where involved Jews, whatever their personal commitments to Judaism and Israel, can find support. At York they can associate with committed, articulate young people who speak up for a variety of Jewish causes. Students can't avoid discomfort by studying in the hinterland. There they'll encounter the same anti-Zionism without a critical mass of pro-Israel students with whom to associate, and without the infrastructure of Jewish life available at York (a kosher restaurant, close relations with Israeli universities, Jewish studies, and many Jewish faculty members involved with the community). That would certainly not serve the best interests of the Jewish community.

Differing, free-wheeling – and sometimes deeply offensive – ideas are among the challenges of university life. They are also great benefits to students. They help them sharpen ideas and learn to defend their positions to people who think differently or who have not yet formed an opinion – things we all must do in a free and diverse country. ■

Michael Brown, Martin Lockshin, Sara R. Horowitz and Carl S. Ehrlich have all served as directors of the Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York.

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Video project links Hamilton kids to Jews worldwide

HOLLY GINSLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, HAMILTON

In an effort to nurture a strong connection to Judaism among its congregational school students, Temple Anshe Shalom in Hamilton has started a "Jewish Video Pen Project."

This year's theme for all student activities at the synagogue has been "building strong Jewish identities," so Laura Wolfson, the temple's educator, decided to look for a unique initiative that would help answer the question of what it takes to do just that.

"I started thinking about what it means for a child to have a Jewish identity and to understand herself or himself as a Jew in the 21st century," Wolfson says.

As part of the Jewish Video Pen Pal Project, students in grades 3 to 7 made a video tour of the shul, which included short interviews with spiritual leader Rabbi Jordan Cohen and with each other describing their experiences being Jewish in Hamilton, Ont., and being part of the 350-member temple.

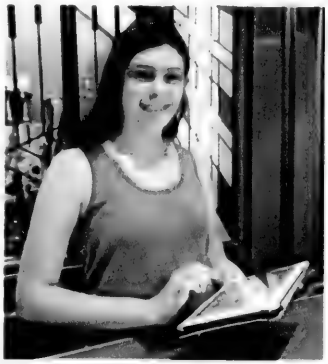
One of the shul's teens edited the various interviews together into an 11-minute video and uploaded it to YouTube with a private link. Wolfson then sent email invitations to other synagogues around the world inviting them to participate in the pen pal project.

Although the actual filming by the children was done over two days using iPads, the script-writing took about three weeks. The 20 children who took part – out of a total of 55 kids in the temple's twice-weekly congregational school – worked on the project during their Wednesday-afternoon classes.

They wrote the scripts with these questions in mind: what would they like to show visually about Temple Anshe Sholom for people who've never been there, and what kind of questions should they ask each other as part of the video?

The children were divided up into pairs – each with one child from an older grade and one from a younger grade – to film the various tours. Each pair filmed a different part of the tour: there was the sanctuary, the chapel, the classrooms, the auditoriums, each other, and, of course, the rabbi.

Wolfson found other Hebrew schools to participate in the project by looking on the World Union for Progressive Judaism's website, which lists all the liberal synagogues outside North America. She sent emails to synagogues in South Africa, Great Britain, Ireland and Australia to join the project. She also invited Hebrew schools in eastern and western Canada to take part and ended up with a connection in Halifax, and she's currently working on one with Vancouver.



Hannah Byrne-Wolfson uses an iPad to film the Jewish Video Pen Pal project.

There are also interested Hebrew schools in Portland, Oregon, Philadelphia, and Michigan. These cities have received Temple Anshe Sholom's video and will be sending back their own this month. As well, the temple recently received its first pen pal video from Cape Town, South Africa.

She asked her students to critique their own video and suggest what they might film for the next one. The students said they could record some of their activities, such as classroom work, singing and services, as well as introduce their teachers.

"Another thing that I would like to see come out of this is for the kids to do more research about the temple, about what goes on in the temple," Wolfson says. "I would like them to know that there is a board and committees and a wide range of activities that happen in the temple, aside from their religious school. We have a very rich history, and there is so much more that they could learn about that as a result of doing this project."

Wolfson hopes the pen pal project can become an annual thing – for example, there could be Chanukah videos and Purim videos going back and forth each year.

"I want these children to have a strong sense of themselves as Jews, and that's a much bigger project than just teaching them Hebrew prayers and the customs of all our holidays and how we mark lifecycle events." ■

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GUEST VOICE

Joseph Rotman's gifts to our country will endure

The following is excerpted from Gov. Gen. David Johnston's eulogy delivered last Friday in Toronto at the funeral of businessman and philanthropist Joseph Rotman.

DAVID JOHNSTON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Joe Rotman and I first met while I was serving as president of the University of Waterloo. He was representing the Rotman School of Management which, with his support, was well on its way from being a good business school to becoming an extraordinary one.

I quickly realized that one of the secrets to the school's success was Joe's ability to identify, support and mentor great leaders—people like Roger Martin, and later, Tiff Macklem and Amit Chakma.

Joe understood that an organization, much like a country, is about people, and that success means surrounding yourself with the most creative, motivated, compassionate and talented people you can find.

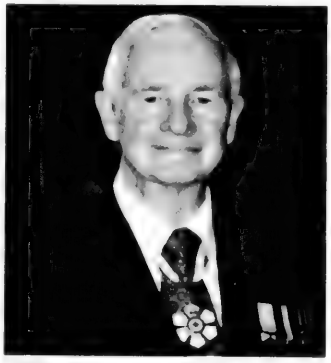
Joe was passionate about so many causes: education, innovation, the arts, business, health care and many charitable endeavours. I think of Proverbs 18:15: "The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge."

His competence was so broad that he was able to contribute wisely to each of them. He was truly a man for all seasons.

But Joe would be the first to admit that he only achieved the great heights that he did because of his capacity to recruit others to the cause. He was dedicated to his work, and his ability to communicate his passion to others convinced them to get involved and give their time, talent and resources. He would fondly describe this approach as "venture philanthropy."

It's a lesson that I have taken to heart in my own life and work, and I know the same is true for many others.

When I consider the strength of Canada today, I see Joe's influence reflected in so many ways. As a philanthropist, he gave generously of his time, his talent and his treasure. His commitment to education benefited a number of institutions, including the University of Toronto and Western University, where he served as chancellor until his passing.



David Johnston

I know his absence will be felt in those organizations in which he was actively involved, including the Canada Council for the Arts, where he had served as chair since 2008.

He once said: "Supporting the arts is supporting the vitality of this country," a statement which reflected the richness of his understanding. He knew an organization, a community, a country thrives best when a diversity of voices are expressed and heard and when we are able to "see things whole," as E.B. White put it.

This perspective is what made Joe such a valued member of the advisory council for the Order of Canada. He himself was invested as an Officer of the Order in 1995 as a true exemplar of its motto: *Desiderantes meliorem patriam* – They desire a better country.

When we look at his life, we see Joe epitomized beautifully what it means to be both smart and caring. He lived these principles every day through his actions and his commitment to the common good.

When I think of Joe, I think of the old proverb: "Blessed is the man who plants a tree knowing he will not be there to enjoy its shade."

Joe Rotman was that man, and his gifts to our country will endure. He was a great leader, colleague, philanthropist, friend and family member. He will be missed by many. ■

David Johnston is Governor General of Canada.

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Joseph Rotman was noted philanthropist, businessman

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Joseph Rotman UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Joseph and Sandra Rotman YOUTUBE SCREEN SHOT

Notable Jewish businessman and philanthropist Joseph Rotman passed away Jan. 27 at age 80.

Rotman, born in Toronto in 1935, was most widely known for his affiliation with the business school of his alma mater, the University of Toronto, of which he was the chief benefactor, donating some $42 million to the school. It was renamed the Rotman School of Management in 1997.

"The University of Toronto, and indeed all of Canada, has lost one of its greatest champions," said U of T president Meric Gertler. "Joseph Rotman believed that each of us has a responsibility to help build civil society. He had great faith in young Canadians, in their eagerness and ability to lead the way in that cause. And he was supremely confident in Canada's ability to compete and to contribute on the global stage."

Rotman also dedicated himself to creating Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute (RRI), a premier centre for the study of human brain function, established in 1989.

He was instrumental in establishing Baycrest's affiliation with U of T, and helped recruit some of the world's top cognitive scientists to the institute, including its founding director, Dr. Donald Stuss.

"For me personally, Joe was an inspiration and a fabulous source of mentorship, advice and support," said Dr. William Reichman, president and CEO of Baycrest. "His passing is a great loss for our entire community and for Baycrest."

Rotman was also a staunch supporter of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, providing seed money to facilitate its opening in 1967 and remaining a major donor to the museum's capital projects throughout the years.

In the 1990s, Rotman served as national chair of the Canadian Friends of the Israel Museum (CFIM), the museum's fundraising arm and was awarded the museum's highest honour of an honorary fellowship.

"He was a real champion for the Israel Museum in Canada," said Pearl Berman, national director of CFIM.

Rotman and his wife Sandra both sat on numerous boards and have donated more than $90 million to causes they cared deeply about, such as the arts, education and health care.

In 1995, Rotman was appointed an officer of the Order of Canada and elected to the Canadian Business Hall of Fame.

His illustrious business career began in the early 1960s, when he got his start trading oil. He went on to work at real estate and venture capital companies, and to establish a number of companies of his own, both private and public, in oil trading, petroleum distribution, oil and gas exploration, merchant banking, real estate and venture capital.

Rotman was also the founder of several oil and gas companies, including Tarragon Oil and Gas. The list of companies he helped to grow includes Premdor and Barrick Gold Corporation.

In 1987, Rotman founded the merchant bank and private equity management firm Clairvest Group Inc.

Rotman was praised as a leader and city builder by politicians such as Toronto mayor John Tory and Ontario Minister of Health Eric Hoskins, both of whom lamented his passing on Twitter.

"My dear friend and mentor Joe Rotman, rest in peace. You lived a great life of generosity, compassion and brilliance. I am heartbroken," Hoskins tweeted Jan. 27.

"Mr. Rotman was a true city builder, demonstrating a commitment to developing Canadian institutions in the arts, education and health care," Tory tweeted.

Rotman's dedication and patronage to the arts was evident from his service as chair of the board of the Art Gallery of Ontario from 1993 to 1996, as a member of the board of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards from 1996 to 1998, and as chair of the Canada Council of the Arts from 2008 to 2013.

In addition to his involvement with U of T, the Rotmans supported the University of Western Ontario by endowing the Rotman Institute of Philosphy – Enaging Science, a centre that works to bridge the humanities and the sciences, and through his establishment of the Rotman Canada Research Chair in the Philosophy of Science.

His contribution to the field of life sciences and innovation is demonstrated by the 1989 development of the Rotman Research Institute, established to build knowledge around cognitive neuroscience, and his founding and being a member of the board of directors of Toronto's Medical and Related Sciences Discovery District (MARS).

He is survived by his wife, Sandra, and their two children, Janis and Kenneth, as well as three grandchildren. ■

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Ex-B'nai Brith CEO to helm pro-Israel Christian group

SHERI SHEFA
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After stepping down from his 36-year post as B'nai Brith Canada's CEO, Frank Dimant has been appointed to lead Christians United For Israel (CUFI) Canada, a coalition of Christian organizations that advocate for Israel.

"When I announced that I was leaving B'nai Brith [last summer], I was approached by people from CUFI... they wanted to ensure that a strong activist Jewish voice not be lost, especially at this time, because... today it is imperative that the Jewish community and the Christian community stand united against a common enemy, a common threat," said Dimant, adding that B'nai Brith has had a working relationship with CUFI for about 15 years, doing joint pro-Israel programming.

Dimant becomes CUFI Canada's first-ever CEO.

Charles McVety, president of the Canadian Christian College and the national chair of CUFI Canada, whose American affiliate is the largest pro-Israel organization in the United States, with more than one million members, agreed that a partnership between the Christian and Jewish communities is essential, given the rise of radical Islam.

"We've been working with Frank for many years supporting Israel. However, of late, with the rapid increase of persecution of Christians around the world, and the persecution of Jews around the world, we feel a very deep sense that the only way to go forward for peace and safety and security is for Christians and Jews to work together to combat this horrible, offensive, radical Islamic attack," McVety said.

Dimant said it's important for the Jewish community to build bridges with the evangelical movement.

"When there was a concern in our community that there was going to be an influx of missionaries called Jews for Jesus, Charles McVety, as president of the Canada Christian College and also as chair of CUFI, Rabbi [Moshe] Stern from Shaarei Tefillah, and myself, gave a national press conference denouncing that kind of activity," Dimant said.

"For evangelical leaders to stand up and do that was very important to our community and demonstrative of their position against trying to convert Jews, so I'm glad to be working with individuals like that."

From left, Charles McVety, Pastor John Hagee and Frank Dimant in Austin, Texas last week

Dimant, who will continue his role as dean of the Modern Israel Studies program at the Canada Christian College, said he is looking forward to building upon what he calls "the strongest pro-Israel advocacy organization in the country."

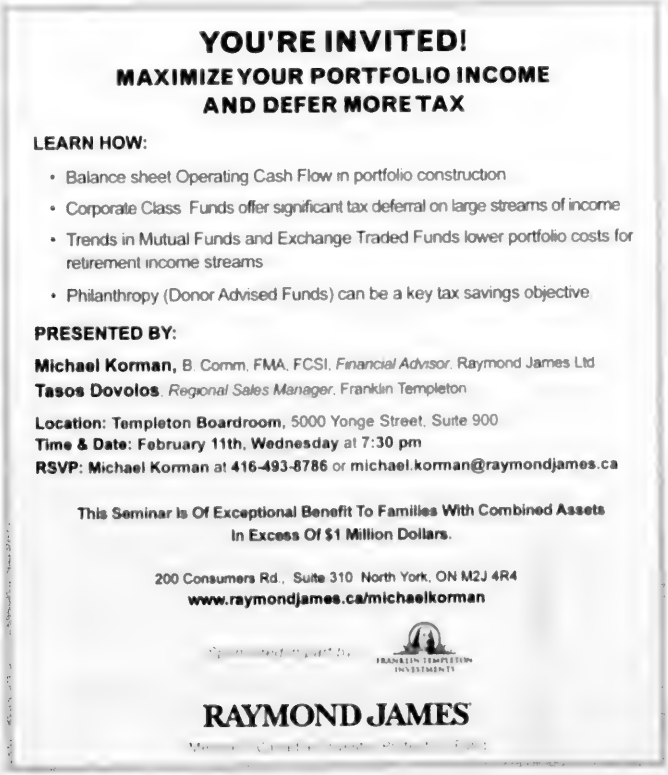
"I would like to see a growth. I would like to see a much higher profile for the organization along the lines of the American CUFI and I think that will be doable and something we're putting into plan," Dimant said.

"We're looking at accelerating missions to Israel... educating Christians about modern Israel and the historical claim that we have through the Bible," he added. "That is very imperative because we have certain elements within Christianity that deny that claim, so we're not only talking directly to believers, but to those who may have a misconception in interpreting the Old Testament."

McVety said he's confident the organization will continue to thrive under Dimant's leadership.

"It makes a lot of sense for one of Canada's most notable Jewish leaders to join hands with a very large and strong organization supporting Israel," he said.

"We revere him as a great leader and we believe that he is going to be able to build this organization and build an even stronger support for Israel in Canada."■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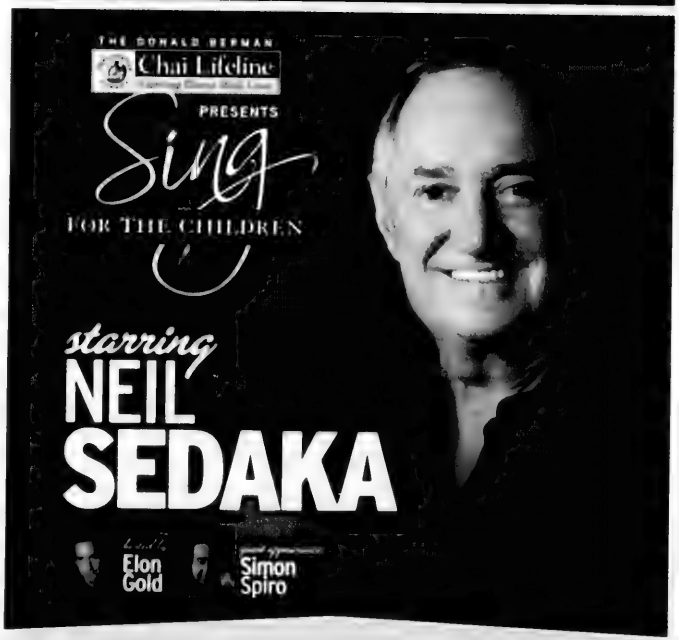
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FAST launches high school anti-racism curriculum

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Despite the recent passing of Elizabeth Comper, philanthropist and co-founder of Fighting Antisemitism Together (FAST), the organization is moving forward with its mission to educate Canadian students about the dangers of hate in all its forms.

Later this year, FAST will officially launch its latest educational tool for high school teachers and students called Voices into Action, following the success of its first initiative called Choose Your Voice – an award-winning program that has reached more than two million students since 2005.

Choose Your Voice, the foundation for the latest initiative, was developed with the help of educators and what was then the Canadian Jewish Congress, to provide middle school teachers with tools to incorporate material about the history of anti-Semitism and racism into the curriculum.

Nicole Miller, executive director of FAST - a coalition of non-Jewish Canadian business and community leaders who fund projects that encourage other non-Jews to speak out – explained that following the success of Choose Your Voice, they saw the need for a similar program for high schools.

Voices into Action, an interactive site developed in accordance with provincial curriculum standards by a team of teachers, curriculum experts, graduate students, university professors, and consultants, contains five units that focus on issues related to human rights, genocide, prejudice and discrimination.

"It's divided into five units and the Holocaust is a major feature throughout. It is at least a third of the content," Miller said.

Although the program addresses racism, bigotry and hate in all forms, there is a special emphasis on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

The founders of FAST, Elizabeth Comper, and her husband Tony, a retired Bank of Montreal CEO, were inspired to create the organization after a series of anti-Semitic attacks in Toronto and Montreal, including the 2004 firebombing of Montreal's United Talmud Torah Jewish day school.

"It was important to address other human rights issues, to put them on a scale, to understand that the Holocaust was as far as you could go with hatred," Miller said.

"The Holocaust is the first chapter of units 1, 2, 3 and 4, and unit 5 is entirely about the Holocaust and it ends with a conclusion on contemporary anti-Semitism."

FAST executive director Nicole Miller

Miller added that most important is the fact that the high school program is curriculum-based and completely free of charge.

"We're not trying to make more work for teachers. They just don't have time so it's important that it meets the provincial curriculum requirements for a lot of different courses. But mostly in social studies and language arts, which includes English and French – our programs are completely bilingual," she said.

She said when teachers register online, they can customize the material to complement their lesson plans.

Some of the subjects explored include the Holocaust, the "Aboriginal Experience," gender issues, cyber bullying and the history of Chinese immigration to Canada.

"There is a whole chapter on cyber bullying, which is really, really important. It doesn't matter what subject you teach, whether you're a science or math teacher, that could become an issue," Miller said.

She said although there are many great programs available to teachers that promote human rights, tolerance and counter anti-Semitism, Voices into Action is unique.

"Our model is a little different. We don't teach the students. We give material to teachers... once they review and assess our programs, they help promote it because they see how great these resources are." ■

For more information, visit www.voices-intoaction.ca

Trent group apology rejected, anti-Israel policy rescinded

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Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) has rejected an apology from student groups at Trent University for a poster the FSWC says uses anti-Semitic imagery to promote a "Divestment Week" event.

Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) Peterborough, a student-run group, partnered with another student group called Sustainable Trent to hold an event from Jan. 26 to 30 that, in part, targets Israel for "its occupation of Palestine."

To advertise the week-long event, OPIRG distributed posters that depict a traffic light. In one of the traffic lights is a Star of David with a red cross through it, reminiscent of a no-smoking sign.

When FSWC president and CEO Avi Benlolo found out about the event and the imagery being used to promote it, he condemned OPIRG for continuing to promote an anti-Israel agenda.

"They simply don't understand that not only is it offensive to have crossed off the Magen David – it is not a surprise to me that they would do that because of their staunch anti-Semitism… – but only pointing a finger at Israel, is anti-Semitic in and of itself," Benlolo said.

On Jan. 25, OPIRG and Sustainable Trent apologized for the poster. "Our intent in using the Israeli flag on our poster was to bring attention to the global boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement that exists in response to Israel's occupation of Palestine, and to criticize the oppressive actions of the state of Israel. We regret that in our use of Israel's flag on the poster, the focal point became the Star of David and not the flag as a symbol of a nation state," they said.

Benlolo wasn't satisfied. "We don't accept their apology… for the reason that they don't really get it," he said.

Rebecca Hubble, 20, a third-year political studies student and a volunteer with the student group Trent4Israel, also felt the apology wasn't genuine. "It seemed they were blaming us for misinterpreting their logo and advertisements… they don't really seem to acknowledge the anti-Semitic image that they are still putting forward with their BDS movement," she said.

Although OPIRG said it retracted the poster and removed it from its online sites, Hubble, who is Christian, said the posters remained all over campus last week.

"They're still up. They put up a big banner at the library that says '[Divestment from] Israeli apartheid' and they are still very visible on campus," she said.

A banner at Trent University last week

Benlolo said he's been informing university boards about student groups that host anti-Israel and anti-Semitic events on campuses across the country.

"The boards of directors of these universities should take responsibility… for the organization they lead," Benlolo said, adding that he's communicated with Trent's president and told him "he should take a principled stand and the university should take responsibility for what is going on."

Trent president Leo Groarke said the administration has spoken to both sides and commended them for being "level-headed." He said Trent "upholds academic freedom as another important value. Such freedom does not permit everything, but it does incorporate the freedom of discussion and debate for students and faculty on complex and sometimes difficult issues."

OPIRG Peterborough co-ordinator Matt Davidson said FSWC "willfully misconstrued" OPIRG's actions, and he rejected the charge of anti-Semitism. "It is a shame that Mr. Benlolo would make these slanderous claims against OPIRG without even contacting us to learn what it is that we do."

Hubble was also part of a group of pro-Israel students who succeeded in reversing an anti-Israel policy of the Trent Central Student Association at the student group's annual general meeting Jan. 29.

The anti-Israel position that was reversed said that "co-operation, collaboration, or joint projects with Israeli academic and cultural institutions in any form… [should be prohibited] unless these institutions acknowledge Israel as an apartheid state."

According to StandWithUs Canada, students voted 47 for and 28 against to rescind the divestment motion.

Judy Zelikovitz, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' vice-president of university and local partner services, praised the students who succeeded in overturning the policy, which was adopted in February 2013.

"Their success demonstrates that BDS does not enjoy broad-based support on campus, and can be defeated with hard work and the right strategy," Zelikovitz said. ■

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Montrealer takes over the reins at CIJA

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

David Cape, newly elected national chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), says he won't change course from the agenda set by outgoing chair David Koschitzky.

Cape, who began his term on Jan. 12, said he has great respect for Koschitzky's passion, dedication and effectiveness as a community leader, and plans to continue working toward "improving the quality of Jewish life in Canada by advancing the interests of Canadian Jewry."

Cape told *The CJN* he's laid out three objectives for his upcoming tenure: increase awareness of CIJA's work across the country; provide more meaningful opportunities for board members and lay leaders to directly engage in advocacy wherever CIJA works; and deepen CIJA's engagement across a range of platforms, including social policy, Israel and anti-Semitism.

Born and raised in Montreal, Cape, an alumnus of JPPS Elementary School and Bialik High School, says he felt compelled from an early age to contribute to the Jewish community and Israel.

"My father was very involved in our synagogue, as well as the YM-YWHA," Cape said, "and I learned that it was very important to give back to community when one was fortunate, as I was."

David Cape

Cape attended Princeton University from 1983 to 1987, and subsequently worked in the United States, first as the head of a software company and then as an employee at Microsoft, before moving back to Montreal in 1994.

Upon his return, he got involved with Federation CJA in Montreal. "It was [during this period], as I started visiting Israel during the intifadah that I again saw the commitment and effort Israelis were making to build the country under incredibly difficult circumstances and felt that I, too, needed to do my part and stand up for Israel."

In 2011, Cape became president of Federation CJA, a post he held until September 2013. During his term, Cape worked alongside CIJA to advocate on behalf of the local Jewish community during Quebec's contentious charter of values debate of 2013.

After stepping down as Federation CJA president, Cape was nominated to join CIJA's national board, an experience that he said allowed him to "witness first-hand how effective CIJA was at ensuring that the voice of the Jewish community was heard in discussions about issues important to Canadian Jewry, and how effective [CIJA] is at shaping the public policy debate."

Cape said he embraced his nomination to chair of the board, "sensing it would afford me the opportunity to contribute even more to efforts that strengthen our great community."

In addition to Israel advocacy, Cape said he's committed to furthering CIJA's engagement in several social justice issues, such as the campaign to protect Canadians from genetic discrimination.

"Canada remains the only G7 country without specific measures in place to prevent discrimination by employers or insurance companies based on genetic testing," Cape explained. "This has serious implications for diagnosing, treating and prevent an expanding array of diseases, particularly for Jews, given the prevalence of key genetic markers among Ashkenazim."

CIJA has also joined a coalition of civil society organizations supporting Bill C-279, which extends hate crimes protections to transgendered individuals, and is working to advance a private member's bill sponsored by Liberal MP Marc Garneau that would expand legal protections for Jewish institutions.

CIJA will remain involved in issues such as the ongoing debate over a Quebec charter of values, the upcoming elections in Israel and Canada, and immigration issues at the federal level.

"The Jewish community remains Canada's most frequent target of hate and bias-motivated crime at a rate ranging from 15 to 25 times than that of the overall population," Cape said.

"Given this experience, we have worked hard to ensure adequate protections are in place not just for our community, but for all Canadians." ■

בס"ד

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Penina, Dovid, Tzippora, Avraham, Racheli and Ben-Tzion Pinczower, and
Ariel, Adin, Avishai, Hila, Talya, and Eliyah Kruger
and great-grandmother of Leah Meira Pomper
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Religious leaders and mayor unite to defend tolerance

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca MONTREAL

Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh clerics joined Mayor Denis Coderre at Montreal City Hall on Jan. 28 in a show of solidarity that religiously and racially motivated violence and extremism are unacceptable.

Coderre was fulfilling a pledge he made at a Jewish community rally on Jan. 11 at Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation, held after the deadly terrorist attacks in Paris. He said at the time that he wanted to convene a meeting of local religious leaders in the belief that "we're all part of the solution" in protecting democratic freedoms.

Sixteen clerics spent about an hour sitting down with Coderre and six executive committee members, and they emerged to gather around the mayor at a press conference.

The rabbis participating were Reuben Poupko of Beth Israel Beth Aaron, Chaim Steinmetz of Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem and David Banon, leader of the Centre sépharade de Torah de Laval and a rabbinical court judge.

There were four Muslim leaders: Sayed Nabil Abbas and Sheikh Nadim El Taki from the Shi'ite community, Sheikh Gilles Sadek of the Sunni community, and Sheikh Hassan Ezzeddine of the Druze community.

From left, Rabbi Reuben Poupko, Sayed Nabil Abbas, Mayor Denis Coderre and Archbishop Christian Lépine were among the religious leaders who gathered at city hall. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Among the Christian representatives was Most Reverend Christian Lépine, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Montreal.

Coderre said that in the wake of the murders at *Charlie Hebdo* and the Hyper Cacher supermarket in Paris, he felt it was his responsibility as mayor to take action in Montreal to ensure that harmony among the different religious communities is maintained.

His request to the clerics was that they take back to their communities the same message of peace and respect that they were conveying to the broader public on this day. "In the aftermath of the tragedies that took place in France… we want to present a united front and to denounce any act of hate. We do not want to import the problems of others here," Coderre said.

"The social contract of our city rests on the values of tolerance and respect for diversity, as well as peaceful coexistence among the different religions."

The meeting, he said, is the first step in what he hopes will become ongoing dialogue between the religious communities and the city administration and among themselves. A working committee has been set up to serve as a link between the communities and the city.

"Each of these leaders has a role to play in the fight we are leading against ignorance, violence and fanaticism. Thanks to them, the message of peace that we reiterated today can be transmitted within their different communities."

In comments to *The CJN*, Rabbi Poupko applauded Coderre for his initiative and said he has spoken "with great courage and clarity" against intolerance and on "the obligation of religious leaders to take a stand against extremism.

"He underscored the absolute need for religious leaders to bring this message within their communities."

Executive committee member Lionel Perez, who attended the meeting, said all communities must be vigilant in detecting radicalization among their members.

At the same time, he said Coderre is dedicated to maintaining an open and tolerant society. "The question is how to find the balance between the two." ■

NUSBAUM, EDITH ז"ל

The Yeshiva University family is deeply grieved by the passing of our longtime cherished friend, Edith Nusbaum of Toronto. Together with her beloved husband, Dr. Mark Nusbaum, a founding member of YU's Board of Overseers of the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, Edith was a YU Guardian and established generous scholarships for Canadian students pursuing graduate degrees at the Azrieli Graduate School. Edith Nusbaum was widely admired as an Ayshet Chayil – a veritable Woman of Valor who in all her ways was a partner in her family's business and a benevolent supporter for many worthy causes. Heartfelt condolences are extended to Dr. Mark Nusbaum and their children; Suzy (and Dr. Mark) Pomper, Shari (and Dan) Weil, Naomi (and Larry) Pinczower, Dr. Tammy (and Dr. Josh) Kruger, and many grandchildren and a great grandchild. Sister and sister-in-law of Dr. Tibor (Laya) Juda and Arthur Juda, z'l, Aaron and Bella, z'l Nussbaum, Dr. Charles and Elly Elbaum, and Maurice, z'l and Esther, z'l Boyman. May the entire family find comfort among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
Richard M. Joel, President
Dr. Herbert Dobrinsky, VP University Affairs
Jeremy Magence, President, Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University
Stuart Haber, National Director, Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University

KERZNER, JOSEPH ז"ל

The Yeshiva University family and the Board of Overseers of the Sy Syms School of Business as well as the affiliated Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University are profoundly bereaved by the passing of our partner and dynamic leader who as a YU Benefactor and as Vice Chair of the Sy Syms School of Business Board of Overseers established the Joseph Kerzner Chair in Accounting and was also a major contributor to the new MBA Program at the Sy Syms School. A devoted son, he established the Samuel Kerzner Memorial Scholarship and the Sarah Rivka Kerzner Memorial Scholarship in our undergraduate schools for men and women, respectively. He was a Yeshiva University's partner in helping Yeshiva University establish Dinners and Convocations in Toronto where on December 18, 1986 he received an honorary Doctorate from Yeshiva University in recognition of his selfless devotion to our institution and generous scholarship support under the auspices of the Bora Laskin Scholarship Fund established by Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University for deserving and needy Canadian students at Yeshiva University. He was honored again with the Pioneer Award at our most recent Convocation. Heartfelt condolences are extended to his beloved children: Jeff Kerzner and Cheryl and Ron Pancer, dear brother and brother-in-law of Gertie and the late Walter Gangel, z'l, Anne Zaretsky, Lou and Helen Kerzner, Max and Dolly Kerzner, Albert and Anita Kerzner, Miriam and the late Morris Kerzner, z'l, doting grandfather and an especially cherished uncle of Michael Kerzner who was extremely devoted to him along with many other family members. May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

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GUEST VOICE

Debt, fear, lack of self-worth remain after marital abuse

Talia Silver*

When I was in my early 20s, I was introduced to a chassidic man who was six years older. After a brief courtship, we were married. Over the six years of our marriage, I gave birth to three children. He did not provide financially for our family and we had to relocate often. We lived intermittently with my parents as well as with his parents. I put our food bills on my credit card and I accumulated significant debt.

He would stay up all night and sleep all day. He never pursued any kind of steady employment. In the evening, he would hurriedly pray so that he could go out with his friends and/or attend an undisclosed meeting. He was not transparent with any details because he believed that women do not have the capacity to understand such matters.

From the onset of our marriage, there were numerous problems. My husband would relentlessly scream at me in an extremely threatening and demeaning tone: "Where's my shirt? Why didn't you iron my shirt? If you love me, then you would do this for me and have my clothes ready for me to wear. This is not the way we do things!" He had constant tantrums and would regularly humiliate me in the presence of others, including my parents.

If something was not done to his unattainable and unpredictable standards, he would glare at me intensely and accuse me of not loving him. He was extraordinarily manipulative, constantly placing the onus for his abuse on me. For instance, he would hostilely question me for hours to the point that I would succumb as a result of overwhelming mental duress.

Other examples of his abusive behaviour to me:

- When I unintentionally dropped a meat spoon on a milk surface, he became enraged and threw the food I prepared into the garbage in front of all of the guests, leaving me mortified.
- He threw my challah dough in the garbage in front of my in-laws because I had failed to follow his precise instructions.
- He screamed and insulted me in front of my children, family and friends. I was extremely worried that my children would grow up disrespecting me because of the behaviour modelled for them.
- He would physically block the doorway to unremittingly taunt me in the presence of our children.
- When one of our young children misbehaved he would take them outside, regardless of the weather, and not allow them into the home until the child agreed to stop crying. I vehemently objected to this severe method of discipline, but he would threaten me and prevent me from protecting our children.
- He isolated me from friends and supporters.

I began to see a therapist, and during these sessions, I recognized that I was a victim of verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. I told my husband that he must go and seek therapy if he wanted our marriage to continue. He denied any ownership of our marital issues. My husband went for five therapy sessions, but stopped without telling me. When I found out he was no longer interested in pursuing therapy, I came to the realization that he was not serious about repairing our marriage.

We have lived in separate countries for the past two years. I asked for a *get* several months ago and he has consistently refused. During our time apart, he has barely contacted his children. For a while, I called him daily so that the children could have contact with him. It went to voicemail or, if he picked up, he would scream at me for bothering him.

I informed my husband of an upcoming celebration for our son, hoping he would attend. He told me that if it took place without his permission, he would hire the most expensive lawyers and make me pay compensation for years. He also threatened to call the police and tell them that I kidnapped his children, and he said he would run away, making me an agunah, a woman who has not received a *get* (a religious divorce) and can therefore not remarry, for 60 years.

I now live in fear for my children's safety and welfare as well as my own. Additionally, I feel the need to act quickly to prevent myself from ending up an agunah.

I now accept that my husband will likely never change. For most of our marriage, I was harshly berated for menial and trivial matters. I refuse to raise my children in such an unhealthy and unstable environment. I have gone back to school to learn a profession to support my children and myself. My parents continue to support me and my children financially and emotionally. ■

**Talia Silver is a pseudonym*

Better laws needed to protect women: experts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Sasson said there should be better laws in place to protect women.

"We know that even if a woman has a restraining order… it doesn't mean that he's not going to hurt her. I think there are a lot of areas that need continuous lobbying, and we also have to be vigilant because things fall through the cracks very quickly. And so we have to make sure that the government is keeping up with their promises and changes that are required. It's not only about getting better, it's protecting what we've already accomplished," Sasson said.

"We go backwards a lot, government-wise. Women's issues aren't in the portfolio for the government any more. We've been filtered into general services. I think we lose a lot and we have to keep fighting to keep it."

Krowitz said that in the 25 years she's been at the helm of ATEVAW, there has been some progress, but not enough.

"We live in a world that celebrates violence," she said, referring to the highest grossing films, television shows and video games.

"I think what has happened to society is that it has become desensitized to violence. We live in a disrespectful society in many ways.

"We need a seismic shift in our culture in order for an issue like this to go away." ■

SeeJN | Names, not numbers

Netivot HaTorah Day School Grade 8 student Ethan Rennert interviews Holocaust survivor Leon Rucker on Jan. 23, as part of Names, Not Numbers, an oral history project that brings students face-to-face with Holocaust survivors. Netivot is participating in the project for the fifth time. The curriculum includes interviewing survivors and filming them as they tell their personal and emotional stories of survival. The students work with a Holocaust educator, a Jewish studies teacher, a journalist and a filmmaker to produce a documentary film that will premiere in June.

New Nova Scotia-Israel R&D program announced

JOEL JACOBSON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A new program to facilitate research and development partnerships between entrepreneurs and firms in Nova Scotia and Israel was announced Feb. 2 in Israel, Ottawa and Halifax.

The program aims to build stronger innovation and economic bridges between the province and Israel. It was initiated last November when Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak met with Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil in Halifax.

The joint program brings together the Israeli Office of the Chief Scientist in the Ministry of Economy and the province of Nova Scotia through the Israeli Industry Center for R&D (MATIMOP), the Canada-Israel Industrial Research Development Foundation (CIIRDF), and the Embassy of Israel in Canada.

Called the Nova Scotia-Israel Innovation Program (NSIIP), the program will harness the complementary R&D expertise, experience and resources of both regions. The NSIIP will leverage investment from the Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS), Ministry of Economy in Israel; and the province of Nova Scotia through Innovacorp.

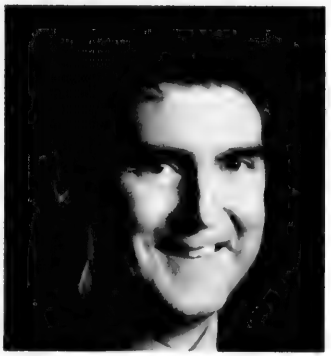
The program will enhance R&D partnership between Israel and Nova Scotia, and promote the joint creation and commercialization of high potential technologies in which collaborations between their start-ups could accelerate growth toward full scale operations and commercial success. Entrepreneurs will be able to combine their technological and business capabilities, and address key challenges during the precarious start-up phase of development, reducing the risk of new ventures while developing new channels to global markets.

Barak reflected on the close ties between Israel and Nova Scotia, beginning with David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, who trained as a young soldier at Fort Edward in Nova Scotia during World War I.

"We have recently strengthened these ties with several collaborative projects between Dalhousie University and Ben-Gurion University. Today's announcement takes our bilateral relationship to the next level with a partnership in innovation that will open up new economic opportunities and foster even closer people-to-people connections."

McNeil added, "We're pleased to create a more formal collaboration between the vibrant technology start-up communities in Nova Scotia and Israel. This partnership will allow early-stage Nova Scotia companies to accelerate their growth through improved access to technology, global markets, business expertise and investment."

Henri Rothschild, president of CIIRDF, stated: "CIIRDF was founded on a powerful vision: science and technology partnerships are major engines of economic growth, and deliver significant return on investment to all collaborators. The Nova Scotia-Israel Innovation Program will deliver on this value proposition and enrich companies in both jurisdictions. With a sharp focus on regional economic objectives, it will stimulate the development of novel products, open-up new global markets for collaborating firms, and ultimately increase the global competitiveness of Nova Scotia and Israel."



Stephen McNeil

Rafael Barak

The role of Innovacorp, Nova Scotia's early-stage venture capital organization, is to find, fund and foster innovative Nova Scotia start-ups that strive to change the world. To kick-start the program, MATIMOP and CIIRDF will work closely with companies across Nova Scotia, including firms in Innovacorp's portfolio, to identify key technological and business needs in Nova Scotia that could be addressed by Israeli companies and start-ups.

Parties will jointly facilitate matchmaking and broker new collaborations, as well as conduct bilateral calls for research and development proposals. Where possible, there will be co-funding of selected R&D projects by the OCS in Israel and Innovacorp in Nova Scotia. These initiatives will provide Nova Scotia and Israeli firms with a greater understanding of the technological strengths of each jurisdiction, business synergies, and long-term opportunities for R&D collaboration. ■

Cotler to receive Law Society's first Human Rights Award

PAUL LUNGEN
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You can add the Law Society of Upper Canada's first-ever Human Rights Award to the list of honours bestowed on Montreal MP Irwin Cotler.

Cotler, a professor of law and former minister of justice and attorney general of Canada, will receive the inaugural award at a special evening on Feb. 12 at Osgoode Hall in downtown Toronto.

The award will be granted every two years to recipients for their "outstanding contributions to the advancement of human rights and/or the promotion of the rule of law provincially, nationally or internationally," states a Law Society news release.

"The Law Society is committed to the protection of human rights and the rule of law and we are extremely pleased to present our very first Human Rights Award to the Honourable Irwin Cotler," said Law Society treasurer Janet Minor. "His long and illustrious career as an outspoken advocate for human rights – both at home and abroad – makes him a most fitting recipient."

MP Irwin Cotler during a visit to the Kotel in 2012 CJN FILE PHOTO

As federal minister of justice from 2003 to 2006, Cotler launched the National Justice Initiative Against Racism and Hate and initiated the first prosecution in Canada under the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act for incitement to genocide in Rwanda.

Prior to entering politics, Cotler worked as an international human rights lawyer, representing such high-profile clients as Soviet dissidents Andrei Sakharov and Natan Sharansky, South Africa's Nelson Mandela, and Jacobo Timmerman in Latin America.

He is part of the international legal team representing two Chinese political prisoners, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo and Gao Zhisheng.

As justice minister, he brought together the justice ministers of Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority to participate in the first-ever joint justice forum.

A constitutional and comparative law expert, he has testified before parliamentary committees on human rights in Canada, the United States, Russia, Sweden, Norway and Israel.

Cotler has received 10 honorary doctorate degrees and numerous awards.

The ceremony bestowing the Law Society's award will take place from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Osgoode Hall's Donald Lamont Learning Centre, with a reception to follow.

The public event is free though participants are asked to RSVP in advance.

Cotler, 74, is known as a staunch defender of Israel. He has been MP for Mount Royal since 1999, but said last year that he will not be running in the next federal election, which is expected to be held next fall. ■

FSWC announces new post-graduate scholarship

JODIE SHUPAC
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From left, Liel Miron-Halyo, Lisa Xiao and Nathan Gibson FRIENDS OF SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER PHOTO

In an effort to counter Holocaust denial and encourage the academic study of the Shoah, the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) has partnered with charitable organization the Zaglembier Society to establish a new, post-graduate-level scholarship.

The FSWC-Zaglembier Society Scholarship will award $1,800 apiece annually for a trial period of five years to two students focusing on Holocaust studies within a post-graduate program in the 2015-2016 academic year.

"We hope the scholarship will... support the continuation of Holocaust studies among the young people of the community," said Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of FSWC.

"The Holocaust is a singular event in human history that should and cannot be forgotten... Its lessons must be passed on to future generations in the hope that humanity will learn from them."

David Bleeman, president of The Zaglembier Society, whose membership mainly consists of Holocaust survivors and children of survivors from the Polish province of Zaglembie, said the organization believes "it is our obligation to ensure the phrase 'never forget' is grounded in rigorous academic study."

While few graduate programs in Canada focus exclusively on the Holocaust, Benlolo said the subject is often included in Jewish studies, history and genocide and human rights programs, and graduate students exploring the subject in their given field are eligible to apply.

He stressed that the scholarship is non-denominational, and that applicants needn't be Jewish. Both FSWC and the Zaglembier Society recognize the importance of students of varying faiths and backgrounds pursuing Holocaust studies in their post-graduate work, Benlolo said, to ensure that "the horrific truth of what really happened isn't distorted or forgotten."

He added: "FSWC believes the legacy and lessons of the Holocaust are not only for the Jewish community, and provide critical learning for all people."

The scholarship will complement FSWC's existing Wiesenthal Scholarships. Seven awards worth $3,600 each are given annually to graduating high school students on a university track who have demonstrated what Benlolo called "initiative and leadership in carrying out [the late Nazi hunter] Simon Wiesenthal's legacy of tolerance, justice and human rights within their schools and communities."

FSWC also plans to launch a third scholarship program this spring, providing seed money to high school students interested in starting up initiatives consistent with the organization's mission to counter hate and intolerance in the community.

FSWC is already involved with university campuses in various capacities through the Wiesenthal Campus Initiative, in which a national campus co-ordinator works with both undergraduate and graduate students from campuses across Canada to promote FSWC's message of tolerance, co-existence, dialogue and education.

The organization also works with FSWC student ambassadors to co-ordinate speaking events and programs on campus that address issues such as race, religion, hate and multiculturalism.

This past semester, for example, the organization arranged for Sudanese human rights activist Simon Deng to share his story of overcoming child slavery with students at Ryerson University and the University of Toronto.

"The student ambassadors monitor their campuses for acts of racism, intolerance and anti-Semitism," Benlolo explained, "and maintain contact with our national campus co-ordinator on how to effectively address these cases of intolerance."

Applicants to the FSWC-Zaglembier Society Scholarship will be assessed based on their academic merit at the undergraduate level, their proposed thesis topics and a written application addressing questions related to their goals within Holocaust education and their reasons for pursuing Holocaust studies at the post-graduate level.

The application process hasn't officially opened, but Benlolo said some university students have already started to hear about the scholarship via word of mouth, and have expressed interest in applying. ■

New Windsor JCC head comes home to lead community

RON STANG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, WINDSOR, ONT

Jay Katz

Jay Katz is coming home.

Katz, who grew up in Windsor but in recent years has been Toronto-based, takes the helm at the Windsor Jewish Community Centre this spring.

In fact, Katz said, this will be the "third time I'm moving to Windsor in my life."

The Toronto native first moved to Windsor as a child when he was seven, growing up here and leaving at 22. He returned in the 1990s and was hired as executive director of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, leaving in 2007 for the same post with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra.

Katz has an MBA from the University of Western Ontario, and has worked widely in finance and real estate in both Canada and the United States. But he also was an antique dealer in Los Angeles and has had extensive experience in arts and non-profit management.

He's excited about returning to Windsor.

"It's a community that is close to my heart," he said. "I grew up there. It means a lot to me. It's a great opportunity to do something meaningful and interesting."

Katz lauds the city's diversity – it's the fourth-most ethnically diverse in Canada – and the "lifestyle" of a moderate climate and little congestion. He still has a brother and cousins here.

Outgoing community centre director Harvey Kessler is retiring after 15 years.

Kessler, a Windsor native, has had a wide background in the non-profit sector including with the Canadian Hearing Society and the United Way.

Kessler is looking forward to travelling to Israel with wife, Marcia, to spend more time with immediate family.

"Windsor is the smallest organized Jewish community in Canada," Kessler said. Besides the community centre, there is also the I.L. Peretz House 70-unit senior citizens apartment building.

The Jewish community is notably well integrated with the overall population.

For example, Peretz House is open to all – "only around 15 to 20 per cent of our tenants are Jewish," Kessler said.

As well, during summer, the federation sponsors Camp Yomee, where 150 children from the entire community attend.

For over a decade, the community centre has also organized the Windsor Jewish Film Festival, "attracting well over a thousand people now," Kessler said.

There's also the annual student forum on social justice, which brings together 150 Grade 8 students for workshops on everything from lessons learned from the Holocaust to poverty and homelessness.

"That's open to all," he said.

The Windsor area has some 1,500 Jewish residents, a number that Kessler said remains "stable."

Katz will take the torch from Kessler in another way as well.

"Prior to myself, all the executive directors here had been Americans," Kessler said. "And I was the first kind of local Windsor boy who took the position. Now, Jay is the second Windsor boy to take it." ■

INTERNATIONAL

Little being done to fix U.S.-Israel rift

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

The Netanyahu government and the Obama administration have had no shortage of spats over the years, but this time around, neither Jerusalem nor Washington is reportedly doing much to fix the rifts that emerged surrounding Israel's prime minister's planned March 3 speech to the U.S. Congress on Iran, a visit American officials said breached protocol as it was not co-ordinated with the White House.

According to a Jan. 31 report in *the New York Times* the current row reflects "six years of suspicion and mistrust and grievance, wounds from past brawls easily reopened by what might otherwise be small irritations."

"It reflects resentment on the part of [Barack] Obama, who watched [Benjamin]Netanyahu seemingly root for his Republican opponent in the 2012 election and now sees him circumventing the Oval Office to work with a Republican Congress instead. And it reflects a conviction on the part of Netanyahu that Obama may sell out Israel with a bad deal and may be trying to influence the coming Israeli elections," set to take place March 17, two weeks after his planned speech.

Netanyahu is widely expected to urge American lawmakers to pass a new sanctions bill against Iran to force to it comply with international demands it curb its nuclear program – a bill Obama strongly opposes and has vowed to veto, urging that such a move would hinder the P5+1 negotiations under way to secure a deal with Tehran. Officials in Jerusalem said last week, however, that Netanyahu would focus less on sanctions and more on the dangers of a bad deal with Iran.

The row over the planned Congress speech has set off an ugly, ongoing public spat between the Netanyahu government and the Obama administration, with senior American officials charging that the Israeli leader had "spat" in Obama's face and could not be trusted.

On Jan. 30, Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Ron Dermer, insisted that Netanyahu's decision to accept the invitation by Republican House Speaker John Boehner was not meant to disrespect Obama.

Officials in the Netanyahu government told Israeli media late last week that the United States has already agreed in principle to a deal that would leave Iran capable of enriching enough uranium for a nuclear bomb within "mere months." A Channel 10 report quoted unnamed Jerusalem sources saying the terms of the deal would leave Iran "closer than was thought" to nuclear weapons, "mere months from producing enough material for a bomb," and that the U.S. has agreed to 80 per cent of Iran's demands.

The fallout from the row may result in a "virtual freeze in the relationship at the very top until after the 2016 American presidential vote," according to the *New York Times*.

Richard Haass, a former U.S. State Department official and president of the Council of Foreign Relations, told the paper that it seemed Netanyahu and his government has "written off" the Obama administration, placing all their bets on the Republicans. "They have made the calculation that to the extent possible, they will use Congress as the channel to conduct their relationship," he said.

Netanyahu on Jan.30 downplayed the diplomatic spat, terming it a "procedural issue" that can be resolved – unlike a "bad" deal with Tehran, which cannot be so easily mended. "We can resolve procedural issues with regard to my appearance in the U.S., but if Iran arms itself with nuclear weapons, it will be a lot harder to fix," Netanyahu said.

Last week, a senior Obama administration official charged that Dermer has been working to advance the political fortunes of Netanyahu at the expense of the U.S.-Israel relationship, according to the *New York Times*. The accusation marked a striking escalation in the rhetorical spat between the White House and the Netanyahu government over the Congress speech.

The "unusually sharp criticism" by the senior official, who was not named in the report, reflected "the outrage the episode has incited within President Obama's inner circle," the *Times* suggested. "Such officially authorized criticisms of diplomats from major allies are unusual." ■

SeeJN | 'A wonderful boy'

EDI ISRAEL/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

One of two IDF soldiers killed in last week's Hezbollah missile attack on the Lebanon border, Staff Sgt. Dor Haim Nini, 20, from Shtulim, was laid to rest in the cemetery of his home village on Jan. 29. Limor Avizard, Nini's cousin, said that Dor "was a king, an Israeli hero. He got through Operation Protective Edge bravely." Dror Shor, the head of the Be'er Tuviya Regional Council where Shtulim is located, said Nini's family was one of the oldest in the moshav and that the death of Dor, "a wonderful boy," is "a disaster that is hard to describe."

Pirates, hippies and anti-porn crusader vie for votes in upcoming election

LAZAR BERMAN
JERUSALEM

As the deadline for registering with the Central Elections Committee passed Jan. 29, the Israeli election season kicked into high gear, with 26 parties jostling for the Knesset's 120 seats.

Mainstream parties such as Likud, Zionist Camp and the ultra-Orthodox factions registered for the March 17 elections, as did a host of newcomers. Former Shas leader Eli Yishai settled on the new name Yachad – Hebrew for "Together" – for his new faction, after toying with the name Ha'am Itanu.

Haredi women's party U'Bezchutan, formed to protest the exclusion of women on ultra-Orthodox lists, also registered.

Among other newbies, the united Arab party, the Joint List – made up of the Hadash, Ra'am, Ta'al and Balad parties – is projected to win around 12 seats in the elections. Moshe Kahlon's new party, Kulanu, is polling around nine seats.

The Pirates party registered for the second straight election. The one-man Protecting Our Children – Stop Feeding Them Porno party is also vying for a spot. The hippie-chassidic Breslaver We Are All Friends (Kulanu Chaverim) Na Nach party also threw its black hat into the ring.

The Green party went with a vulgar phrase meaning, "We just don't care" for its faction name.

In a surprise move, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu named Benny Begin to the 11th slot on the Likud list.

Begin, a respected former minister and son of the first Likud prime minister, Menachem Begin, lost his Knesset seat after failing to win a sufficiently high slot on the 2013 Likud slate, and did not compete in the party primaries this time. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

OPINION

Canada, the ICC and Argentina – correcting injustice

Gerald Steinberg

If there is a justification for the International Criminal Court (ICC), it is the case of Alberto Nisman, the Argentine prosecutor murdered on Jan. 18. After years of official cover-up and delay, Nisman became the central investigator of the horrific 1994 bombing of the Buenos Aires Jewish Community Centre, which killed 85 and injured 300. He was killed (the government first claimed this as a suicide) the night before he was scheduled to expose the top officials in Argentina who covered up the role of senior Iranians in the bombing.

For 20 years, Argentina's legal and court systems demonstrated that they are incapable of bringing the perpetrators to justice. The murder of Nisman highlights this fact. And it is precisely for cases like this that the ICC was designed – for "crimes against humanity" in situations where national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute the perpetrators. The victims and families have no other place to turn in their quest for justice.

An ICC investigation can be initiated by a signatory government ("state party"), and Canada is a very appropriate candidate to demand that the prosecutor act without further delay. Canada played a key role in the negotiation of the Rome Statute that created the court in the late 1990s, under the Liberal government headed by Jean Chrétien. Indeed, the website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development still boasts that "Canadians can be proud of the central role Canada played in establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC)."

This role included chairing negotiating committees, extensive lobbying and even funding "non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from developing nations so that the ICC process would benefit from their unique perspectives."

However, as critics predicted, much of this well-intentioned activity was naive, and like other international organizations, the ICC framework has been very limited and quickly politicized. Only nine official investigations have been conducted, all concerning Africans. Two individuals have been convicted and a number of cases were dismissed or withdrawn. There is no evidence that the deterrent effect expected from the creation of the ICC has developed – mass terror, war crimes and crimes against humanity continue unabated.

A Canadian-led ICC investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators of the 1994 Buenos Aires mass terror attack (the evidence overwhelmingly points to Iran and its Hezbollah allies) and the murder of Alberto Nisman would reverse this trend. It would show that state sponsors of mass terror, such as Iran, do not have immunity, even when political leaders in terror sites such as Argentina are readily corrupted.

In addition, Canada's request to the ICC prosecutor would also be an important moral and ethical antidote to the intense campaign to exploit the ICC for anti-Israel legal warfare. In his recent visit to Israel, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird denounced the Palestinian-led ICC campaign against Israel and the decision to open a preliminary investigation.

As Baird understood, one of the main objectives is to restrict Israel's ability to defend its citizens – a result that is the opposite of the ICC's stated purpose of promoting justice. "Israel – every time it comes under attack – seems to have to have one hand tied behind its back. And what this seems to do is tie the other hand behind its back."

Baird also noted that "obviously, Israel has one of the most independent judiciaries in the world," which should rule out any ICC involvement. Under Baird's instructions, Canada is filing an objection: "We are going to speak out forcefully against this decision, and try to get it turned around."

Given this background, a Canadian-led demand that the ICC immediately investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of the 1994 Buenos Aires bombing and the 2015 murder of Alberto Nisman would indeed fulfil the court's purpose. After 20 years, the victims and their families would finally see some hope that justice will be done. ■

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'Bottlegate' affair against Netanyahus heats up

LAZAR BERMAN
JERUSALEM

Israel's attorney general asked the state comptroller to share with him the results of ongoing investigation into allegations of excessive expenditures and possible misappropriation of state funds by the Netanyahu family.

According to the Justice Ministry, Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein held a meeting about the allegations on Feb. 1, after which he released a letter to State Comptroller Yosef Shapira, asking him to "transfer to me all the material you have gathered" on the issue.

"Though your investigation into the matters mentioned in the letter has not yet finished, I would be grateful if you update me on the issue," the letter read.

Weinstein also asked Shapira for an indication as to when the comptroller's report on the allegations would be released.

In June 2014, the attorney general had asked Shapira to look into charges that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's wife, Sara, pocketed thousands of shekels in returns on bottles recycled by the prime minister's residence.

Earlier Sunday, Shapira revealed he would not delay the release of his report because of election day on March 17.

The Netanyahus' attorney David Shimron confirmed he had requested a delay, because he argued the report should either compare the Netanyahu era with those of other prime ministers, or compare his spending with that of other top officials such as the president.

The report goes beyond the recycled-bottles controversy and examines spending on luxuries in the premier's residence on items such as flower arrangements, scented candles and catering.

Since drinks consumed in the prime minister's residence are purchased by the state, any funds accruing from them belong, by law, to the state treasury.

The Netanyahus said the funds were collected by them inadvertently, and noted that some 4,000 shekels ($1,300 Cdn) was returned to the state coffers in 2013 by Sara Netanyahu under the supervision of the financial regulator of the Prime Minister's Office.

The so-called "bottlegate" accusations, which surfaced in recent weeks in a lawsuit by a former employee of the prime minister's residence, have been taken up by the election campaigns of parties hoping to oust Netanyahu.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara in May 2014.
FLASH90 PHOTO

Statements from the prime minister in recent days accused left-wing parties of engaging in "personal" attacks against his family instead of substantive debate.

Tzipi Livni, head of Hatnua and co-leader of the Labor party-led Zionist Camp Knesset slate, charged over the weekend that the Prime Minister's Office under Netanyahu consumed some 4,300 shekels ($1,400) worth of alcohol each month. ■

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A look back at how Auschwitz was reported – or not

JULIE WIENER
JTA, NEW YORK

Hundreds of Holocaust survivors and foreign dignitaries journeyed to Auschwitz last week to mark the 70th anniversary of the notorious Nazi death camp's liberation. And media outlets from all over the world were there to document the trip.

Auschwitz today is the most potent symbol of the Holocaust. But at the time the camp was liberated – on Jan. 27, 1945, by the Red Army – there was virtually no press coverage.

In fact, while both *JTA* and the *New York Times* had written about Auschwitz on multiple occasions in 1944, neither mentioned the death camp again until months after its liberation.

JTA's first post-liberation reference to Auschwitz came on June 30, 1945, in a short article about 2,000 survivors "from such infamous places as Dachau, Buchenwald, Auschwitz and Mauthausen" travelling to Tyrol, in western Austria, in hopes of immigrating to Palestine, Brazil, the United States and France.

Perhaps in the months and years after the war, Auschwitz's liberation – and the grim scene found there by the Red Army soldiers – was eclipsed by other war-related news, particularly as the Jewish community became absorbed with the project of resettling hundreds of thousands displaced people and building a Jewish state. Or perhaps it was too horrifying and painful to address so soon. Certainly, it cannot be explained by the ignorance of Auschwitz's horrors, since the 1944 reports offered a fairly clear picture of what was happening inside the electrical fences.

The train tracks leading to the goods station in Auschwitz. Auschwitz was the largest of the German concentration camps. ISAAC HARARI/FLASH90

A June 1944 report by the World Council of Churches in Geneva, for example, noted "that travel conditions are such that many deportees die en route and that others are killed and cremated on arrival in Auschwitz."

A few days later, *JTA* reported on more details, including the practice of tattooing inmates and the failure to provide adequate clothing.

In November, the United States War Refugee Board offered still more details, based on eyewitness reports from two prisoners who had escaped Auschwitz and Birkenau, and of a "non-Jewish Polish army major who is the sole survivor of one group imprisoned at Auschwitz."

The War Refugee Board report, as described by *JTA*, said that those caught trying to escape Auschwitz "were hanged in the presence of the whole camp," described the "brutal" working conditions and told of the camp's "biological laboratory" where "SS, civilian and internee doctors performed 'experiments' on Jewish girls and women."

Whatever the reasons, it took several years for anyone to commemorate the anniversary of liberation – or at least for any such commemoration to garner media coverage.

The first one on which *JTA* reported came in 1951, with 50,000 people at an Auschwitz ceremony mentioned in a larger article about other commemorations in Europe, including one for the eighth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. At that early Auschwitz liberation ceremony organized by the Polish government and delegations from Czechoslovakia and Hungary, *JTA* noted that "only a handful of Jews... were reported present."

It was not until liberation's 50th anniversary, in 1995, that it began receiving significant attention, no doubt aided by the fall of the Iron Curtain, which made it easier for visitors to travel to Poland.

Not all the attention was positive. As *JTA* reported, the two days of 50th anniversary commemorations were "marked by conflicts between Jews and Poles as to how Auschwitz should be remembered."

Conflicting understandings of the Holocaust spurred Jews to stage "their own separate memorial ceremony on Jan. 26 in 1995 as a supplement to the official program."

By the 60th anniversary in 2005, when *JTA* published a series of articles and the ceremony at Auschwitz attracted 1,000 survivors and more than 40 heads of state, Polish-Jewish relations had improved.

Some 1.3 million people died in Auschwitz, about one million of them Jews. What will happen at the next major anniversary, in 2025? One thing we know for certain: at the 80th anniversary, the youngest remaining survivors will be over 90, meaning it may very well be the last ceremony in which any witnesses are present. ■

Holocaust documentary broadcast to Iranians

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

A documentary film featuring footage from the Auschwitz death camp has been broadcast to Iranian viewers, exposing many of them for the first time to the atrocities and mass-murder committed by the Nazis against the Jews.

The documentary, titled *Germany's Führer*, was broadcast on Holocaust Memorial Day by Manoto1, a London-based satellite TV station, and was shot by an Iranian film crew that visited the site. The film details the Nazis rise to power in Europe and discusses the stages leading up to the execution of the Final Solution for the extermination of the Jews.

The showing of the film coincided with International Holocaust Memorial Day and marked 70 years since the camp was finally liberated by the Soviet army.

Owning a satellite dish in the Islamic Republic is forbidden by the government, but nevertheless, the documentary was estimated to have been viewed by scores of Iranians.

It is unclear to what extent the film actually managed to change the deeply rooted opinions of many Iranians who maintain the Holocaust was fabricated or perpetrated by the Jewish People as a means to garner world sympathy.

"All these crimes were committed by the Jews themselves so they reach their real objectives," one viewer wrote on Facebook, according to the *Times of London*.

Yet the screening of the film did succeed in sparking a lively online debate in Iran, leading some to draw parallels between the Nazis and their leader Adolf Hitler, and the heads of the Islamic Republic.

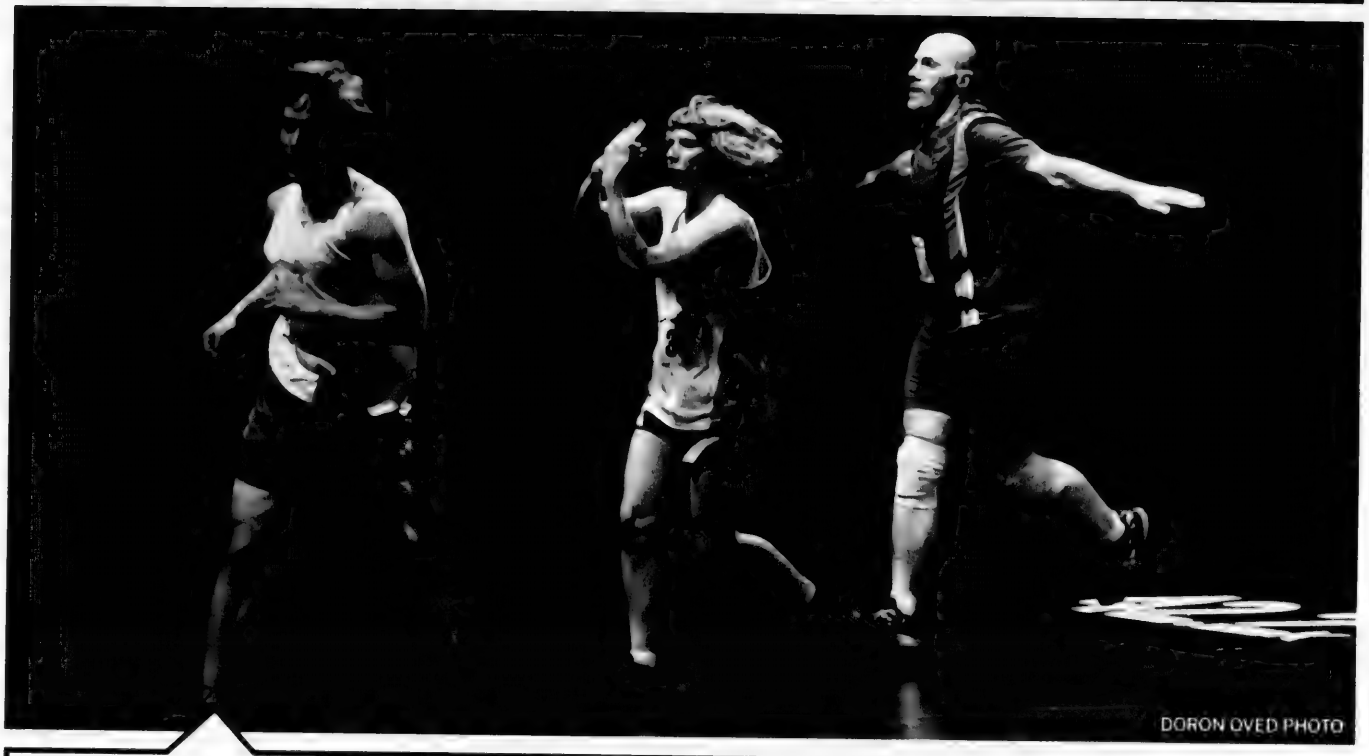
"We are being trampled under the boots of the likes of Hitler today. At least Hitler wanted to improve the lives of his own people, but these people ruling Iran today want everything for themselves," the *Times* reported one viewer as writing.

Holocaust denial is widespread in Iran and the position has often been reinforced by the country's leaders, most notably former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who referred to the Holocaust as "pure fiction."

However, Iran's current president, Hassan Rouhani, has publicly acknowledged the Holocaust.

"Any crime that happens in history against humanity, including the crime the Nazis committed towards the Jews as well as non-Jews, was reprehensible and to be condemned," Rouhani told *CNN* in September 2013. ■

Jewish Life



DORON OVED PHOTO

Marathon runs around in circles

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

An actor or dancer has a lot to remember when he or she struts onto a stage during a performance. An actor does not just have to remember the lines, but the emotional inflection behind the dialogue, as well as the staging. A dancer has to think about proper form and sharing the space beyond just getting the moves right.

Now, imagine that the performer's role was to move, speak and interact with the other actors – but had to do so while running around a circular space, mostly without stopping, for a full hour.

This is the major challenge behind staging *Marathon*, an acclaimed Israeli play that arrives at the Theatre Centre in Toronto on Feb. 4 before a short nationwide tour. The Canadian staging will mark *Marathon's* English-language and North American premiere.

Choreographer Aharona Israel, also the play's creator, says the constant physical exertion inherent to the performance is a metaphor for Israeli society. The constant running in a circle reflects a state of urgency, emergency and, ultimately, exhaustion.

"It is also a way to search for authenticity on stage," Israel tells *The CJN*, adding that the actors will not fake their exhaustion after running for so long.

Marathon pushes its performers to their physical limits. Due to the rigorous demands of the performance, it took Israel and her actors half a year of rehearsal before they were ready to stage *Marathon* in 2012. She hired a running coach to teach the actors how to maintain energy during that process.

Marathon's text and characters, meanwhile, derive from the experiences of the three actors. The current staging and text cover topics such as immigration, bereavement and post-war trauma.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

INSIDE:

Celebrity chef teams up with Toronto's Kosher Catering owner for new venture

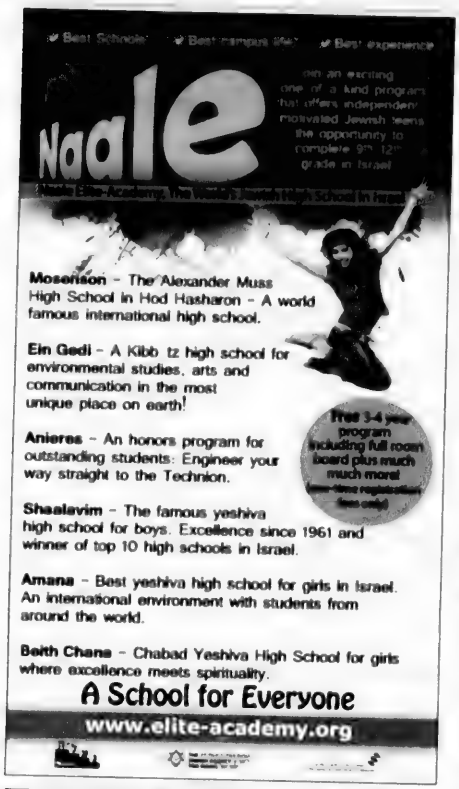
Susur Lee and Moishe Brown make an unlikely pair.

Lee, the Hong Kong-born, Toronto-based celebrity chef known for his near empire of trendy restaurants and repertory of television appearances, is, at 57, statuesque and polished, practically larger than life.

Brown, 36, the owner of Toronto company Modern Kosher Catering, is soft-spoken and quietly self-possessed, kippah-clad.

Together, they're creating an exclusive line of kosher, Susur Lee-branded food, to be added to Modern Kosher's existing list of menu options.

See full story on page 45
– JODIE SHUPC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AUTHORS & POETS

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We can only accept email submissions. We prefer Word documents

Maus creator discusses art of cartoons

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Art Spiegelman ENNO KAPITZA PHOTO

Art Spiegelman was exhausted – he had just returned from China. The condition, he conceded apologetically, caused him to be a bit rambling and unedited. But the beneficiary was a packed audience Jan. 26 at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema.

The storied cartoonist and creator of *Maus*, now lauded as a touchstone in both the "graphic novel" genre as well as in Holocaust education, took the crowd through a freewheeling, hour-long appreciation of comics, free speech, his Jewish sensibilities and, in the wake of the *Charlie Hebdo* massacres, how perilous a craft cartooning can be.

Drawing chuckles, Spiegelman said he's been called the father of the graphic novel, "but I'm demanding a blood test."

Mainly, he dwelled on the topic of his talk, presented by the Koffler Centre of the Arts: "What the %&@! Happened to Comics?" Whether political, journalistic or just fun, comics and cartooning (not the same things, he stressed) have lost their bite and whimsy, at least in North America, he claimed.

That's a pity, he added, because humans, Spiegelman believes, are hardwired to think in comic-like panels of single images and "in little bursts of language."

Now 66, Spiegelman recounted growing up in New York on a steady diet of comic books. He learned to read from *Batman*, philosophy from *Peanuts*, politics from *Pogo* and about sex by contemplating Betty and Veronica of *Archie* fame. "Everything else" came from *Mad* magazine, which, in its earliest incarnations, was widely denounced as crude and subversive.

"I studied *Mad* the way some kids studied the Talmud," he quipped. "It changed my life. It made me want to be a cartoonist." To him, *Mad*, which was written mainly by Jews, "was my window into America from a dysfunctional refugee household" and "a secular Jewish response to Auschwitz."

His Polish Holocaust survivor parents, however, "didn't see it that way."

As is well known by now, Spiegelman's crowning achievement was *Maus*, a monumental, stirring and hugely innovative story, told in cartoon form, of his parents' survival of the Nazi era and their later lives in America. Famously, Jews are depicted as mice, Germans as cats, Americans as dogs and Poles as pigs. *Maus* was the first graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and is widely used as a teaching tool.

Spiegelman explained briefly how his animal representations came to be. Partly, they were a result of the standard cat versus mouse food chain in comics and cartoons, but he also built on earlier anti-Semitic depictions of Jews as rodents.

With overhead photos and reproductions, he showed images from the Nazi newspaper *Der Sturmer* and several anti-Semitic cartoons depicting Jews as unclean rats infecting the German body politic. The intent was to dehumanize Jews. "It's necessary to dehumanize in order to kill," Spiegelman said, "and it was no accident that Zyklon B (used in gas chambers) was a pesticide."

Post-*Maus*, Spiegelman felt he had to re-invent himself, so he went to work for the *New Yorker*, where his first cover art, in 1993, showed a chassidic man in a deep embrace and kiss with a black woman. It was meant to convey conciliation in the raw weeks following the riots in Crown Heights between Jews and African-Americans, "but all hell broke loose," Spiegelman recalled. "Everybody was upset by it."

He redeemed himself somewhat with a post-9/11 cover that appeared as funereal all-black but which actually showed the twin towers when viewed at a certain angle.

As for *Charlie Hebdo*, Spiegelman claimed the French satirical newspaper is not anti-Islamic but an offender of all religions, including the Catholic Church. He likened it to the television cartoon *South Park*, and though juvenile, "it relishes the ability to speak its mind, whether that's good or bad."

He showed a variety of covers from the publication, and also the infamous 2006 Danish editorial cartoons of Muhammad that generated global controversy.

Though he never wanted to be a political cartoonist, Spiegelman waded into the fray himself in the wake of a contest a few years ago in Iran for best anti-Semitic cartoon. Published in the *New Yorker*, Spiegelman's efforts succeeded as satire because they held Iran's contest in contempt.

Ultimately, he said, political cartoons have lost their "sting" in America because of declining newspaper readership coupled with the fear of offending. ■

The Art Gallery of Ontario continues its exhibit of Spiegelman's work. Art Spiegelman's CO-MIX: A Retrospective runs to March 14.

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

TEATRON PRESENTS *THE VALUE OF NAMES* AT TORONTO CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Playwright **Jeffrey Sweet** was inspired to write the comedy-drama *The Value of Names*, after imagining a hypothetical situation in which a talented dancer is hired for a Broadway show to be directed by the man who had blacklisted her father in Hollywood decades earlier.

In *The Value of Names*, a daughter tells her comedian father that she is changing her name to get a role on Broadway. Presented by Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre, the award-winning play opens this month with actors **Allan Price, Jack Newman** and **Justine Lewis**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St. Feb. 19 to March 1. Various ticket prices from $19 (preview) to $48. www.teatrontheatre.com, Ticketmaster 1-855-985-2787.

• • •

Yiddish Wit and Wisdom: The Friends of Yiddish hosts a Yiddish Wit and Wisdom Celebration featuring lively readings of a selection of Yiddish literary treasures in Yiddish with English explanation and commentary. Members free, guests $5; includes refreshments and door prizes. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. (between Sheppard and Finch). Sunday Feb. 8, 2 p.m. Please RSVP by Feb. 5 to yiddish18@yahoo.ca or 416-458-1440.

• • •

Theatre-Dance from Israel: Koffler Centre of the Arts, in association with Spotlight on Israel, co-presents the North American premiere of *Marathon*, a theatre-dance performance created by Tel Aviv choreographer **Aharona Israel** and performed by **Ilya Domanov, Merav Dagan** and **Gal Shamai**. It is performed in its original Hebrew on Feb. 5 (with English subtitles) and in English on Feb. 4 and 6. Running time, one hour. The Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. W. $30, $20. kofflerarts.org

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Names in the News: Eighty-year-old Montreal poet-troubador **Leonard Cohen** has been nominated for Best Album of the Year (*Popular Problems*) in the 2015 Juno Awards, and is also up for an award in the Artist of the Year category. Some six decades Cohen's junior, fellow Montrealer and jazz singer **Nikki Yanofsky** is also in the running for a Juno in the Pop Album of the Year category for her CD, *Little Secret*. The 2015 Junos will be given out in Hamilton during Juno Week, March 9 to 15.

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Film Events

• Film critic **Kevin Courrier** delivers the final lecture with clips in his series of "Forbidden Desires – The Films of **Alfred Hitchcock**," focusing on such works as *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Rear Window* and *Psycho*. Drop-in $12, students $6. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Feb. 9, 1 to 3 p.m.

• Film critic **Shlomo Schwartzberg** presents "Valentine's Day – Romance on Film," a talk with film clips about some strongly romantic films including *It Happened One Night*, *To Have and Have Not*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* and more. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. at Bloor, Thursday Feb. 12, 1:30 to 3 p.m. Drop-in $4, includes kosher popcorn. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• Toronto Jewish Film Society and Spotlight on Israeli Culture present *The Matchmaker*, a film set in Haifa in the summer of 1968, a sobering coming-of-age comedy-drama in which 16-year-old **Arik** works for a mysterious matchmaker, a survivor: "echoes of the Holocaust meet the summer of free love." With guest speaker **Prof. Kalman Weiser**. $15, $10; tickets available one hour before each screening. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday Feb. 15, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival, in association with Spotlight on Israeli Culture, presents *Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem*, a 2014 French-German-Israeli co-production directed by **Ronit** and **Shlomi Elkabetz**. Viviane (Ronit Elkabetz) craves a divorce from her controlling husband, but since there is no civil divorce in Israel, she is at the mercy of her husband and the rabbinical courts. A "powerful critique of faith and gender politicals in Israel"; in Hebrew and French with English subtitles. $15 cash at the door. Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. Sunday Feb. 22, 1 and 4 p.m. www.tjff.com

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At the Galleries

• *Still Life Is Still Life*, an art show by **Bina Cole**, is at the Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery, Columbus Centre, 901 Lawrence Ave. W., Feb. 5 to March 2. Opening reception, Thursday Feb. 5, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. www.carriergallery.com

• *Prayer*, mixed media by **Dvora Barzilai**, explores the Hebrew language in liturgy, songs, contemporary Hebrew proverbs and forgotten texts. Continues in the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery to Feb. 19. ■

An exhibit by Bina Cole is on at the Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery.

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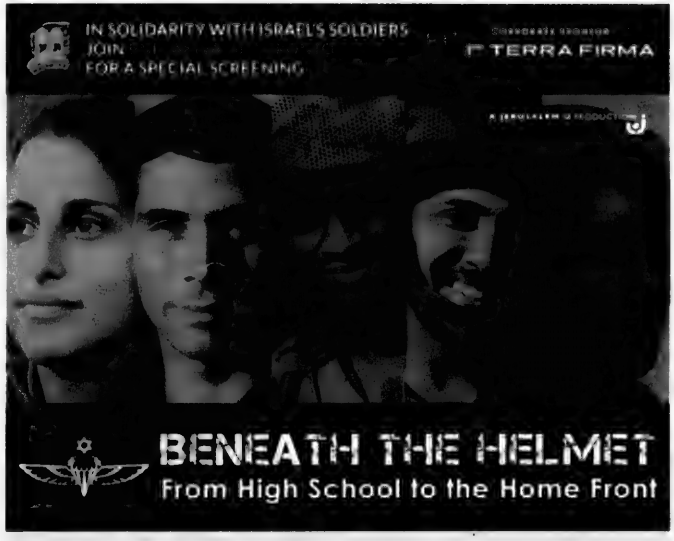

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Historical novel takes place in Inquistion-era Portugal

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The plot of David Liss' latest novel, *The Day of Atonement*, centres upon a nearly impossible, usually unreachable, human task.

"I needed to restore order to my broken life," explains Sebastian Foxx, the audacious, troubled, courageous hero of the story. Foxx's life was broken, we learn in the first pages of the book, by the Inquisition in Portugal.

Some 10 years before the main narrative of the story actually begins, when Sebastian Foxx was 13-year-old Sebastião Raposa playing upon the cobbled streets of Lisbon in 1745, the sadistic executioners of the Inquisition took his "New Christian" parents away and caused their deaths. They destroyed Foxx's family, shattering his life into jagged sharp-edged shards that ceaselessly cut and wounded his soul. Through the aid of one of his father's friends, Sebastião is rescued from the Inquisitors' grasping hands and spirited to London where he becomes a ward of the renowned Benjamin Weaver, the stalwart, resolute champion of three of Liss' previous works.

Though he finds safety, comfort, education and affection in Weaver's home, Foxx does not find peace. He is tortured by the nightmare he cannot cast out of his mind, namely, the horrific fate of his parents and worse, the constant, unalleviated guilt he feels for having abandoned them.

Ten years after arriving in London, unable to bear the guilt and the anger that daily tear at his conscience, Foxx leaves a note for Weaver explaining why he must depart the home in which he found shelter. He plans to travel back to Lisbon to avenge his parents' murder and to seek out the girl whom he loved in Lisbon those many years ago, if she is still alive.

It is only in that way, Foxx believes, that he can atone for the "sin" of having abandoned his mother and father and "make peace" with them. As he explains, "for sins of one man against another, the Day of Atonement does not atone, until they have made peace with each other."

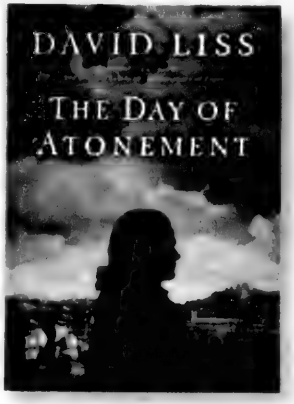
So, Sebastião Raposa, now fully the Englishman Sebastian Foxx, sets out on his fateful journey back to the city that seared unhealed torment into his life. As soon as he arrives in Portugal, it is quickly apparent that danger lurks there. Having adopted the religion of his ancestors while living with Weaver, Sebastian returns as a Jew, probably the only Jew who dared to step foot in Inquisition-terrorized Lisbon.

And this is merely how the book begins!

Liss has perfected the art of suspenseful historical fiction. *The Day of Atonement* is: packed with precise detail of time and place; thoughtful and provocative in the larger, moral, human issues that underpin the story; replete with a vivid roster of robust, well-developed, engaging individuals of variously noble and sinister characters; and a complex tale of fast-paced, tightly told, gut-wrenching action with myriad, unpredictable twists and turns of plot.

The Day of Atonement is somewhat of a sequel (although it may be stretching the term) to three of Liss' eight previous works *A Conspiracy of Paper*, *A Spectacle of Corruption* and *The Devil's Company* in which the steely-eyed, rakish, ethical, tender yet intimidating Benjamin Weaver is the main character.

Weaver has been described by the author-historian Ross King as "one of historical fiction's most compelling action heroes." Based upon the real life Daniel Mendoza, a Sephardi Jew who was a champion boxer in London's East End at the turn of the 18th century, Weaver is a Jewish former boxer, private investigator and debt collector whom Liss uses as a literary springboard.



The Day of Atonement
David Liss
Random House

Weaver is Sebastian Foxx's mentor. Foxx, we are meant to understand, is a younger, rough-edged, not-yet fully-formed Benjamin Weaver, who deliberately places himself in harm's way far from the people and resources he might summon to help extricate him from the dire difficulties that lie in wait.

Ever present in the alleyways, inns, and markets of Lisbon is the dark, looming presence of the Inquisition. It hovers like a malevolent ghost peering around each corner. It casts a pall over sun and sky, spawning fear and drowning courage. Nevertheless, Foxx confronts the Inquisition at its very epicentre, the Palace, "the most dreaded structure in Lisbon," to find the man responsible for his parents' deaths.

"I moved purposefully, as if I belonged - another skill learned from Mr. Weaver – and made my way across the marble floors, past the great oil paintings and gilt statues and altars. So much wealth, bought with New Christian gold, acquired with New Christian blood," Foxx states.

"So many of my people, my family, had been dragged into this place, put to the question, imprisoned, tortured, murdered. This place was the very heart of Lisbon's evil, the machine that fed upon human flesh and churned out ruined husks."

Outside the Palace, Foxx sees an unassuming, simple pastry seller taken to the Palace for questioning.

"I had seen men taken away by the Inquisition before. My childhood had been full of such scenes, and that this one unfolded according to the ancient script made it no less dreadful to witness. The man struggled and cried out for help. He twisted his neck to one side and then the other, as if looking for something that would rescue him. No one looked at him, their morbid curiosity crushed by their will to not appear too interested.

"The man shouted that he was innocent, that he had done nothing, that he was a good Christian, but the soldiers did not react.... In a matter of seconds, everything he had had been stripped from him and there was nothing in his future but torment and isolation and want. He stopped shouting his innocence and instead began to wail, helplessly and hopelessly, as he grieved for all he had known."

Whether Foxx ultimately does restore order to his broken life - indeed whether he even escapes Lisbon with his life - is the key intrigue and creative tension that fills each page of *The Day of Atonement*. It is an absorbing and rich reading experience. ■

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Susur Lee goes kosher

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Susur Lee and Moishe Brown make an unlikely pair.

Lee, the Hong Kong-born, Toronto-based celebrity chef known for his near empire of trendy restaurants and repertory of television appearances, is, at 57, statuesque and polished, practically larger than life.

Brown, 36, the owner of Toronto company Modern Kosher Catering, is soft-spoken and quietly self-possessed, kippah-clad.

And yet, there seems to exist between them – each the master of his kitchen – an easy understanding and respect.

Graciously addressing one another only as "chef," the two convened Jan. 28 at Lee's chic, Asian fusion restaurant Bent, located on Dundas Street West, to discuss their forthcoming culinary collaboration.

Together, they're creating an exclusive line of kosher, Susur Lee-branded food, to be added to Modern Kosher's existing list of menu options.

Brown, who attended culinary school in Israel and launched Modern Kosher in 2013, has made it his mission to enliven, and inject elements of contemporary food culture, into traditional kosher fare.

He typically caters events like bar/bat mitzvahs, weddings and baby namings, and, though based out of the kitchen at Adath Israel Congregation, he'll also cater at other synagogues or venues.

"I've moved away from just doing the kugels and gefilte fishes," he said, "introducing new ingredients…importing stuff from Israel or the United States…trying different fusions."

Brown sees this latest venture – which came about roughly six months ago when a member of Adath Israel met Lee at a local sports club and decided to connect the two chefs – as an obvious boon.

Since first promoting the collaboration on Facebook two weeks ago, he said his bookings have increased.

"For the last so many years, I've been finding that a lot of wedding parties want to go to outside venues instead of shuls," Brown said. "I've already met with three different young couples whose parents haven't been to any of Lee's restaurants, but they have, and they're really excited [to have his food at their weddings]. The younger demographic is very difficult to attract, so [this venture] is already proving its point."

The menu they're co-developing will meld Lee's brand of Asian fusion with both traditional eastern European and Mediterranean-style kosher foods.

For example, they spoke of exploring Asian variations on braised meat (brisket), and dishes like crispy duck with wild blueberry preserve, sashimi with citrus sauce and latkes with caramelized onions and mustard seeds.

"We want to lighten up the eastern European style of food, which can be quite heavy," Brown said.

Lee, whose experience making "Jewish" food consists of a Jewish National Fund-sponsored culinary tour to Israel nearly a decade ago, has fully embraced the challenge of cooking within kashrut's guidelines; he and Brown have been meeting regularly to brainstorm menus and review regulations.

Celebrity chef Susur Lee, left, and Modern Kosher Catering owner Moishe Brown to collaborate on kosher food line. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

"I like this slow engagement we've had, my getting to know the cultural background," Lee mused. "I think working within specific limitations and making the food taste amazing – that's the challenge. Making kosher food is so specific, and I like specific things."

His stint in Israel was enough to pique his interest in Jewish food. "I felt really connected when I went there," Lee recalled, "and saw all the variety of fish, breads, the best Lebanese foods, shakshuka – I had the best shakshuka – I felt people there are really passionate."

He grinned, adding, "I did make one mistake there. I was making chickpeas and…I picked up the wrong bucket to add water to them and all of a sudden, I see this rabbi running over yelling, 'You're killing my people!' I was like, 'Holy shit, this is really serious.'"

"We've been swapping mashgiach stories," Brown chuckled.

Lee was quick to note that Asian cooking is also not without limitations, given that Asian chefs often forgo the use of dairy.

Of course, Lee's interest in kashrut doesn't stem purely from curiosity; he explained that a large number of his restaurant clientele, particularly at his downtown Toronto Chinese restaurant Luckee, are Jewish.

"I have a lot of really good connections with Jewish people," he said. "There's so many opportunities to explore, be creative and think outside the box [with Jewish food]."

Brown and Lee will launch the line March 12, when they'll co-host a sample dinner at Adath Israel for press and select members of the community.

In addition to expanding his customer base, Brown believes his existing clients will welcome the innovation.

"In terms of the future of the palate of the Jewish people of Toronto," he said, "I think they will appreciate this lightening up of kosher food." ■

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'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 5, 2015

When it comes to cartoons, Spiegelman paved the way

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"Prior to the publication of the first issue of RAW, *Art Spiegelman and François Mouly gave a few interviews that I found captivating. What Art said about the potential of the medium was very inspiring to me. And then he began to serialize* Maus. *I couldn't have predicted the impact it would have, but reading that first chapter, I knew it would be a masterpiece.* Maus *showed that, if they're good enough, serious comics can have a very large audience."*

- Chester Brown, Canadian cartoonist

Like leading Toronto-based cartoonist Chester Brown, I distinctly remember my first encounter with *Maus*. Unlike Brown and the great Canadian cartoonist Seth quoted earlier, I was not immersed in comic culture and so was not aware of *RAW* and Spiegelman's catalytic presence in a cartooning revolution when, as a student living in New York, I bought a copy of *Maus I* at the Strand bookstore on Broadway in the fall of 1987. I bought it as a book, from a new release table, not in a vast and expansive section of comics and graphic novels that my oldest daughter can now lose a day in at the Strand. (My daughters, like many Canadian kids, would be introduced to *Maus* at school.) Back in the 1980s, there was no large comic section, but there may have been a shelf of comic material somewhere in the sprawling multi-story landmark that still remains a vibrant hub of activity with its distinct red banners in lower Manhattan.

Spiegelman clearly helped create the demand and boom in comic publishing and also reminded us how important the printed book is as a creative and tactile form. In 1991, back in Canada, I bought *Maus II* when it first came out at Pages on Queen Street West, a truly great independent bookstore with a dedicated comics section that sadly closed in 2012. Fortunately, we still have The Beguiling and TCAF (Toronto Comic Arts Festival).

• • •

"Since The Beguiling opened in 1987, Art Spiegelman's work has introduced more readers to the medium than any other author – from the adult non-comics readers converted by Maus, *to, more recently, the children who started with Little Lit and Toon books as their first comics. Even now, with a market crowded with books that followed his successes, his books are still the books people cite as sparking their love of comics."*

- Peter Birkemoe, The Beguiling Books & Art Inc. and TCAF

Toronto has emerged as a leading centre of comic arts internationally and Spiegelman's influence in this community is substantial (as it has been in Montreal through comics publisher Drawn and Quarterly). This has carried over to the current emerging generation of artists, many of whom have established significant international reputations in their own right, thriving in the creative space Spiegelman (and Mouly) have shaped. Nina Bunjevac (whose second major graphic novel, *Fatherland*, was recently published worldwide by Random House) and Michael Deforge, who continues to make his mark as a leading innovator, are great examples.

"Any cartoonist who doesn't realize that Spiegelman paved our way, twice, is a fool," says Bunjevac with her characteristic bluntness. "He first did it with *RAW*, and then again with *Maus*. I would not be doing what I am doing now were it not for having been exposed to both. It's that simple."

Deforge adds that "Art Spiegelman pushed the edges of what the medium could be, both in the formal experiments in his own comics and in his work as an editor."

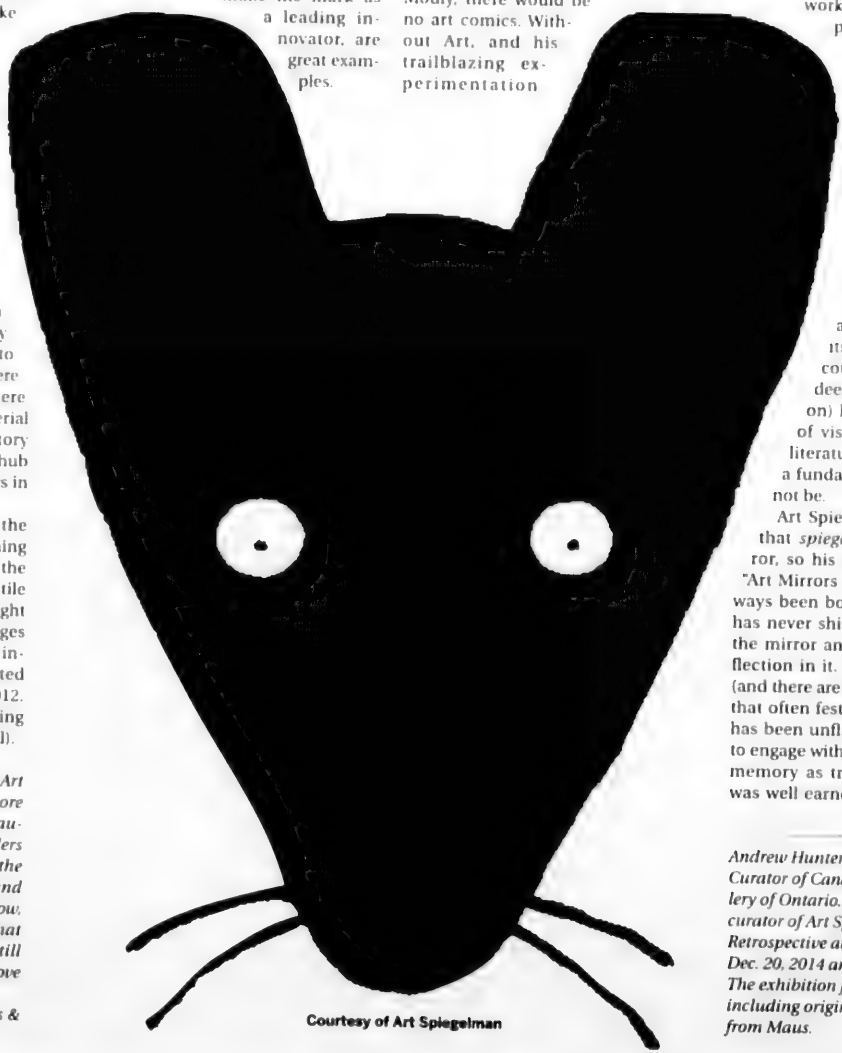
Toronto publisher Annie Koyama sums it all up nicely: "Without Art, and his publishing partner Françoise Mouly, there would be no art comics. Without Art, and his trailblazing experimentation and fearlessness in mining his own past, there wouldn't be a comic honoured with the literary world's top prize. Without Art, comics would be a poorer place."

As often happens when an artist produces a work of such power, popularity and influence, that work can become almost a burden, even a barrier. *Maus*, at times, has certainly been that for Spiegelman, not only because of its phenomenal success, but also clearly because of the intense personal demands telling such a tale put upon the author.

It would not be until post 9/11 that Spiegelman would once again attempt a work of scope and ambition on par with *Maus* (*In the Shadow of No Towers*, 2004), but he has remained a constant provocative presence, particularly through his many iconic covers for the *New Yorker*. His black on black silhouette of the Twin Towers must be considered one of the most powerful responses to the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

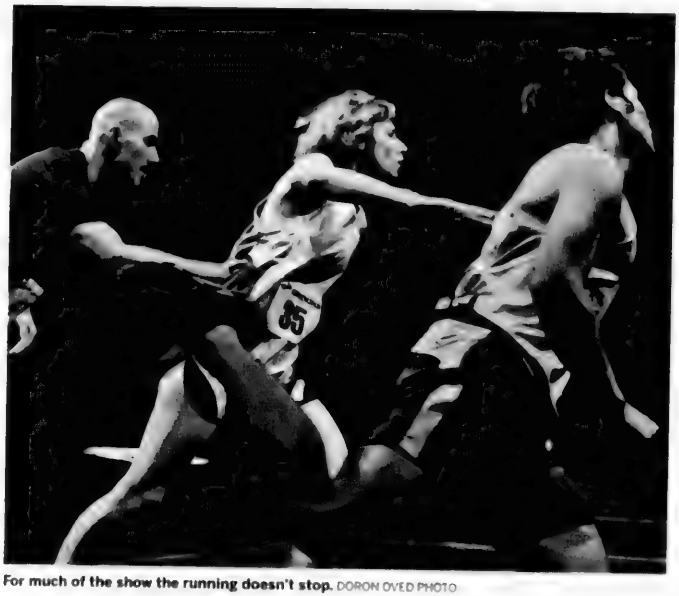
Spiegelman's work stands as great art, the argument of its art status resolved. How could such a body of work so deeply rooted in (and building on) long recognized traditions of visual and graphic arts and literature, and that has had such a fundamental impact on culture, not be.

Art Spiegelman likes to point out that *spiegel* in German means mirror, so his name equals, in essence, "Art Mirrors Man." Spiegelman has always been bold in his convictions and has never shied away from holding up the mirror and also seeing his own reflection in it. His most powerful works (and there are many) expose the wounds that often fester and won't heal, and he has been unflinching in his willingness to engage with the trauma of history and memory as trauma. His Pulitzer Prize was well earned and richly deserved. ■



Courtesy of Art Spiegelman

Andrew Hunter is the Fredrik S. Eaton Curator of Canadian Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. He is the co-ordinating curator of Art Spiegelman: Co-Mix, A Retrospective at the AGO that opened on Dec. 20, 2014 and runs through March 20. The exhibition features over 600 artworks, including original manuscript material from Maus.



For much of the show the running doesn't stop. DORON OVED PHOTO

Performers run between eight and 10 kilometres each show

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

"We did a lot of running and talking," Israel says. "I initiated conversations on different things [with the performers] and out of that, I made different tasks where movement and material could be developed."

The choreographer also hired a writer, Asa Wolfson, to watch rehearsals and document parts of the conversations between the cast members. Along with help from the performers, Wolfson and Israel collaborated on the initial text.

"In a way, the text was made the way choreography is made... improvising and weaving it together," Israel says.

The show premiered at Israel's Acco Festival in 2012. The version of *Marathon* that will run in Toronto, from Feb. 4 to 6, will feature one performance each day: the first and last show will be in English, while the middle show will be in Hebrew with English subtitles.

Ilya Domanov and Merav Dagan, two of the original three cast members, are still touring with the show. Gal Shamai, who has completed several half-marathons, was a natural fit to join the small group of performers when one of the original cast members dropped out.

"Originally, I looked for people whose presence was interesting for me or who carried a kind of personal story that I felt like I can relate to," Israel says. "When I looked for a replacement, I had to find someone who has the running skills already."

For much of the show, the running doesn't stop. (The performers sometimes get walking breaks.) Israel estimates that the performers run between eight and 10 kilometres during each 60-minute show.

Israel says that she has never had to stop a production in the middle due to exhaustion or dehydration. However, some shows have been cancelled.

"It's not a piece you can perform if you're not fully fit," she says.

Marathon is in Toronto as part of the Progress Festival and Spotlight on Israeli Culture and will be co-presented by the Koffler Centre of the Arts. Following Toronto, *Marathon* will head to festivals in Peterborough, Ottawa and Vancouver.

The Koffler Centre also offers two multi-day workshops, led by Israel, where she will discuss her process and teach local artists about themes inherent to her work.

The first, Intelligent Body, runs on Feb. 6 and 7, and focuses on combining dance and movement with a text. The second, Seeing Through Movement, is open to all artists and deals more with the human perception of visual space and movement. That workshop runs on Feb. 9 and 10. ■

Marathon is co-presented with the Koffler Centre for the Arts, and supported by Spotlight on Israeli Culture, the Embassy of Israel, and the Israeli Consulate (Toronto). Feb.4-6, 7:30 p.m., the Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. W.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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The CJN will not enter into any correspondence with contestants.

E-mail your information to "contest@thecjn.ca" Re: **"SING" Contest**, or mail to: The Canadian Jewish News, 1750 Steeles Ave. W. Suite 218, Concord, ON L4K 2L7 or fax to: 416-391-0949.

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הקרן החדשה לישראל

SAY YES

What's New

FEB. 5 - FEB. 12

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Feb. 5

YIDDISH VINKL
Judy Perly, owner of The Free Times Cafe, is the guest speaker, noon, 320 College St RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

FINDING OUR WAY IN PRAYER
The clergy at Beth David Synagogue present a 4-part series on "Finding our way in traditional prayer." Tonight: "Language of the siddur," 7:30 p.m. Feb. 12, "Prayer and song."

Saturday, Feb. 7

FAMILY SHABBAT
Pride of Israel holds a new family Shabbat program, 9:45 a.m., 59 Lissom Cres

DANCING IN JAFFA
Congregation Darchei Noam presents the film *Dancing in Jaffa*, about a champion ballroom dancer who teaches dancing to Jewish and Arab children in Jaffa. 7:30 p.m. $10.

Sunday, Feb. 8

BREAKFAST HONOURS
B'nai Torah Congregation honours member **Meyer Weinstock** at a breakfast, 8:45 a.m. $10. RSVP 416-226-3700, ext. 21.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH
Friends of Yiddish holds an afternoon of readings of short stories in Yiddish and English, 2 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue RSVP **Sandy** 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

BETWEEN GODS: A MEMOIR
Author **Alison Pick** discusses her new book, *Between Gods*, 11 a.m., First Narayever Congregation. 416-927-0546.

LGBT SPEED DATING
Kulanu holds its LGBT Jewish speed dating event at the Fox and Fiddle, 27 Wellesley St. E. Registration at 4:30, event starts at 5 p.m. Register at www.bit.ly/lgbtjewishdating. $15.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Feb. 19 is Feb. 9. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Making simple machines

The Grade 2 class at Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School welcomed visitors from the Thomas & Marjorie Schwartz Preschool Centre at the annual toy fair. By applying the principles of simple machines to toy making, the older students created a range of creative toys, which they shared with their preschool friends and the school community. From left are Omer Golberg, Mika Zer Kuch and Simone Rothschild.

UNFROZEN DANCE
Shaar Shalom Singles and Intersynagogue Singles 50+ hold an Un"Frozen" Dance with the music of **James Regan,** 2 Simonston Blvd. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. $10. 905-889-4975, ext. 72.

Monday, Feb. 9

MEDIA TODAY AND TOMORROW
Paul Godfrey, president and CEO of Postmedia Network, discusses "The media today and directions for tomorrow," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai. 416-487-4161.

THE JEWISH CALL TO JUSTICE
Rabbi Miriam Margles discusses "The Jewish call to justice: poverty, tzedakah and social change," 7:30 p.m., Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Ave. RSVP info@djctoronto.com.

Tuesday, Feb. 10

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *We are here*, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz,** 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

Wednesday, Feb. 11

LEADERS OF MODERN ZIONISM
Rabbi Philip Scheim discusses "Leaders of modern Zionism," in a 6-part series, 8 p.m. Beth David Synagogue. Tonight, Rav Abraham Isaac Kook. Feb. 18, Ze'ev Jabotinsky.

Thursday, Feb. 12

TAI CHI
Explore Tai Chi, 7:30 p.m. at Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Contact agol@shaarshalom.ca

Coming Events

JEWISH MAGIC
Mekorot offers a 3-week course with **Barry Levy** on "Jewish magic: In the Talmud, in the non-talmudic magic literature and in halachic literature," Mondays, Feb. 23-March 9, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. info@mekorot.ca.

HEBREW READING
Beth Emeth Synagogue offers a free 6-session Hebrew reading class for those who can read Hebrew slowly. Classes start Feb. 22, 9:15 a.m. Call 416-633-3838

WOMEN'S SHABBAT
Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold is the guest speaker at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Feb. 14, 9 a.m.

JEWISH ACTIVISM IN AFRICA
Adam Hummel is the guest speaker at a Shabbaton at Chabad of Markham, Feb. 20. RSVP for dinner 905-886-0420.

MORASHA
Barrie Wilson presents "The lost gospel, a Jewish perspective," Feb. 25-April 1, 11:15 a.m. at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call **Loretta,** 416-789-7400.

ORTHODOX FEMINISM IN ISRAEL
Hannah Kehat, founder of Israel's first Orthodox feminist organization, speaks Feb. 22, 7 p.m. at the Miles Nadal JCC. Sponsored by the New Israel Fund of Canada.

VENDORS WANTED
Vendors wanted for a March 8 market to raise funds for Uptown Chabad and B'nai Brith Canada. Contact **Sandy Gordon** 416-605-0868 or sandygord@gmail.com

YOUNG JUDAEA ANNIVERSARY
Canadian Young Judaea celebrates Camp Solelim's 50th anniversary, March 7 with a party at The Warehouse. Tickets at www.campsolelim.ca

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- The challenge of anger for women: A 6-session group for women to learn to express their anger in a non-aggressive way. Starts Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.
- Effective parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children age 2 to 10. Starts Feb. 10, 7 p.m.
- High-conflict divorce: A workshop for parents in a high-conflict but not abusive situation. Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.
- When you're about to separate, what to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. Feb. 17, 6:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Film critic **Shlomo Schwartzberg** discusses "Romance on film," Feb. 12, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155, or lisar@mnjcc.org.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, Feb. 18; Spa day, facials, manicures, barber and hairdresser, Feb. 12, 10 a.m.; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Feb. 9, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Great Jewish painters of the 20th century." Mondays until March 16, 1 p.m.; Feb. 12, **Priya Aggarwal** discusses "Chemical awareness and their impact on human health," 1:30 p.m.
- **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. Feb. 18, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays until Feb. 25, **Osnat Lippa** discusses "The Great Artists," 1 p.m.; Thursdays to Feb. 26, **David Chandross** discusses "Nature, philosophy and adventure," 2 p.m.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333, or Judi, 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30. Must reserve by calling 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with Rabbi Meir Gitlin, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabad markham.org

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Reflections in the hall of mirrors," a lecture series on how movies have soaked up the political and cultural ideas of the time. Feb. 4-March 25, 1 p.m.
- The Yiddish group meets for conversation, Mondays at 1:30 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele," Feb. 17, 24 at 1 p.m.
- **Galya Sarna** shares recipes as she prepares an Israeli-style meal with a French twist, March 19, 6:30 p.m
- JCC book club discusses *Sima's Undergarments for Women*, by **Ilana Stanger-Ross**, Feb. 23, 1 p.m.
- Red Cross babysitting course offered Feb. 13, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Lively current events discussions are held Thursdays, 12:45 p.m.
- Try Tai Chi, Mondays 10 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Tu b'Shvat seder, Feb. 5. Doors open at 1 p.m., program 1:30-3 p.m. RSVP lisar@mnjcc.org or ext. 0.
- Shabbat family party (ages 0-4 with an adult), Fridays at 11:15 a.m. Shabbat club (ages 3-5) meets Fridays 12:30 p.m. Call ext. 388.
- **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: the films of Alfred Hitchcock," Feb. 9, 1 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk**, Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein**, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m
- *Prayer*, the art of **Dvora Barzilai**, is in the gallery until Feb. 19.
- The gallery is looking for submissions on the theme of "Shmita/Seven Generations." Submissions are welcome from artists of all backgrounds. Email deannad@mnjcc.org or call ext. 250.
- Making meaningful bar and bat mitzvahs will be discussed Feb. 8, 9:30 a.m. RSVP principal@djcs.org.
- Teen Time, a program for youths in grades 7-8 co-presented by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, Feb. 8, 1 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *The Matchmaker*, Feb. 15, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker: **Kalman Weiser.** Box office opens one hour before screening start time.
- Free family day activities all day Feb. 16, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Enjoy a dance party, jungle gym, face-painting and more.
- Fitness: MELT method full body, Tuesdays 7 p.m., to Feb. 17. fitnessguru@mnjcc.org
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- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200

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- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What's so funny: The complex world of comedy," Feb. 18, 7 p.m.
- **Rachelle Shubert** presents "Here's to Music! Here's to Life," March 5, 2 p.m. at Four Elms Retirement Residence.
- Book club discusses *Sima's Undergarments for Women* by **Ilana Stanger-Ross**, Feb. 24, 7 p.m.
- Single and over 50? Enjoy an evening of live entertainment March 14, 7:30 p.m Pre-registration required.
- Paint your own pottery, Sundays 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- **Marcela Rosemberg** teaches a glass fusion workshop on making your own seder plate, March 10, 7 p.m.
- Red Cross babysitting program, March 9, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. for children 11-18 years. ■

WRY BREAD

Tree-planting ceremony ends in bloodshed, cupcakes

David Levine

It started as a simple and pleasant Tu b'Shvat outing – planting trees in a community garden to celebrate Judaism's agricultural New Year – but after a booking conflict created a shortage of trees, the situation turned ugly.

"The trip got off to a great start," says teacher Rebecca Kronfeld. Along with parent volunteer Bethany Epstein, Kronfeld was taking her Grade 6 students to plant trees, a time-honoured way to observe Judaism's least annoying holiday.

"The kids were so excited. We'd been prepping for weeks – learning about the holiday, and how to do the planting. Only three kids threw up on the bus!"

Kronfeld says the 57 students in her class were walking toward the field when the confrontation first occurred.

"This van just pulls up out of nowhere, driving the wrong way up a one-way street, and almost hitting Daniel B. They parked diagonally across the intersection. Then they got out and all heck broke loose."

"That's not what happened at all," protests Burt Schwartz, 78, resident of Withered Acres Retirement Community and head of its excursion committee, as well as the driver in question.

"I was going the speed limit. I never came close to that boy – who was too busy staring at his Game Boy to look up! When I was young, cars would drive right next to you. Sometimes they'd bump your elbow. Did we complain?"

But the real conflict was yet to come: Organizer and head planter Howard Fluge explains that an "innocent mix-up" with the calendar led to a situation in which "only a limited number of holes had been dug and only a limited number of saplings were available."

"The error is my fault," Fluge confesses. "Even though it was our intern's job, and I told him a hundred times to double-check the bookings. I take full responsibility for his failures."

Fluge says he tried to reason with both groups, "but once they realized that we only had enough saplings for one group, neither was in the mood to compromise."

The ensuing chaos has proven difficult to reconstruct. Forensic teams have determined that as word of the shortage spread, both groups made a beeline for the available trees. Some students found their path obstructed by a makeshift barricade of canes and walkers, while others were quick enough to avoid the trap.

Kronfeld saw it all from the parking lot: "Stephanie G. and Marshall were the first to reach the saplings. They grabbed as many as they could and ran out to the field. When the rest of the students tried to follow, the old folks turned and ran after them. That's when The Buddy System failed us."

Burt Schwartz sees it differently: "We were just going to plant trees. The next thing you know, all these kids are swarming around us – like a street gang. They laughed at us and ran out to plant *our* trees. That upset some of the group."

Fluge, perhaps the only impartial observer, saw "the students running ahead to plant trees with the old folks bearing down on them. Several of the elderly people tried to brandish their canes as clubs, though some of them fell over while trying the manoeuvre."

While some students managed to plant their saplings properly, most just tossed them in the ground and ran, with barely enough time to take a selfie before escaping the wrinkled wrath.

"At least a dozen students tripped and fell while running back up the field," says Fluge. "Some of them landed on the old folks, who were slowly crawling out to uproot and replant the saplings themselves. It was a mess."

"They turned on our kids," says Kronfeld. "Jeremy W. was whacked in the shins by a cane. Someone poured Metamucil in Brittany L.'s hair."

Schwartz disagrees.

"Those hoodlums were violent and disrespectful to their elders. Hildie Green is 98 years old, healthy as an ox. Two days later? Renal failure. Just like that."

Whoever is at fault, Fluge doesn't want other schools or retirement facilities to shy away from the activity. "It's a great way to bring the community together," he says. "Maybe don't bring your grandparents." ■

Family Moments

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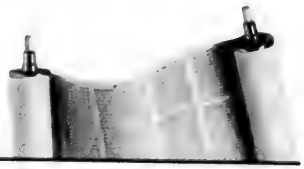
Parshah

Yitro | Exodus 18:1 - 20:23



Rabbi Aaron Katchen explores Jewish views on ecology and environmentalism
Rabbi Michal Shekel says silence can provide a breath of spiritual fresh air
Rabbi Howard Morrison analyses portraits of Yitro in Jewish tradition

Aaron Katchen

"When in your war against a city you must lay siege to it for a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the axe against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed. You may cut them down for constructing siege-works against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced" (Deut. 19:20).

Whether talking about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil or the Tree of Life, trees have an important place in the Torah. In Deut. 20:19-20, the Torah discusses the rules of war and sieges. The turn of phrase is very interesting in the Hebrew – "*ki ha'adam hu etz ha'sadeh.*" These words can be understood as translated above, or they could be interpreted as, "For a person is a tree of the field." The midrash (Sifrei) relates to that metaphor and states that a person's life is from the tree of the field. This comes as a warning: we are meant to get utility from the earth, but it will come at a cost. The unnecessary destruction of the trees will be our destruction as well.

Today, this concept is highlighted in our commemoration of Tu b'Shvat. The recognition of a New Year for Trees may seem odd, but the holiday's origins actually related to the Temple in Jerusalem, regarding when we were allowed to benefit from the produce of our trees. As time passed, the kabbalists in Safed created a seder, mirroring the Passover seder, as an inroad to the deeper meanings of creation. In modern times, Tu b'Shvat has become a day to explore Jewish views of ecology and environmentalism. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Michal Shekel

Like for many of you, the excitement of the Super Bowl is still fresh in my mind: the buzzing anticipation followed by hoopla accompanying the plays, the sound and lights, and even the half-time special effects draw the attention of non-enthusiasts and diehard fans alike.

How do you top that? Sinai: covered by clouds, lightning flash and the blare of the horn grew louder and louder (Exodus 19:19). Biblically, this was the "pre-game show," the introduction to *matan* Torah, the giving of the Torah.

Surprisingly, things change dramatically when we get to the main event. Midrash Shmot Rabbah recounts that no animal made a sound, the sea stopped roaring, and even the Divine creatures were still. A hush fell over the entire world as God began to speak.

Revelation took place in absolute silence. A well-known tradition states that God spoke only the first word of the first commandment, *anochi*, I am. Yet another teaching states that God only spoke the first letter of the first word of the first commandment: the silent letter aleph.

Today, the noise of modern society distracts us from creation and Creator. Still, we choose sound to separate ourselves from the world. We make a cocoon of it, while taking silence for granted. We play our favourite music to drown out the sounds around us as we go about our daily tasks. Worse, we disparage silence. In the media, it's called "dead air."

Yet silence is the spiritual equivalent of a breath of fresh air. The practice of Mussar recognizes two types of silence: *shtikah* is the familiar wordless, noiseless silence, while *dumiyah* is a deeper silence, a progression from silence to stillness. *Shtikah* is what the body desires. *Dumiyah* is what the soul craves. It is the stillness when we perceive God at Sinai. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis.

Howard Morrison

Who exactly was Yitro? How is he portrayed in Jewish tradition?

One interpretation suggests he was a righteous non-Jew, originally an Egyptian priest who advised Pharaoh. When Yitro saw his advice wasn't heeded, he fled to Midian. Another view suggests that mentioning Yitro right after the episode of Amalek teaches that while there are non-Jews who predicate their existence on hating the Jewish People, like Amalek, there are also righteous non-Jews like Yitro who admire the Jewish People and its ideas.

Another interpretation suggests Yitro actually converted to Judaism and became what today we call a Jew by choice. In this context, he was permitted to give advice to Moses. Was he a sincere Jew by choice? One voice suggests he joined the people of Israel only after Amalek was defeated in order to save himself. Another suggests Yitro was inspired by the miracle of the Exodus, a paradigm for religious and physical freedom, and sincerely recited the words, "Blessed is God who saves Israel."

So we have multiple portraits of Yitro: righteous non-Jew who loved and supported the people of Israel, or Jew by choice whose motivation is understood in more than one way. From the various interpretations, we have lessons we can apply to our contemporary challenges.

It's a positive benefit for the Jewish community to form meaningful alliances with non-Jews in ways that reinforce shared values and concerns. Over my 28 years as a pulpit rabbi, I've been blessed to have friends and associations with clergy and others from outside the Jewish faith. Alternatively, over the generations, Judaism has offered a method of sincere conversion to Judaism. In my years serving the Jewish community, I've been blessed to have worked with countless numbers of sincere Jews by choice.

While the middle of the parshah focuses on the dramatic events at Mount Sinai, don't forget the beginning of the portion and its many lessons derived from the question, "Who was Yitro?" ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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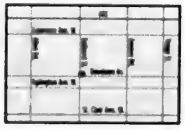

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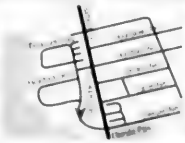

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Standup comic turns disability into comedy gold

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT WINNIPEG

At age 12, Adam Schwartz was told that he had a form of autism called Asperger's syndrome.

But rather than letting his condition hold him back, the South African-born Schwartz – his parents, Peter and Hilda, moved the family to Winnipeg when he was five – has managed to earn a master's degree in library and information sciences and is building up a second career (by day he works for the Winnipeg Public Library system) as a standup comic, the basis of whose routine revolves around the challenges that he faces as someone with Asperger's.

One example of his humour: he says that in high school gym class, his classmates were impressed with his prowess at the water fountain.

Asperger's is a developmental disorder that affects a person's ability to socialize and communicate effectively with others. "I can't read body language or tonal language," Schwartz points out. "And I used to perseverate a lot."

Five years ago, in an effort to improve his social skills, Schwartz, now 28, began taking acting classes. Those classes morphed into standup comedy.

He says he actually finds it easier to get up in front of an audience than to have one-on-one contact. He started out performing at open mic nights once or twice a week. He was a finalist for the *Winnipeg Free Press*' Wackiest Comedian contest in 2011.

In 2013, he put together a show for the Winnipeg Fringe Festival. "Aspergers: A Tale of a Social Misfit" that focuses on his trouble making friends and connecting with the ladies. The show brought him quite a bit of local notice, including interviews on CBC Radio and television.

Last year, he took the show to the Fringe in Saskatoon, and this summer, he will be making his debut at the Toronto Fringe Festival in July and the Victoria Fringe in August.

Adam Schwartz

> *When a crowd is silent, it throws me off more than most comedians, because it is unexpected, and I don't do unexpected well*

In one of his blogs on his website Autism Spectrum Connection Schwartz wrote about how he has to prepare for his performances. "I have to avoid sensory overload," he wrote in a February 2013 post. "I rarely go into situations where I don't know what to expect. No matter what situation I get myself into, whether it is at a bar or going to work or home, I always know what to expect. I know that when I get up in front of a stage to perform, the sound I will likely hear is laughter. I know that before and after the show, there will be conversations going on, with something funny occasionally thrown in for variety. When a crowd is silent, it throws me off more than most comedians, because it is unexpected, and I don't do unexpected well. Therefore, I am up there trying to salvage the show not only for the audience's benefit but also for the benefit of my own sanity, because the longer the new situation goes on, the greater the chance I will have a problem with sensory overload."

He is happy to report that he has generally received warm and friendly responses from his audiences.

Coming up, he has several shows already booked including a coffee house performance in early April commemorating Autistic Awareness Day in Canada.

Schwartz's website also provides links to autism studies and resources and programs across Canada for people with autism. He reports that he is also in the process of creating a new charity – Autistic Productions – whose goal would be to change people's views about autism and Asperger's syndrome. ■

SeeJN | Hockey for Reena

The third annual Stuart Farb Memorial Hockey Game took place Jan. 10 at the Thornhill Community Centre Hockey Arena (and raised $6,113 for the Rebecca Farb Endowment Fund at Reena Foundation, which helps support respite and enrichment programming at Reena). Pictured with family and friends are Stuart's children, Guy, Jody and Philip Farb, centre.

Dario Teitelbaum: Meretz party is the only left-wing Zionist option

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Dario Teitelbaum, the Argentine-born head of the World Union of Meretz (WUM), the international network for supporters of Israel's left-wing, social democratic Zionist Meretz party, as well as other progressive Zionist groups, was in Toronto last month, where he met with local groups and activists affiliated with progressive Zionism. He spoke to *The CJN* about the state of Zionism, the upcoming Israeli elections and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What was the specific purpose of your trip to Toronto, and how does this relate to WUM's overall agenda?

I came to Toronto to meet people, to create a dialogue around the agenda of the WUM and to meet with groups like JSpace, Hashomer Hatzair and people from different factions of Jewish Zionist politics and the Reform movement.

WUM is in charge of maintaining the relationship between Israel and leftist Jewish groups in the Diaspora.

The WUM is a way for people with the same way of thinking to come together around the policies of Israel we're trying to promote. We do kind of bridge-building, to keep people around the world within the idea of Zionism, to keep it relevant to daily life.

Our attempt is to keep people within Zionist organizations and working with Israel, while having the right to express dissent about Israel.

What are some of WUM's concerns about the current state of Zionism?

We're concerned that Zionism right now is considered to be equal to the political right, to the messianic conception of Israel. Somehow people today, when you talk about Zionism, understand it as being part of the right or that it means blindly supporting any action taken by the Israeli government. So we're trying to say that we support the State of Israel, but we also criticize Israeli policies, especially those regarding the conflict with the Palestinians.

There isn't legitimacy for, on one hand loving Israel and, on the other hand, criticizing it. It's not happening deeply enough. I believe that being a Zionist today means supporting the peace process in the Middle East.

What are WUM's biggest concerns at present regarding the current Israeli government's methods?

Meretz believes that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is leading using a policy of not doing. The government is very conservative and is always responding to situations, but not taking initiative. They have been losing opportunities, like they did after the war in Gaza this past summer. Hamas was really weak, and it was worth re-opening negotiations after the war, but instead, now we have Palestinians going to the UN, trying to get into the International Criminal Court, taking Israel to task for violations of human rights. We must look at where this situation is taking us.

Do you believe that the war last summer seriously damaged Israel's reputation internationally?

Before reputation, I care about life. On one hand, we in Israel were living under the threat of missiles for 14 years, so the government has to defend the population. But only defending the population is not good enough. Every two or three years we have another round of violence and nothing moves forward, and the situation in Gaza gets more difficult. That brings people in Gaza to a situation where they feel they don't have anything to lose.

We talk in Israel about living in a kind of continuous state of trauma. The last military action [in the summer] lasted 50 days, which created a huge damage to the population. Half the population had to leave their region and have a kind of exile within their own country, and there was a general kind of loss of confidence in the military.

We need to take steps to change the situation and not accept this kind of living for people around the Gaza Strip and the north of Israel. That's what we demand of Netanyahu.

How would the Meretz party have responded differently to the events of last summer, namely, the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers?

That's a hypothetical question and difficult to answer. The question is, really, what we would have done to avoid a situation like this. We would change the approach to the conflict in such a way to avoid such a dilemma.

Do you believe a two-state solution is still possible?

I think that's one of the main issues Israel is facing right now – whether the situation we've created is irreversible or not. I believe we still have time to stop creating new settlements, to create an atmosphere that's pro-dialogue with the Palestinians. I'm speaking idealistically, but I'm worried. I know we have very difficult partners and we have to choose the right people to talk to and reinforce them, and not give more power to the most extreme elements. Today, through terrorism and rockets, the most extreme set the rules of the game.

What are the Meretz party's major campaign issues in the upcoming Israeli election?

"People today... understand [Zionism] as being part of the right."

Since the Labor party [led by Isaac Herzog] joined forces with the centrist Hatnua movement [led by Tzipi Livni], they've been trying to reach out to centre and right-wing voters, so Meretz is now the one and only left-wing Zionist party.

We are going to present our platform not only regarding the peace process but also regarding what's happening in our society in Israel. To have the economy in the hands of [the country's wealthiest] 20 to 25 families is crazy. To increase, year after year, the level of social injustice in Israel and the lack of prospects for the younger generations, we're going to put all of that on the table.

We now have three women in the first five positions in our party. The feminist and gender equality viewpoint is also going to be part of our agenda, and it's not something ideological for us. It's just part of life.

There are people who say Meretz only has one issue, and that's not true. To have a two-state solution is one of our main issues, but while other parties are going to try to make the issues of the country seem like they've disappeared and not bring them into the election, we're going to bring them back to the table.

I think today there is [formal] equality among Israel citizens, but it's not something meaningful. For minorities, at the level of law, everything looks OK, but at the level of life, minorities – and I'm talking about women, working immigrants, different populations in Israel that don't get the rights they're supposed to – there is much to improve. ■

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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A female spy helped change the course of WWII

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Discerning minds toiling in the subterranean labyrinths of espionage have known that women are by nature endowed with a wide range of creative, emotional, spiritual and dissimulative qualities that make them perfect spies.

There is a well-entrenched inclination to see the spying business as a male prerogative. This view is anchored in "snoopy" thrillers where male secret agents display amazing skills in chasing bad guys on the rooftops of the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul with motorcycles, helicopters, vertical and horizontal propulsion devices, jumping, nay, flying from one cupola to another with undiminished enthusiasm but uncertain results.

The de rigueur "beautiful Mossad girl" or Bond women doing their mermaid imitations or a villainess implausibly named "Pussy Galore" are often portrayed in supporting or destined to fail roles. But this presents a distorted view, as women have demonstrated the strength of their allegiances with courage, determination and cunning matching their male counterparts.

Writing in *Forbes*, Maseena Ziegler quotes Mossad's head, Tamir Prodo, praising female spies for their "distinct advantage in secret warfare because of their ability to multitask." He also said women are "better at playing a role" and superior to men when it comes to "suppressing their ego in order to attain their goals." And these feline qualities were in full display during World War II on the Allied side.

An Indian princess, a mother superior at a convent in Paris, a New Zealander most wanted by the Gestapo and a hedonistic Peruvian guava heiress are just some of the more colourful players in the cast of female spies who hoodwinked the generals of Adolf Hitler's mighty phalanxes and outwitted the death head terror squads of the Third Reich.

But it is the story of a young Jewish woman in Cairo, operating under the pseudonym "Yvette" and working for MI 6 and the Jewish Agency – the inspiration for Ken Follet's novel *Key to Rebecca* – that stands out from all the rest.

The moment "Yvette" set eyes on John Eppler, dressed in the uniform of a British captain, speaking with a Saar accent, pretending to be South African and using British pound notes instead of Egyptian money in a Cairo nightclub, she knew he was a Nazi spy.

"Yvette" was spot on: Eppler was the head of the German Kondor Mission sent to Cairo by Field Marshal Rommel, the Desert Fox, to find out about British plans as Rommel was preparing his final assault on the Egyptian capital. Incidentally, the film *The English Patient* also deals with extensive Nazi efforts to sneak spies into the British-controlled Middle East during the War.

"Yvette" insinuated herself into Eppler's world and, yes, she became his lover. Roaming freely in Eppler's boathouse on the Nile, she saw Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* on the table with a notepaper covered with gridded squares and six-letter groups. She understood that she was looking at the cipher the Nazis were using to transmit valuable information to Rommel. She had what she needed to break her cover and immediately informed MI 6. In a matter of hours, the members of the Nazi Kondor spy ring were behind bars.

The boys and girls at Bletchley Park, working feverishly, finally broke the code. This breakthrough allowed Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery to launch one of the greatest deceptions since the Greeks left a giant wooden horse at Helen's gate. The British successfully impersonated Eppler, brilliantly deceived Rommel and led Hitler eventually to his first major defeat, at El Alamein.

As Winston Churchill observed, "We had neither a victory before nor a defeat after" that fateful encounter on the burning sands of North Africa.

I often wonder what would have happened to Jews in then-Palestine if Rommel had succeeded and marched all the way to Jerusalem to shake Haj Amin al-Husseini's hand.

"Yvette" returned to Israel after the war, married and raised a magnificent family. ■

Erol Araf is a Montreal-based strategic planning consultant.

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GOLDLIST, Susan Helene - March 27, 1979 - January 19, 2015. Susie will be forever cherished by her adoring family, her parents Leza and Gerry, her brother Mike, her best friend Danny and her cherished doggy Little Jay. Susie was a loyal compassionate friend. She encouraged and inspired many. She will be lovingly remembered for all that she did and for all that she was: her compassion and caring for animals, her singing and dancing, her writing and laughter. A private family service was held. In Susie's memory donations may be made to The Susan Helene Goldlist Memorial Fund c/o The Benjamin Foundation, 3429 Bathurst St., M6A 2C3, 416-780-0324, where the funds will be held in trust until her family chooses an appropriate charity to honour her memory. To leave a message of condolence, please visit www.benjamins.ca and search her by name, Susan Goldlist.

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inside

Schabas says there's no evidence of bias
Canadian international law prof explains why he resigned from Gaza inquiry. **PAGE 50**

Singing her heart out
Teen Madison Tevlin proves that disability shouldn't define a person. **PAGE 24**

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Matchmaker,
matchmaker,
make me a match.
As Jews turn to the web to find mates, is the role of the shadchan outdated?
Page 8
Plus, the dating woes of mixed-race Jews. Page 16

Finding shelter in WWII Toronto

British historian Martin Gilbert lived as a child with local family from 1940 to 1944. **PAGE 17**

Recalling a world without vaccines

Dr. Michael Gordon on the perspective grandparents can bring to the debate. **PAGE 10**

Pictures of life in the Lodz Ghetto

Henryk Ross' photos on display at the Art Gallery of Ontario. **PAGE 38**

6 27843 39403 7

Minyan-goer told to *get* out, and rabbis seek to end stigma

Recalcitrant husband turfed

A man who has refused to give his wife a religious divorce for 18 years was thrown out of a minyan at Yeshiva University in New York Feb. 3. The Beth Din of America has ruled the man must give the *get*, and Jewish law forbids including men like him in minyans, said the Office for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA), a New York-based modern Orthodox group that tracks recalcitrant husbands. The man was thrown out after being spotted by ORA executive director Rabbi Jeremy Stern. "We're not davening Ma'ariv until you leave," the rabbi is heard saying on a YouTube video that had more than 34,000 views by the end of last week. "You're not welcome to daven here... It's ludicrous... 18 years... you're a *rasha* [wicked person]."

Disabled can marry, group says

Seeking to overturn a stigma among some rabbis that discourages marriages between people with cognitive disabilities, the Israeli liberal Orthodox group Beit Hillel has ruled that the unions are OK according to Halachah. Some rabbis have refused to perform marriages for people with such disabilities as Down syndrome or severe autism, believing couples wouldn't be able to fulfil the requirements of Jewish marriage and household. Beit Hillel released a similar paper last year detailing why people with intellectual disabilities can celebrate a bar or bat mitzvah and be recognized as adults under Jewish law.

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin

Rivlin reaches out to Arabs

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin called last week for the building of a new city to accommodate Israel's growing Arab minority. Rivlin met Feb. 5 with 50 Arab local council heads and mayors to discuss integration and development. He also called for the creation of schools to "continue to deepen the integration of the Arabic language in all our children's educations." Mazen Ghanaian, mayor of Sakhnin, an Arab city, and head of the committee for Arab municipalities, called for Rivlin's help on unemployment, particularly among men, which he said is "a phenomenon plaguing all parts of the country." ■

Gematria

3

The number of Israeli diplomats recalled last week for tweets critical of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman.

1,168

The amount of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in Britain in 2014, a record and more than double 2013's total of 513.

Quotable

I shudder to think of the carnage that would have ensued if it came to fruition.

— Rabbi Reuven Poupko on reports accused terrorists planned to kill Jews. **See page 27.**

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

A guide to mishloach manot by Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Dealing with domestic abuse

Violence is a learned behaviour. Boys who grow up in homes with abuse and domestic violence are nearly four times more likely to perpetrate domestic abuse than those who grow up in homes without it. Because violence in the home tends to be a child's first experience of it and is often defended as either inevitable or trivial, it becomes the root and justifier of all violence for many.

We must intervene early. By doing so we can protect the women and children who become the first victims.

Arguably one way to begin the process is for our Jewish schools to take their reporting of abuse under our laws more seriously. It is not about calling home, it is about calling Jewish Family & Child.

Justice Marvin Zuker
Toronto

Bibi and Bougie go to D.C.

I take exception to the tone and message in the editorial "Bibi and Bougie go to Washington" (Jan. 29).

It seems to disassociate the primary concern of Israelis in the upcoming elections, the economy, from foreign relations, which ranked very low by comparison.

To dismiss the visits of the leaders of two of the most important parties to Washington during this time is to display a shocking lack of understanding and appreciation for realpolitik. Like it or not, Israel's very survival depends upon the support of the United States, and particularly its Congress. Building and expanding this support only strengthens Israel, while playing footsie with President Barack Obama is a proven waste of time. And a stronger Israel will have a more robust economy, better security and improved social justice.

I welcome these visits, over just several days, during which ongoing relationships with key decision-makers will be strengthened and new ones established. It seems to me that these results would benefit Israel and all Israelis a lot more than another campaign stop in Ashkelon or Safed.

Len Shara
Cote St. Luc, Que.

Iran is not the threat

A Feb. 5 letter "Dealing with Iran," makes some serious errors.

It wrongly assumes that Iran is trying to produce nuclear weapons. However, in March 2013, U.S. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper confirmed that Iran has not decided to develop a nuclear weapon and that it would be unable to do so secretly.

It repeats the false accusation that Iranian leaders threaten to wipe Israel out. However, in 2012, then-Israeli deputy prime minister Dan Meridor acknowledged that then-Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad never said that Iran seeks to "wipe Israel off the face of the map." While the western media regularly present Iran as a dire threat to world peace, Iran has in fact not invaded any country since the 1700s – in marked contrast to the United States and Israel.

As for threatening Jews, the Islamic Republic, while anti-Zionist, is not anti-Semitic as manifested in its treatment of Iran's Jewish community – the largest of any Muslim-majority country. The Jewish community in Iran dates back more than 2,000 years, continues to run kosher shops, Hebrew schools and synagogues, and has guaranteed representation in parliament. The main source of evil today is clearly ISIS, and an effective force countering ISIS is Iran. Therefore, it is fair to ask: which country is better confronting today's evil, Iran or Israel?

It should not be difficult for Canadians to understand that the conflict the United States and Israel have with Iran is due to geopolitics, not ideology. Iran wants to be recognized as a major regional power, while the United States and Israel want to frustrate that goal to preserve their regional pre-eminence. Many informed Israelis freely acknowledge this reality. For example, according to Eliezer Tsafrir, former head of Israeli intelligence on Iran and Iraq: "However ideological and Islamic, everything Iran was doing was nationalistic, and even similar to the Shah."

Jeffrey Rudolph
Montreal

Remembering the Shoah

U.S. Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, upon visiting the death camp Dachau, summoned all the news photographers in Europe to the camp to take pictures. As he said, "In years to come, no one will believe this had happened." His prediction was correct.

Paul S. Levin
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Be not afraid, for God is with you

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RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Fishman: We're told that God did not lead the Jewish People out of Egypt in a direct manner, but rather took them on a circuitous route. This was done so that if the people saw war, they would be afraid and wish to return to Egypt. Miracles are a dime a dozen, but God has to work with the human heart and realize all of our human foibles and fears.

As one commentator has put it: "God is able to change nature, but He can't change human nature." I think it's natural for a person to have fears and concerns and worries, and having faith does not necessarily equate with having clarity and confidence. Actually, living with faith includes uncertainty.

Rabbi Splansky: The most often-repeated mitzvah in the Tanach is: "Thou shalt not fear." More than 120 times we are commanded: "Be not afraid." When Avram sets out into uncharted territory, he is told, "*Al tira.*" When Hagar is about to give into her loneliness and despair, an angel of God calls out, "*Al tir-ee.*" At the shores of the Red Sea as Pharoah's army is advancing, Moses says *"Al tira-u."*

Our ancestors heard these words just when they needed them most. Some say this is evidence that God is a "crutch," a fabrication born from human need. More likely, I believe, our vulnerability opens our eyes to many realities we weren't able to see before. A time of personal trial opens our ears to better hear God's consistent message, as spoken to Isaiah: "Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be frightened, for I am your God."

Rabbi Fishman: I was always taught that when someone writes that they are not afraid, it is usually a sign they're trying to supress their fear. Yet this is a comfort for me. A person of faith continues to live life notwithstanding hesitations about what tomorrow may bring.

This is how I understand the concept of living in a relationship with God. Not that a supreme power takes away all doubts and uncertainties, but rather that God allows us the companionship. As we struggle to find our way through life's rough waters, we know we are never alone.

Rabbi Splansky: Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik admits: "I know that I am perplexed, that my fears are irrational, incoherent. At times I am given over to panic; I am afraid of death… I don't know [even] what to fear, what not to fear; I am utterly confused and ignorant." But when a psychiatrist who deemed all fears to be unhealthy asked Rabbi Soloveitchik if the concept of *yirat HaShem* (fear of God) should be omitted from the High Holiday prayer book, he answered: "I am not a psychiatrist, but I know that fear is a part of being human. Everyone has fears – fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of loss of wealth, of health, of life itself. There is, however, one great fear that pushes away all the other smaller fears. What is that fear? It is fear of the Holy One, Blessed be God."

I know many good people who would say of themselves, as did Sigmund Freud, "I am resigned to the fact that I am a God-forsaken non-believing Jew." But if "Do not be afraid" is a mitzvah, we must take up the challenge to consider how to fulfil it. How might I hold these words in my hands? And how might these words hold me? How might they place me in God's hands?

Rabbi Fishman: The first word of the Ten Commandments is "Anochi" ("I am"). The 19th-century chassidic Rebbe of Ishbitz commented that "I" in Hebrew can be written as "Ani" or "Anochi." The one-letter difference between them is the *kaf*, which in Hebrew means "like" or "as if."

In the very moment of revelation, we were introduced to a God who still was only showing us a small sense of who He is. We can never really know God. Our understanding of so much in our world will always be incomplete. Even when we think we may know something, there are still gaps.

Belief in God doesn't mean always having the answers, but living with the questions. This, too, is Jewish faith, and it is the most authentic approach I know. ■

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From the Archives | On strike – in Yiddish

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, low wages, long hours, and hazardous working conditions were the norm for many working class Jews. It was an era when Spadina Avenue was the focal point of Jewish working class life; and when striking was a common part of the working class experience. This photograph shows a man striking for a group affiliated with the Ontario Poultry Buyers in 1939 in Toronto's Kensington Market.

SeeJN | Tzedakah knitters

Knitters from Richmond, B.C.'s Kehila Society have been knitting blankets, scarves and gloves for Rose's Angels, a group founded by the Kehila Society and Courtney Cohen, 26, in memory of her late grandmother, Rose Lewin. Volunteers distributed the knitted wear earlier this month to needy locals. Pictured are, from left, Cynthia Schwartz, Catherine Myerowitz, Lena Slater, Irma Schneider, Sheila Lazarus, Doris Schlosberg and Ethel Staniloff.

From Yoni's Desk

Probing the Jewish approach to physician-assisted death

In a December *CJN* cover story, Barbara Silverstein wrote about the intersection of Jewish law and physician-assisted death (PAD). At the time, Quebec had already adopted a law legalizing PAD, and the Supreme Court of Canada was preparing to issue its own ruling on the matter. Now that the court has struck down the ban on PAD in a unanimous decision, it seems appropriate to revisit Silverstein's findings.

According to Jewish law, her piece explains, there appears to be no room for discussion on the legality of PAD: the answer is a resounding "no," and two rabbis quoted by Silverstein make that abundantly clear. Rabbi Ronald Weiss, the director of chaplaincy services at Jewish Family & Child in Toronto, tells Silverstein, "It's murder to help someone die… Judaism teaches that every moment of life is precious and of infinite value." Rabbi Michael Dolgin, spiritual leader of Toronto's Temple Sinai, puts it even more bluntly: "From a Jewish perspective, we can't even talk about it."

But even if there's no denying that the Torah and generations of religious lawmakers have traditionally stood against physician-assisted death, Silverstein suggests there might be more to the story. Some argue that the Judaism of the 21st century should take into account the same social, cultural, and medical trends that contributed to the Supreme Court's decision to overturn its own ban on PAD. In the 21 years since the court last ruled on the subject, public opinion has changed dramatically, and the new decision clearly reflects that reality. Perhaps the Jewish approach to PAD should, too.

Indeed, while he affirmed Judaism's traditional legal consensus against PAD, Rabbi Dolgin added "but that finality is an inadequate Jewish response," especially given the advances of modern medicine. "There are many situations now where people's existence is extended to a point that we must ask if we are extending life or if we are extending suffering?" he asks Silverstein. "When there is no hope of recovery and extending the pain amounts to suffering, it's a valid Jewish legal and ethical question to ask whether trying to extend that situation as many minutes and seconds as possible is the right Jewish response."

Still, some argue an official Jewish alternative to PAD already exists. Baycrest's Dr. Michael Gordon, a *CJN* columnist, tells Silverstein "that good palliative care within the scope of medical practice can alleviate much of a patient's suffering and is in accordance with Jewish law." If the Jewish thing is to encourage life, not death, PAD legislation could promote the exact opposite. By that account, physician-assisted death makes "it too easy for people with severe disabilities to give up on living when they could have productive lives," Montreal's Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz argues in Silverstein's piece.

PAD will soon be legal in Canada, but for many Jewish Canadians, and many of their religious fellow citizens, there's another set of laws to consider, and the law of the land and the law of God appear out of sync in this case. As Silverstein's piece hints, though, there may be more than one Jewish approach to PAD. Death is absolute, but religion might not have to be. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

Jewish education without borders

Seymour Epstein

Recently there has been renewed interest in the Pew Research Center's 2013 study, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*. Most of this is due to an article published on Nov 2, 2014 by Jack Wertheimer, a historian of American Jewry, and Steven M. Cohen, a sociologist of the same domain. They re-analyzed the findings and raised an alarm to the American Jewish Diaspora regarding what they consider to be the more threatening implications of the statistics.

One of the points they emphasized is that Jews can no longer brag about their high regard for family life and family values. The statistics show that many non-Orthodox young Jews are not marrying and that the fertility rate among non-Orthodox Jews is 1.7, a statistic very distant from the 2.1 required for growth. I share their sense of alarm, not only for American Jewry, but within our Canadian communities as well.

Soon after the Pew study was released I wrote an article in this newspaper relating the U.S. statistics to the Canadian scene. While there is significant history that makes us somewhat different than our American co-religionists, there is no reason for us to be complacent.

Pew points to a significant 32 per cent of Jews born after 1980 who see themselves as Jews but not by religion. This is a 70 per cent increase in that category from a study in 1990 while the population only increased by 25 per cent. They may define themselves differently, but they are not living a significant form of Jewish life and their children will be mostly lost to the Jewish people.

Whether they are native Jews, Russians or Israelis, their loss is an unacceptable tragedy on two grounds. One, we are too tiny a people to suffer a loss of such magnitude. Two, there is no reason for them to be cheated out of a rich heritage that belongs to them, just because the current modes of Jewish life do not resonate with them.

There is a need for a new form of Jewish education fashioned for the 21st century which will boldly teach and learn without reference to past and current denominational lines, nor with reference to the religious/secular divide – Jewish Education Without Borders.

While traditional Jewish teaching must continue formally and informally, for children and adults, in the existing institutions of Jewish life (indeed, it must be intensified to combat the illiteracy that is rampant even at the centre), a creative challenge exists to establish and nurture truly pluralistic educators who can stand proud in their own beliefs and yet be open to new Jewish portals that will appeal to those who are now indifferent, distant, or disaffected.

Jewish literacy is life-critical to a creative future that adapts Judaism to the challenges of every age. Our strength has always been our ability to adapt. We transformed ourselves from an enslaved people to landowners in Canaan. We turned a Babylonian captivity into a learned Jewish community that flourished in Iraq for centuries. Once the Second Temple was destroyed, we changed from a central sacrificial cult based in Israel into a religion practised locally in thousands of communities around the world. And after the destruction of European Jewry in the Shoah, we built the "Start-Up Nation."

Behind every one of these transformations were Jewish consciences filled with values, texts, and a sense of historical destiny. Even when we were challenged intellectually, culturally, and politically by the enlightenment, our varied responses were based on profound knowledge of our sources. Even those who rejected the traditions knew what they were leaving behind.

The Jews of Israel have already ventured into the domain of pluralist education by creating centres of Jewish learning which do not have a religious base and which attract students and teachers from a variety of different camps. Here in North America we have some centres of pluralist education. Academic Jewish studies at universities, community schools and camps, and some communal programs are functioning in the right direction. But much more is needed for all ages.

Jewish leaders must first recognize the problem by pro-actively searching for Jews on the periphery and listening to their voices. This process is the opposite of *kiruv*, the technique used by the Orthodox to attract new adherents to traditional Judaism. Whether it works or not for the Orthodox is a question, but it is not what is required for the population I have described.

The goal of Jewish Education Without Borders is not to attract distant Jews to institutions they do not respect, but rather to help them find new modes of Jewish life that are meaningful to them. North American Jewish life was built by immigrants and it became the most powerful Diaspora in Jewish history. Its great institutions, movements, and organizations were designed for Jews who mostly no longer exist. And they were designed new and fresh to meet the cultural, spiritual, and communal needs of those early generations in North America. The future, if there is to be one, must be built with the same creativity and sense of destiny that created the Jewish life we were raised on. But, new yet-to-be-built domiciles of Jewish life and fresh paths we have not yet paved will form that future.

Do I honestly believe that a Judaism severed from the traditions of belief and ritual has any long-range future? I doubt it, believing Jew that I am, but the modern age has given us a variety of Jewish lifestyles and we dare not give up on thousands of Jews who are disappearing. They must find their own portals and those gates will not necessarily look like ours. A new kind of Jewish teacher must exist to help them via Jewish literacy. Jewish education has always been the strategic plan of the Jewish people. The goal for all of us is pride and courage; pride in the Jewish achievements of the past and courage to work together towards a creative future.

I was recently asked: "If we build it will they come?" My answer: "If we build it they will not come, but if they build it, some will come." ■

Seymour Epstein, is a teacher at York University and was the director of Toronto's Board of Jewish Education at UJA Federation.

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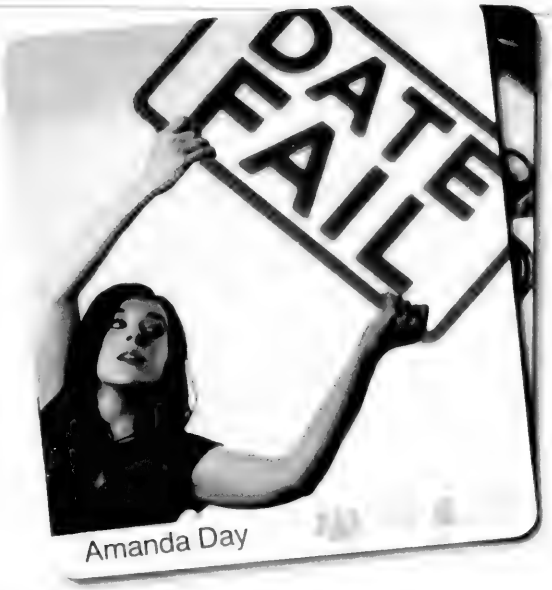
Will 'hook-up' apps replace matchmakers?



Amanda Day

SHERI SHEFA
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There is no shortage of online dating sites that aim to capitalize on people's desire to find a mate and live happily ever after.

From Plenty of Fish to Gluten-Free Singles and everything in between, over the past 10 years, online dating has gone from being a shameful last resort to a necessary evil.

The latest online dating fads are smartphone apps called Tinder and its Jewish version, JSwipe.

Both are free, mobile apps that users download to their phones. Based on little more than a few of your cutest pictures, a couple of lines about what you're looking for, and your physical proximity to potential mates in the area, users swipe right if they like what they see, left if they don't. If two people swipe right on each other's profiles, a match is made and they're free to begin chatting.

Perhaps it has never been easier to meet people, but Orna Serruya, a Toronto-based matchmaker for Jews who are keen to settle down with a Jewish partner, said those who are serious about finding a spouse shouldn't be wasting time on dating apps.

"I feel like the people on those sites are looking to have fun, hook up. I don't know if they are all single. I'm wary of them. If people are on there, I'm not sure it is the right vehicle for them to find their potential bashert," said Serruya, who has about 1,000 clients in Toronto, Montreal, Miami, Los Angeles and Israel through her matchmaking service called The O Network.

Specializing in matches for modern Orthodox Jews, as well as a few clients who are ultra-Orthodox, and others who are secular, Serruya said she tries to make matches based on at least five things they have in common, as well as religious status and culture.

Since she started her network two years ago, people have been sending her names "non-stop" and it has grown.

"What I'm doing is personalized. If you're really looking to find the right one, it's the only way to go," Serruya said.

Angie (not her real name), a 25-year-old Israeli-born online dater who works in the film industry, understands why someone would brush Tinder off as nothing more than a hook-up app, but when it comes to apps like JSwipe that cater to Jews looking to match with other Jews, users are likely more serious about finding a mate.

"My theory is that people on JSwipe probably are more serious. If you're on JSwipe or JDate, I'm assuming it's because ending up with a Jew is important to you. I doubt religion would matter to someone who's just looking for something casual. When you use Jswipe instead of Tinder, you're essentially limiting your options. I don't know why someone would do that if they aren't interested in something more serious and long-term," Angie said.

Still, Serruya said, if people are serious about settling down, matchmaking is the way to go.

"You can get lucky, and you can find someone of quality on there. There are good people. My brother is on the site, and he is a good guy. So if someone were to find him, they'd score. So I can't generalize and say they're all bad. But I would say nine times out of 10, you're better off with a matchmaker who will find someone who is 90 per cent of what you're looking for," she said.

She suggested that the reason people are having a hard time settling down is because society promotes the concept of instant gratification.

"People used to commit and they committed for life. Now, if you commit, and something doesn't work, well, goodbye. It's so easy to leave."

Angie, who downloaded Tinder in 2013, understands that argument.

"These apps are definitely not benefiting our generation's FOMO [fear of missing out] culture. That's the downside of having such a large pool of people who are presumably single. You're always thinking someone better could come along with the next swipe," she said.

Amanda Day, a 31-year-old Toronto-based comedian who uses online dating sites and apps, also recognizes the downside to the modern dating culture.

"It's so easy to get distracted by someone else. You could be talking to someone meaningfully for a while and then you could be talking to someone else and that conversation falls completely to the wayside. And it's not that you weren't interested, or that you didn't want to go out with them, but it's just that there is a lot of stuff thrown at you. There are just so many options out there," Day said.

David (also not his real name), 33, who has been single for more than three years, said he downloaded Tinder, not to find "the one," but to learn more about the latest dating phenomenon.

"I'm more interested in the psychology aspect. To me, this is more of a social experiment than taking it very seriously. Unfortunately there are some girls who take it very seriously," he said, adding that women who are looking for love and marriage on Tinder are "delusional."

He said when people are on Tinder trying to find meaningful relationships that end in marriage, "they come off as being desperate and pathetic."

Perhaps David's approach to Tinder explains why the apps are viewed as little more than a way to find casual sex partners, and why both Angie and Day, and countless other women, are often subjected to crass, sexually driven opening lines.

"It wasn't long before I started receiving really creepy and inappropriate messages from men," said Angie, who has since started a blog called Tinder's Finest Bachelors to expose some of the shocking exchanges that are commonplace on Tinder.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Grandparents might be the antidote in vaccination debate

Dr. Michael Gordon

The recent outbreak of measles in California, which has now spread to other American states, and the simultaneous finding of cases in Toronto is a stark reminder of the inherent risk to our children of the ill-informed anti-vaccine movement.

Canada last year witnessed an enormous outbreak of measles with hundreds of cases primarily, but not exclusively, in Western Canada, with the majority occurring in non-immunized children. The current outbreak in the United States is also mainly among non-immunized or under-immunized young children (those who did not complete the recommended course of immunizations, which is a two-step process). The regimen according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is as follows: "To prevent measles, children (and some adults) should be vaccinated with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Two doses of this vaccine are needed for complete protection. Children should be given the first dose of MMR vaccine at 12 to 15 months of age. The second dose can be given four weeks later, but is usually given before the start of kindergarten at four to six years of age." Some adults may need a booster as well, because immunity may eventually wane.

Grandparents can be an important source of historical perspective on the compelling need for vaccination: they're often the only ones who have a living memory of what life was like and what the effects of childhood infectious disease was prior to the introduction of vaccination programs. I am a physician and a grandparent who recalls vividly the period prior to the advent, for example, of the polio vaccine. For most North Americans, polio is a distant memory, and parents who reject their children getting such a vaccine, as well as other commonly used and recommended vaccines, have no historical personal perspective on the effects of childhood infectious diseases.

I recall the polio outbreak that affected America in the early 1950s, when I was a young adolescent. In 1952, there were 59,000 cases of paralytic polio in the United States. Serious outbreaks occurred in all of the 48 states, as well as the territories of Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. A similar picture existed in Canada, where the disease peaked in 1953 with nearly 9,000 cases and 500 deaths.

I recall what it was like during those few years when parents worried about their children contracting the dreaded disease. There were newsreels in the movies showing vast wards with primarily children in iron lung machines, the only way to keep a child alive with severe paralysis until, with luck, there was some natural recovery from the disease. I still see elderly patients who were afflicted with polio and survived, but were left with life-long paralysis and often develop what is called post-polio syndrome in later years, which interferes seriously with normal function and may compromise life expectancy.

Our parents forbade us from swimming in public swimming pools, which for me, living in Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, N.Y., was a serious prohibition. Many children wore a slab of camphor tied to a string around their necks to ward off the disease. Of course, there was no evidence that this actually worked. Then in 1955, with the discovery of the Salk vaccine and massive population immunization, this scourge of childhood disease ended. It should be a thing of the past, but for those who reject such childhood vaccination for misguided reasons.

Grandparents are the only ones who can talk with authority and experience about the real face of childhood infectious outbreaks. It's incumbent upon our generation of seniors to use our influence and hopefully intrinsic respect to convince the vaccine naysayers of their misguided and potentially life-threatening anti-vaccine position and errant understanding of the science in contrast to their dangerous beliefs. ■

The unseen humanitarian face of Israel

Mordechai Ben-Dat

In its long, ongoing, often bloody struggle with the Palestinians, Israel has lost the propaganda battle. There is simply no other explanation for: the ugly anti-Israel demonstrations last summer throughout the capitals of Europe, the near total silence from western opinion makers and political elites to the Palestinians' accusations against the Jewish state in the International Criminal Court, the high-minded but biased and essentially immoral posturing against Israel in certain academic and journalistic circles, the results of opinion polls in Europe that cast Israel as among the most despised nations in the world, or the lingering popularity, especially on campuses in North America, of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. And of course, there are many more examples of anti-Israel behaviour that we could all cite.

We are no longer hoodwinked by the disingenuous attempts to distinguish anti-Israel from anti-Jewish. The singularly focused, cult-like obsession with Israeli transgressions – real and imagined – to the exclusion of other countries' missteps, long ago put paid to that false dichotomy.

But deeply felt, hard-core, anti-Jewish predispositions explain only part of the distressing anti-Israel attitudes. A great deal of the anti-Israel animus, especially among young adults, and increasingly, alas, among young Jewish adults, can be attributed simply to ignorance: to a lack of knowledge concerning the history of the conflict and to the current state of affairs in Israel and about Israel. The Jerusalem-based think-tank, The Jewish People Policy Institute, recently confirmed this observation when it noted "the conflict with the Palestinians puts Israel on the defensive internationally and has an [negative] impact on the views of younger Jews toward Israel."

What if our children were to read or see more than the usually slanted coverage of Israel's conflict with the Palestinians? What if they were also to read broader truths about Israel such as the Jewish state's profoundly humanitarian, deeply-etched footprint in the worldwide march to relieve suffering? Would their attitudes toward Israel be less negative?

The following is but a small number of recent stories concerning Israel that most of our young people did not read or see in the mainstream media. They are excerpted from the news website *Israel21c.org*.

• Five years after Haiti was devastated by an earthquake that killed some 230,000 people, Israelis are still on location helping rebuild lives and communities. Within 24 hours of the quake, Israel had sent a 220-person team of rescuers, disaster-management experts and medical personnel. IsraAID: The Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid is still operating there. Indeed, as IsraAID director Shachar Zahavi told *Israel21C*, "the organization is always one of the first relief groups to respond to disasters across the globe. Its policy is to stay on the ground to create and implement an infrastructure of programs to rehabilitate the affected community, leaving only once those programs are functioning in the hands of local residents trained by IsraAID. That's why you'll still find IsraAID workers in Japan, for example, nearly four years after a deadly earthquake and tsunami, and helping in Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, the Philippines, China, Hong Kong and South Korea."

• Last month Israel pledged $8.75 million (US) – the largest per-capita investment by any nation — to the UN's Ebola Response Multi-Partner Fund, trying to combat the spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa. The donation was in addition to fully equipped medical clinics and medical specialists that Israel has sent.

• As the battle for the Syrian town of Kobani raged late last year, IsraAID assisted some 1,000 Christian and Yazidi families by sending 2,000 blankets, mattresses and food for 1,015 babies and young children.

This is only a very partial list of the humanitarian aid Israelis – health providers, engineers, agricultural experts, teachers and scientists – provide to a needy world. It is one of the many unseen positive facets of the complex society of the tiny, imperfect country. Too bad. ■

Tax evasion violates the laws of the Torah

Rabbi Jay Kelman

The most fundamental requirement of citizens in a democracy is payment of taxes due. Much of the reason Greece is in such dire economic straits is widespread tax evasion. As people often resent paying for services that others get for "free," tax evasion is most contagious, as otherwise honest people tend to join in cheating the system.

For Jews our civic duties are part of our religious obligations such that evading taxes is a violation not only of Canadian law but also of the laws of the Torah. Approximately 1,800 years ago the great talmudic sage, Shmuel (he was not ordained as a rabbi), formulated the religious principle that *dina d'malchuta dina* – the law of the land is the law. This was promulgated when taxes went to the "king's" coffers and not for public services. Nonetheless, a Jew was required to pay taxes irrespective of how the money was spent.

In a democracy, tax evasion is much more serious, as it involves stealing from the public. This stealing directly impacts on the quality of our lives, as evaded taxes cannot pay for education, health care, the military, research and development, arts and culture. Furthermore, those who cheat cause tax rates to be higher than they otherwise would be, thereby lowering the standard of living and curtailing consumer spending – the lifeblood of the economy.

I imagine many might be thinking that such a statement is going overboard, that such is the nature of democracy, and that since the problem can't really be solved, why fret over it? A recent report by the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel, should make us think again about the impact my "two cents" may have. They estimate that the underground economy represents approximately 20 per cent of the gross domestic product of Israel, twice the level of the United States. If this illegal and immoral economic activity could be cut in half, government revenue would increase by between 30 and 40 billion shekels, somewhere in the neighbourhood of $10 to 13 billion (Cdn).

Statistics Canada estimates that the underground economy here represents 2.3 per cent of GDP. While that seems trifling – and compared to Israel, it is – it represents a minimum of $15 billion of lost tax revenue. That is quite a bit of money for our political leaders to dangle before us in new programming or tax cuts as they vie for our votes in the upcoming election.

When one considers the huge budget fights in Israel, especially as they pertain to defence spending, tax evasion literally places the lives of Israelis and by extension Jews everywhere in danger. That is something to think about as you plan your next trip to Israel.

One of the unresolved and lingering debates in Israel regards the role Judaism can and should play in public life. As an Orthodox rabbi, I will state unequivocally that from a Torah perspective, ensuring our money is kosher is far more important than any food we may or may not eat. Israel would be a far more "religious" (can I say Jewish?) state if buses ran on Shabbat, soldiers could opt for non-kosher food, businesses operated on Shabbat, but all were able to answer with a resounding "yes" the question our sages teach will be the first we will be asked by God when our sojourn on this earth ends: "Were your business dealings conducted faithfully?" And this question applies whether one lives in Israel, Canada or, for that matter, Turkey.

Isaiah, the prophet of redemption, demands that the Jewish People be a "light unto the nations." He was not referring to our level of observance of Shabbat, kashrut and holidays when he proclaimed such. Rather he was referring to our integrity, compassion, sense of justice and sensitivity. As Isaiah himself says, "Zion shall be redeemed through justice and they that return with her with righteousness." These words are just as true today, if not more so, than they were when first uttered over 2,600 years ago. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Israeli film will hopefully get people talking about divorce

Norma Baumel Joseph

An Israeli film was nominated for this year's Golden Globe awards in the foreign film category. Even more amazing than a nomination of an Israeli film is its topic: Jewish divorce. *Gett: The trial of Viviane Amsalem* places this painful topic on the international scene. As far as I am concerned this is astonishing. No longer just a concern within part of the Jewish world, it is now a global topic. I am eager to see it and wait for the aftereffects.

The film did not win which I am sure is upsetting for Ronit and Shlomi Elkabetz, the directors and writers. But from my perspective, winning is not the issue. Rather this film has significance because it raises the tragedy of Jewish divorce and places it front and centre in the eyes of the world. The catastrophe that is the current state of Jewish divorce is shameful. This film should appropriately shame us.

In 1975 at a Montreal conference for professionals working on divorce, no one would concede to a national problem. The rabbis claimed there was no problem in Judaism. With all the denial, there was no movement toward solutions. In the general Jewish population there was almost total ignorance. Few knew that you even needed a Jewish divorce in addition to a civil one. No one knew the word agunah – a woman unable to get a Jewish divorce because her husband is either missing or recalcitrant.

I confess that while I was teaching about divorce, I did not know agunot (chained women) personally and did not know enough. These last 40 years I have learned a lot and heard all kinds of stories. Too much!

In the 1980s some of us had a private meeting with the then chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Meir Lau. We were trying to build agreement for a prenuptial agreement. As I explained about the mounting problem of agunot, he told me there was no problem. In his computer, he said, there were only four cases of women without a *get*. They were greedy women who would not just give their husbands money. It was just *esseq*, business, he claimed. He saw nothing wrong with establishing a process wherein women must pay their husbands for their legal rights. Nothing was wrong with the extortion that he was witnessing even enabling. Just greedy women messing with a good system! He was not the only rabbi to make this claim.

You can imagine my reaction.

The reaction was a worldwide campaign on the part of many women and men to publicize the problems and advocate for resolutions.

Slowly with a growing awareness some solutions were put forward. We in Canada amended the national divorce act. This law can be used to make sure neither partner uses Jewish law to restrain the other or to prevent the civil divorce from taking full effect. Many countries instituted similar laws. There is an increase in the usage of prenuptial agreements. These are not final solutions but involve greater consideration and responsiveness.

And while this is only a problem both within Orthodoxy and in Israel, the issue must affect all of us. This is not just a problem for the rabbis, though of course they must be directly involved. It applies to all of us, and not just when we are personally involved. When a Jew cries how can we not respond. When a Jewish woman cannot find justice, how can we sit idly by? When Jewish law is systemically untrustworthy, it is incumbent on all of us to repair it.

So what will the film accomplish? Hopefully, it will get people talking. There have been a number of good films recently addressing this problem. They all shine a much-needed light on the women. Films bring necessary attention that might yield reinterpreted laws. Attention is needed. Education is called for. Films on the world stage have incredible potential. Not simply to embarrass but to affect change. That is my goal. Always. ■

News

Child survivor to honour French family who saved him

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Leon Rucker has that rarity: an upbeat Holocaust story.

Though he was a hidden Jewish child during World War II, his memories are positive, even pleasant. Sheltered by a loving Catholic family in the French countryside, Rucker has no painful recollections of midnight knocks at the door, none of anguish at the possibility of being discovered and betrayed, and no memories of food shortages, deprivations and fear.

"I was treated very well, and I have wonderful memories of those times," said the soft-spoken 77-year-old Thornhill resident, a retired engineer and a founder of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation.

Even so, dangers persisted for the Langlois family, the French clan who sheltered the young Rucker on their farm in the tiny village of Néret, about 300 kilometres south of Paris, from 1942 to 1944.

That's why, on Feb. 17, members of the Langlois family will be designated Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and education centre.

Making the journey to Néret for the ceremony to honour his rescuers are Rucker, his wife Patricia (a former editor of *The CJN*), their son Simon and two granddaughters, one of whom, Shoshana, 10, is named for Suzanne Langlois, who effectively acted as a surrogate mother to Leon. Suzanne and her parents, Eugène and Alexandrine Langlois, are being honoured posthumously.

Accepting the honour on their behalf will be Gisèle Langlois Royer, now almost 90, Suzanne's last surviving sibling and the youngest of the Langlois' six children.

Leon Rucker, aged 5, with his mother Léa, right and Suzanne Langlois

Leon Rucker today. RON CSILLAG PHOTO

Rucker smiles when he says the ceremony is taking place in the village's "Salle des Fêtes," which was once the one-room schoolhouse he attended as a child.

Born in Paris in 1937, Rucker has faint memories of hearing air-raid sirens and seeing German soldiers, who marched into the French capital in June 1940. His father, Nathan, was a furrier and was married to Léa. The family enjoyed a comfortable life.

But France was split. The northern zone was Nazi-occupied, while the south, called Vichy, enacted harsh anti-Jewish laws. However, the southeastern city of Nice came under Italian control, which was far less oppressive. As a result, thousands of Jews took refuge there, including the Rucker family.

For two years, "we lived very peacefully" in Nice, Rucker says.

But things became tense when the Allies invaded North Africa in November 1942. "My parents knew that sooner or later, they would have to go into hiding."

By then, Leon's uncle had taken refuge in the village of Néret, but the local reeve refused more Jews. So the uncle asked a local family whether they could take in a little Jewish boy from Paris. They immediately agreed, and in late 1942, Suzanne Langlois arrived in Nice to collect five-year-old Leon.

Suzanne was unmarried and in her 30s. "I became like a son to her," Rucker recalls. He attended school and spent many happy days on the farm. "I kept my name. People didn't ask too many questions. If they asked, I was 'le petit Parisien.' Some of them might have known I was Jewish, but they didn't want to get involved. Most people were neutral."

As for the Langlois family, they were firmly on the political left, anti-clerical and opposed the Vichy regime. Leon was never passed off as a Catholic. They fed and clothed the lad, who kept in touch with his parents via mail. Leon remembers hearing the sound of bridges being blown up by the French Resistance.

The situation lasted until September 1944, when he was reunited with his parents, who had narrowly escaped deportation while living in Lyon. The family returned to Paris to find someone had occupied their apartment, which they were then forced to share. But Rucker's father became a currency trader on the black market, and the family prospered anew. However, all their relatives in Poland had perished in the Holocaust.

Rucker would return to the farm to visit the Langlois family regularly. In 1954, he came to Canada, where he met his wife, and they had three children.

Gisèle Langlois has no children. But members of the family still live in Néret (population 200) in the original farm compound, and a grandson still farms the Langlois land. A number of other grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the area plan to attend the ceremony.

The specially struck medal and certificate will be presented by a representative of the Israeli Embassy in Paris.

Rucker concedes he did not begin the work of having the Langlois family recognized as Righteous until only a few years ago because of other commitments. He also recognizes that his tale is different from those of most others who were hidden as children during the war.

"For me personally," he says, "it's a happy story." ■

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Mixed-race Jews have JSwipe dating woes

DANIELLE KUBES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Jenn Czobel downloaded JSwipe to her phone, she expected it to be like Tinder: a dating application where users choose to chat based on photos, geographical location, mutual friends and a short biography – except it's meant just for Jews, or those who fancy them.

What she didn't expect was to have zero matches. On Tinder, she has several hundred.

"I don't look like I'm Jewish, and the people on JSwipe are obviously on there to find someone with whom they share similar values," says the 28-year-old account manager from Toronto.

Czobel's mother is from Vietnam and her father is from Hungary, so she doesn't look like the majority of Jews in Toronto.

David Yarus, founder of JSwipe, thinks her religion should matter, not her race.

"What's peculiar, though, is that the profile says 'Jewish' or not. It says: 'Willing to convert,' 'Other,' 'Jewish,'" he says. "So if hers says 'Jewish,' it doesn't fully make sense to me."

In fact, Yarus thinks, as does popular culture (see: Priscilla Chan, wife of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg), that her Asian features should be working in her favour, a reference to the stereotype that Jewish men are attracted to Asian women.

"That seems almost like the opposite of what I would ever think feasible to have happen. Because at the end of the day, this is, actually, potentially the dream situation for Jewish dudes: she's half-Asian *and* she's Jewish," he says. "So it should be that she's getting double the matches."

The truth is, most people prefer to date people of their own race, especially white people.

Research from the popular dating site OkCupid shows that white women in particular almost exclusively reply to messages from white men. White men, on the other hand, are much more open to dating women from different races, except for black women.

And although JSwipe specifies religion, not race, in its profiles, Judaism has always conflated the two.

That's because Judaism is not just a religion in the modern sense of the term. Rather, it also has a national and tribal component, as well as ethnic, cultural and even racial aspects.

But despite the fact our Israelite heritage, with its link to land and kin, has been diminished by centuries of dispersion and greater stress on the religious side of Judaism, it still seems that for anyone who's serious about being Jewish, a prospective mate should ideally meet all criteria – cultural, religious and racial.

And observant as a half-Asian Jew may be, would it ever be enough for most people in our community?

Geoff Grossman, a 29-year-old who is half-Chinese and half-Caucasian, explains that he was the only visible minority at his Toronto Hebrew school, "until my little sister started attending."

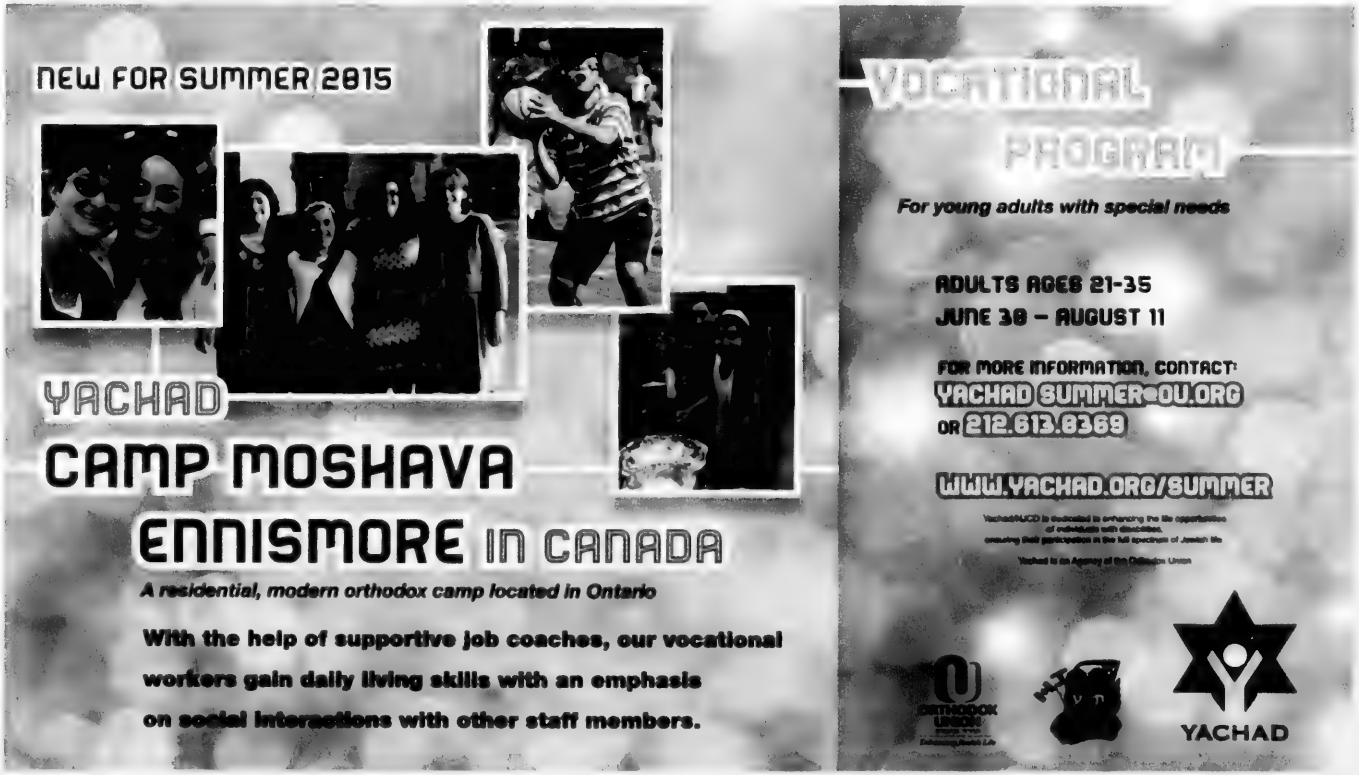
He uses both Tinder and JSwipe, but doesn't take either very seriously.

"I can't imagine just swiping. I used to live with a guy that used to swipe right [say yes to profiles, enabling the exchange of contact information] all the time, and it was a complete gutter system. I'm not like that."

He says the typical reaction he receives from Jewish girls on JSwipe is essentially, "'Why the hell are you on JSwipe? Your eyes are different,'" he says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Jenn Czobel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Orna Serruya

Tinder's pros and cons

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"They'd say things that you wouldn't dare say to a person you just met at a bar – sexual things they wanted to do to me, called me derogatory names. I was really horrified at first and extremely offended, but then, as sad as it is, I learned to get used to these types of messages. I think most girls have as well. We've all gotten used to the fact that these types of messages just come with the territory of online dating."

Day also decided to publicize some of the vulgar messages men send her. She recently launched a podcast on SoundCloud and talkhole.co called Date Fail, which features discussions with other online daters about "sex/courtship/romance in our social media age."

"[Publicizing the sexual comments] has become such a big part of my online presence. When I post those messages, I get so much feedback from it."

Despite the downsides to online dating, Day said the positives outweigh the negatives.

"I like the way Tinder works, because of that initial attraction, seeing a picture and deciding if you're attracted to the person and taking it from there," she said.

"But before this, I wasn't getting a lot of dates. It was hard for me to meet up with people and have that connection. Now I don't have to worry about looking good at the grocery store. Now I can just go get my eggs."

Angie herself had a meaningful relationship with a man she met on Tinder and knows of many others who developed relationships through the app.

David said he does want to get married, but "the old-fashioned way."

"It'll happen the natural way. I'll find someone in my travels, or here, and hook up the good ol' fashioned way." ■

'Jew-balls' are an 'exercise in futility and painfulness'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Grossman says his online experience mirrors real life.

"I've done it a couple times, just to shoot myself in the foot – going to [the midtown Toronto pickup joint] Alleycatz or one of those Jew-balls, matzah-balls stuff," he says. "It's just an exercise in futility and painfulness."

Although many Jews – white, black or green – view such events as futile, painful and often requiring several overpriced tequila shots to endure, non-Caucasian Jews in our community face different challenges

"I have obviously met people at Jewish events, Jew-dos. But I think initially, they probably just think I'm tagging along with my Jewish friends," Czobel says.

"I think that once they find out that I'm Jewish, it puts me into a different category in their mind – a wife-able category." ■

Historian Gilbert spent war in Toronto as a child

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Martin Gilbert and Suzy Leizner

Judith Mandel, 75, was just a baby when Martin Gilbert, then about four years old, was temporarily taken in by her Toronto parents during World War II.

Gilbert, who later became an esteemed Jewish British historian and the biographer of Winston Churchill, died on Feb. 3 at the age of 78.

Mandel said Gilbert experienced a severe episode of heart arrhythmia in 2012 and that the deprivation of oxygen caused him to have a serious brain injury. He ultimately died of an infection.

Known throughout his life as a passionate Zionist, advocate for Soviet Jews and chronicler of the Holocaust, Gilbert was born in London, England, in 1936 and, nine months into the war, was evacuated to Canada as part of the British effort to safeguard children from German bomb attacks.

Gilbert was sent to Toronto with his aunt in the summer of 1940, and it was arranged by what Mandel said was the then-equivalent of Jewish Family & Child for him to live with Mandel's parents, Ida and Harry Leizner, at their Palmerston Avenue home.

He stayed for three years with the Leizners – who were members of Holy Blossom Temple and had two children, Judith and her younger sister, Suzy – before returning to his family in London in May 1944.

Mandel's father was a family doctor whose office was on the bottom floor of the family home, and her mother supervised a nursery school and in the summers ran a children's overnight camp near Barrie, Ont., attended mostly by Jewish children.

"My mother would have had a lot of sympathy for any child in need of care," said Mandel, who now lives in north Toronto and has three adult children, explaining why she believes her parents took Gilbert in. "That was just her – she was a very child-focused person."

She added: "When Martin got back to London, he was sent off fairly soon by his parents to boarding school. My mother found that horrifying, to have a child who had been taken from his family at age four get back to his family and then be sent away to boarding school."

While her own memories of Gilbert as a child are vague, Mandel said her mother spoke a lot about him as the years went on, and the two kept up a strong correspondence. "My mother always talked about him as being a really bright kid and not playing around the way other kids played," Mandel recalled. "When he became an adult, they corresponded a lot. She was very proud of him. She watched everything he did, and they wrote letters to each other."

Although there was what Mandel called a "gap" in her own personal correspondence with Gilbert, when she was in her 40s, she reconnected with him, and the two forged an adult friendship that lasted until Gilbert's death last week.

"He came to Toronto several times, and my husband and I would attend his lectures. His schedule was very complete, but we'd always manage to find some time to see him, to go for dinner," Mandel said. "My husband, Raymond, was a Polish Holocaust survivor, so the two of them would have a lot of discussions about that."

Gilbert published 88 works that dealt largely with the two world wars, the Holocaust and Israel. He studied and taught at Oxford University.

In 1962, he began working on a biography of Winston Churchill, helping Churchill's son, Randolph, with the project. After Randolph passed away, in 1968, Gilbert took over the endeavour and added six volumes to the two existing ones. Subsequently, in 2007, he wrote a book called *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship*. In 1990, he was made a commander of the British Empire and, in 1995, he was knighted.

Gilbert loved Israel, Mandel said, noting that he had a second home in the hills of Jerusalem, where he spent much of his time.

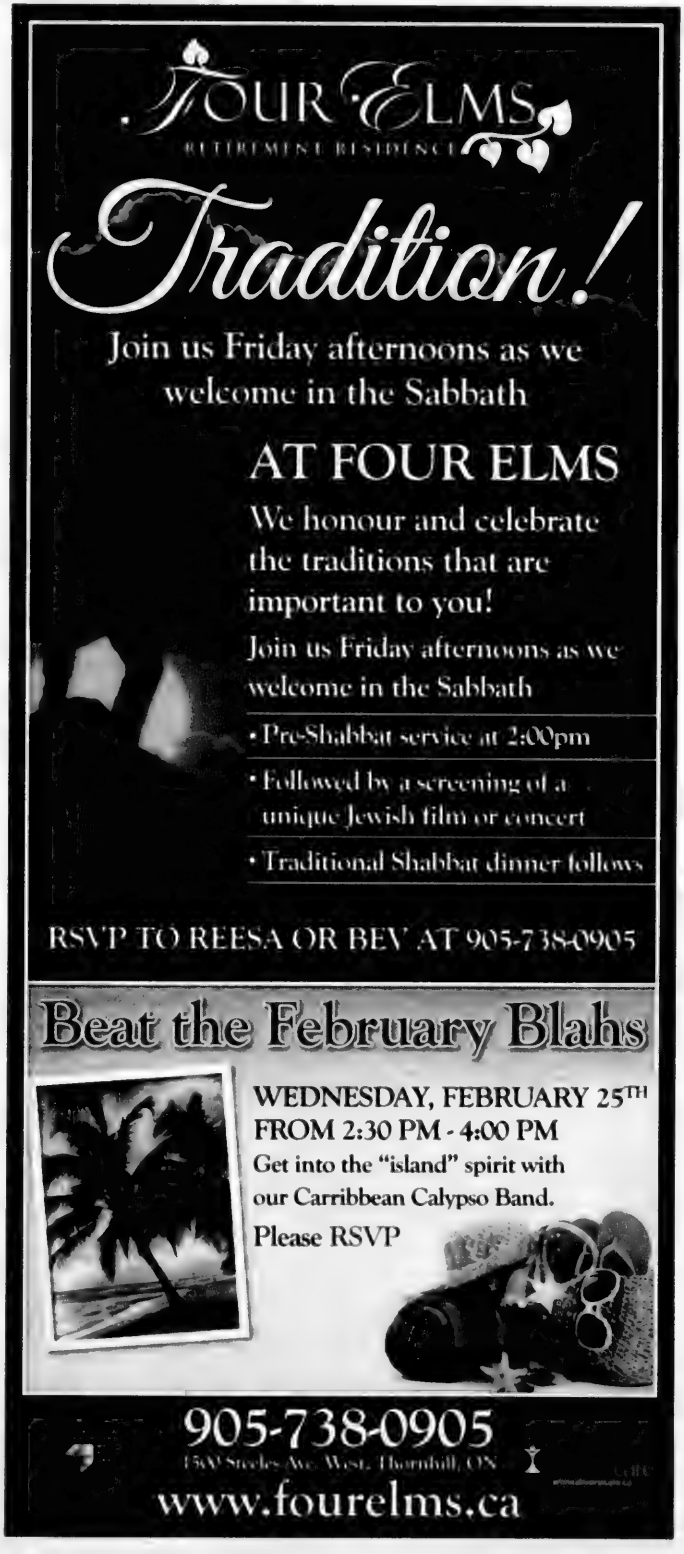
Mandel's impression of Gilbert was that he was "a very caring person, super intelligent... When you got to know him, he was very easy to know."

In 2003, Mandel's daughter Ruth wrote a book about the plight of Jewish child Holocaust survivors called *How to Tell Your Children about the Holocaust*, for which Martin wrote the forward.

Two summers ago, Mandel visited Gilbert in hospital in London and said he was very sick and barely able to communicate.

"It was very sad to see somebody so highly communicative, and such a wordsmith, not be able to talk."

Gilbert leaves behind his third wife, Esther Goldberg, whom he married in 2005, and three children, Natalie, David and Joshua. ■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Joe's business acumen and contributions to our institutions of higher learning and healthcare research will be legendary. He set a unique standard of personal commitment and giving that is now emulated across the nation. Through his vision, he challenged and positioned a number of organizations to aspire to and attain global recognition as leaders, Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute among them.

Joe was an inspiration and a fabulous source of mentorship advice and support, as well as an ardent supporter of the Baycrest vision. He was a transformative leader for our organization. His presence, support and generosity of spirit will be missed, but his impact on the field of brain health and aging will be felt for generations to come.

All of us at Baycrest express our heartfelt condolences to Joseph's wife Sandra, their children Janis, Kenneth and Amy, and the entire Rotman family.

May his memory be a blessing to all who had the honour and good fortune of knowing him.

Baycrest

Jewish groups laud outgoing foreign minister

CJN STAFF

John Baird, right, meets with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in Jerusalem on Jan. 18.
MARC NEYMAN/GPO PHOTO

Representatives from Jewish groups and the Israeli government praised outgoing foreign minister John Baird for his close ties to the Jewish community and his robust support for Israel after his surprise announcement Feb. 3 that he is resigning from cabinet and leaving federal politics.

As foreign minister, he was noted for his clear articulation of his Conservative government's policy on Israel, a position that's not expected to change under his successor, who was not immediately announced.

Israeli ambassador Rafael Barak thanked Baird "for his contribution to [the] special friendship" shared by Canada and Israel.

"As foreign minister, Mr. Baird has been a rare beacon of light at a very dark chapter in world history. His principled positions, guided by the values of the Canadian people, have served as a pillar of strength for all liberal democracies," Barak said.

"For the people of Israel, who live in the only liberal democracy in the Middle East, Mr. Baird's vocal support has been an empowering force against the rise of fundamentalism and tyranny on our borders," Barak added.

Barak noted that Baird was a frequent visitor to the Jewish state, including a visit last month in which several agreements were concluded furthering "the Canada-Israel strategic partnership."

Just prior to Baird's trip, the Palestinian Authority brought war crimes charges against Israel at the International Criminal Court in The Hague and continued to seek sanctions at the UN. In December, Canada voted against the Palestinian statehood proposal introduced at the UN Security Council.

Baird said these moves by the Palestinians "will not contribute to peace and security in the region" and he said Canada would help "defend Israel from international attempts to delegitimize it."

During his latest trip to the region, Palestinian protesters threw shoes and eggs at Baird in Ramallah after he met with his Palestinian counterpart.

Baird, 45, has been involved in Conservative politics for most of his adult life. At 26, he was elected an MPP in the Progressive Conservative government of former Ontario premier Mike Harris. He was elected MP for Ottawa-West Nepean in 2006. After serving in a number of other ministerial portfolios, he became foreign minister in May 2011.

One academic who monitors the Canadian political scene said under the stewardship of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Baird, the Tories have made inroads among traditionally Liberal Jewish voters.

Nelson Wiseman, professor of political science at the University of Toronto, said the government's pro-Israel policy has been an important factor in that. There is some electoral benefit in backing Israel in the few ridings with a large Jewish presence. But that doesn't fully explain the strong pro-Israel position of this government, he said.

"It is a principled position," Wiseman said. "They are courting the vote, but we should not be so cynical as to believe the only reason they're adopting this position is that they're courting the vote."

Foreign policy, he continued, barely registers among Canadian voters, who are more interested in pocketbook issues such as the economy and taxes.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said that as foreign affairs minister, "Baird deserves immense credit for advancing Canada's core principles on the world stage in a wide range of policy areas – from human rights in Africa, to Iranian nuclear proliferation, to Russia's aggression in Ukraine."

As "a steadfast friend of both Canada's Jewish community and Israel, Minister Baird played a unique and significant role in strengthening the Canada-Israel relationship. In doing so, he affirmed the shared democratic values that underpin ties between Canadians and Israelis," Fogel said.

The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) thanked Baird "for his unwavering support of Israel" and "his firm stance against anti-Semitism."

Last year, Baird received the FSWC's Award of Valour, given to "those who actively uphold the principals of tolerance, social justice and Canadian democratic values."

Michael Mostyn, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada, said that Baird "is an outstanding individual of the highest integrity who always made time for the community. He was a strong minister who pushed through many important agenda items."

Efforts to reach JSpace Canada and Canadian Friends of Peace Now for comment were unsuccessful. ■

With files from Paul Lungen and JTA

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

New management expected to rescue Island Yacht Club

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The Island Yacht Club (IYC) has a new lease on life.

On Feb. 5, members voted nearly unanimously to approve an agreement that will see the storied yacht club turn the management reins over to Blockhouse Bay Management Company.

The move will avert a looming bankruptcy, as the club struggled to pay ongoing expenses and meet mounting debt that now stands at $1.6 million, said IYC Commodore William Kassel.

"I'm thrilled everything is moving forward. I think it will be bigger and better than ever," said Kassel, a member of the club since 1973.

Over the years, the IYC has lost members to other boating clubs. The club suffered a body blow in 2004 when a fire destroyed the clubhouse and members looked elsewhere for their boating needs. More than half the members left at the time.

Currently, the club has 43 boats but 120 slips, leading to a shortfall in funds to pay fixed costs, such as rent and taxes.

"We would have been bankrupt and the club would not exist. We were getting really close to it," Kassel said. "We were great boaters, but terrible managers."

Blockhouse Bay was recently incorporated by the people who own the Toronto Island Marina, Bill Duron, Gary Lovas and Carl Lovas. Duron is CEO of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Duron and his partners have a proven track record in operating boating clubs, Kassel said. They turned around the fortunes of the Toronto Island Marina, which like the IYC had more slips than boats. Today the Marina has a waiting list for its 330 slips.

Under terms of the new agreement, Blockhouse Bay will invest $1 million in the IYC. The IYC's 43 boating members will each commit $5,000 to the club while the 12 social members will contribute $1,500 each.

Kassel expects Blockhouse will solicit new members immediately, likely from the Toronto Island Marina's waiting list. Currently the IYC is the only club in Toronto's inner harbour with available slips, he said.

Blockhouse will take over management of the clubhouse restaurant, as well as the docks, summer and winter storage and the tender service.

It will upgrade the existing fixed docks and turn them into floating docks, making them more convenient for members, and upgrade the electrical service.

Still to be determined are the new membership categories and fees. However, current members will experience lower membership fees this year as well as reduced tender charges. Docking fees are expected to rise by four per cent, Kassel said.

With a restructuring of debt, which has been approved by the club's bank and debenture holders, approval by the City of Toronto, the club's landlord, new management and an expected growth in membership, the IYC should return to financial viability, Kassel said.

"They're going to restore us to the glory we had in the past," he added.

The IYC was founded in 1951 on Mugg's Island for Jewish boaters who were excluded from gentile sailing clubs.

The club began with 15 to 20 members, and grew at one point to 350 members.

Prior to the fire, IYC boasted 110 boating members and 40 social members (based on family units), or about 300 to 400 people in all. In 2012, when the club celebrated its 60th anniversary "on the lake," the club had 80 boating members and 25 social members. ■

The IYC has 43 boats and 120 slips.
ISLAND YACHT CLUB PHOTO

February 16

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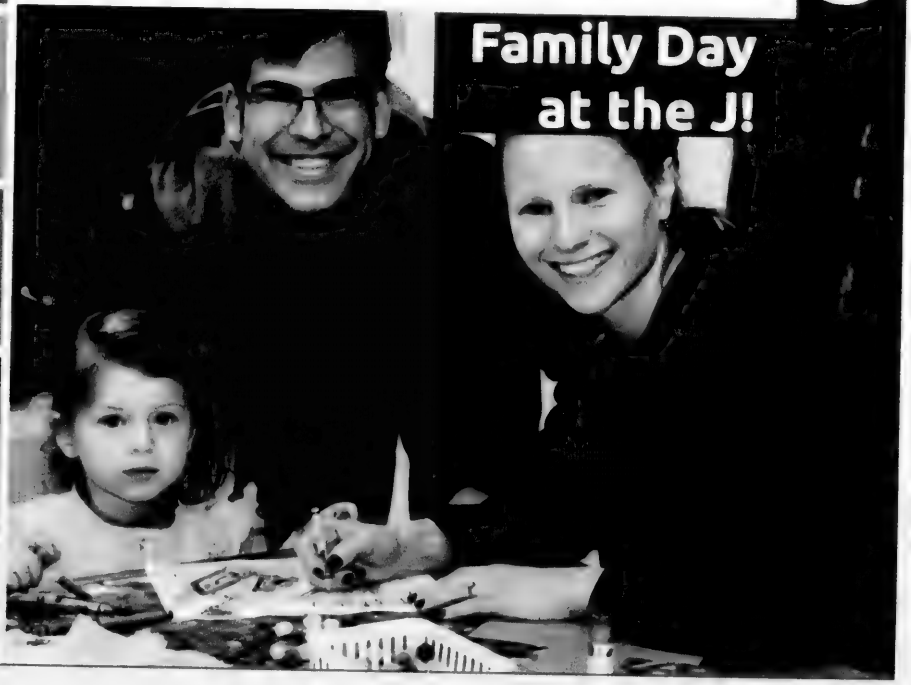

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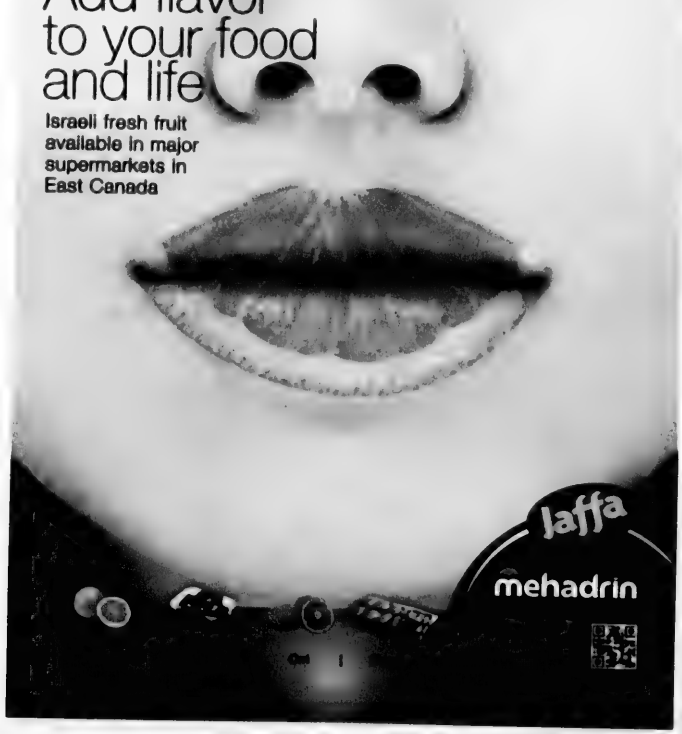

Danforth shul holds interfaith Tu b'Shvat seder

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rev. Robin Wardlaw, left, of Glen Rhodes United Church and Rev. Sarah Miller, right, of Eastminster United Church with Rabbi Miriam Margles, centre, spiritual leader of the Danforth Jewish Circle

The mood of a multifaith Tu b'Shvat celebration was upbeat and congenial as a group of people from diverse backgrounds and faiths shared their reverence for the beauty and bounty of the earth.

Some 60 people from Jewish, Muslim and Christian congregations gathered Feb. 3 at Eastminster United Church on Danforth Avenue to attend a Tu b'Shvat seder conducted by Rabbi Miriam Margles, spiritual leader of the Danforth Jewish Circle (DJC).

The community event was organized by the Danforth Multi-Faith Committee, made up of representatives from the DJC, Eastminster, the Pakistani Community Centre, Glen Rhodes United Church, Neighbourhood Unitarian/ Universal Congregation and the Ethiopian Church.

Karen Robbins of the DJC, a co-chair of the committee, co-founded the group in 2007 with Eve-Lynn Stein of the DJC and Tasleem Riaz of the Pakistani Community Centre. Members of the Pakistani centre pray at Madinah Masjid, the mosque at Danforth and Donlands avenues. The group rents space at Glen Rhodes, which is at Gerrard Street and Coxwell Avenue.

Robbins said the goal of these multifaith events is to strengthen community ties. "There are no politics. We're all about community-building. We meet in each other's homes.

"For me it is about spending time together. We want to get to know each other. We want to be in each other's lives."

Over the years, the committee has held several events – community walks, women's evenings and a cricket match last spring. "This year we decided to participate in each other's calendar events," Robbins said, noting that Rabbi Margles suggested the DJC host a multifaith celebration for Tu b'Shvat, the New Year of Trees.

The rabbi told *The CJN* that an important theme of Tu b'Shvat – gratitude for the abundance of nature – presented an opportunity for people "to bring the wisdom of their own respective traditions" in sharing an appreciation for the environment and its sustainability.

"It's so valuable for people from different cultures and from different religious communities to spend time together engaging in how a particular practice touches a universal theme, particularly in relationship to the environment."

The rabbi and DJC Cantor Lisa Kent led participants at the seder in prayer and songs. People recited the Hebrew blessings for the wine and the fruit of the trees as they sampled grape juice, olives, figs, dates, pomegranates, almonds and walnuts, all symbolizing many of the species mentioned in the Bible.

There was even a Canadian twist to the Tu b'Shvat menu: maple syrup was added to represent this nation's iconic tree.

In between fruit courses and blessings, people crossed the room, greeting each other with shalom or salaam and handshakes, and later they talked to each other about cultural traditions, including food.

In one exercise, the rabbi had participants forming human chains, and in another, people exchanged partners, moving around the room as if they were square dancing.

Two members of the United Church clergy were on hand. Rev. Sarah Miller from Eastminster and Rev. Robin Wardlaw of Glen Rhodes each read a poem to the group.

When asked about the event, both of them were very positive.

"I though it was a beautiful celebration of community," Rev. Miller said.

Rev. Wardlaw noted the "gracious tone of the evening" and diversity of the group. "The breadth of participants – there were people from all over the world."

Yafet Tadesse of the Ethiopian Church likened the event to the changing of the seasons. "We are ushering in a new season of acceptance."

Rafaqat Ali Malik, who participated as both a member of the Pakistani Community Centre and a representative of Asian Communities Council of Canada, said the evening had transcended the barriers of "colour and creed."

For Robbins, the seder was a great success. "I felt it was a real opportunity for connecting. People were really talking to each other. The goodwill was palpable.

"Rabbi Miriam was excellent in navigating us to a space that was open for everyone to feel love for the earth and nature. We could share that no matter what our backgrounds." ■

Raif to get black history award

PAUL LUNGEN
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Back in 1978, while he was serving as a consul within the Israeli trade delegation to Toronto, Arie Raif helped organize a joint program in which Israeli and Egyptian diplomats greeted a Jewish mission on its way to visit both countries in the Middle East.

It was the first such joint effort and it preceded the Israeli-Egypt peace treaty by six months. It was also one of the many achievements cited by the Toronto Police Service (TPS) in presenting Raif with its 15th Black History Month Award.

"This award is designed to recognize police officer, fire and EMS personnel, soldiers, corrections offices, school boards and members of the community for a 'job well done,'" states a letter from Supt. Scott Baptist of the TPS.

The award will be presented on Feb. 22 at the British Methodist Episcopal Church, which is partnering with the police service in granting the award.

"I am very honoured. I am very proud," said Raif.

Raif, a businessman who also serves as CEO of both the Canadian Peres Centre for Peace and of the Canadian Friends of Meir Hospital, said the award recognizes his efforts to establishing "understanding and co-operation among people in the Middle East."

In announcing Raif as recipient of the Black History Month Community Award Celebration, the TPS described Raif as possessing "great humanitarian passion, boundless energy, irrepressible sense of humour," and it called him "an incurable optimist."

It added: "He always demonstrates a forthright approach and is never easily discouraged."

Ojo Tewogbade, a member of the award selection committee, said Raif had been recommended by George Marcello, CEO of the Step By Step Organ Transplant Association. Raif is a member of the organization's board.

Tewogbade looked into the nomination and agreed that Raif's community involvement warranted granting him the award.

Tewogbade, who retired from the Toronto police after 35 years of service, said the award is not limited to black people but is given to anyone in the community who meets the criteria for volunteerism and "a job well done." ■

CORRECTION

The Jan. 29 article about the exhibit in Winnipeg of photos from the Lodz Ghetto ("Jewish, Polish communities partner in remembrance") contained several errors. The exhibit was first shown in Canada at York University in 2013. It was sponsored by York's Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies and its Mark and Gail Appel Program for Holocaust and Anti-Racism Education, and the Azrieli Foundation. It was hosted by Osgoode Hall Law School at York. The exhibit was originally funded by a grant from the foreign office of the Federal Republic of Germany. The curating was by the Topography of Terror Foundation in Berlin, which has focused on education about Nazi Germany and the Holocaust since its opening in 1987.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Teen with Down syndrome sings her heart out in video

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Toronto teen Madison Tevlin, who was born with Down syndrome, has captured hearts worldwide with her rendition of John Legend's *All of Me*.

As a John Legend fan, Madison, 13, chose to sing the song because it reminded her of love and her family.

The video was produced last summer when Madison was still 12 with the help of her vocal coach Marla Joy, Toronto producer Jody Litvack and pianist Kibwe Thomas.

Madison was hesitant to make the video because she had a sinus infection on the recording date, but, like a true professional, she told her family, "I am going to go with the flow. A singer has to sing."

On Jan. 20, the family uploaded the video to YouTube, along with a running script highlighting obstacles faced by people with Down syndrome, for their friends and family to appreciate.

"Madison is singing her heart out, defying all the stats," Joy said.

The outpouring of support for Madison's passionate performance exploded, with more than five million views and counting.

Madison, left, with siblings Jonny and Zoie

Its success was accelerated by a tweet from actor Ashton Kutcher: "Only a few people with Down syndrome are able to sing. Little Madison defies all odds with her new song. Down syndrome does not define a person."

Madison wants everyone to know that Down syndrome does not define her.

"If I can do it, others can do it. I want others to see they can, too. If you love it, you do it," she said.

"We're glad that people are 'seeing the ability' of people with Down syndrome and that Madison has shared her talents and gifts with other people. She is quite the inspiration and a very talented person," said Kaitlyn Pecson, design and communications manager at the Canadian Down Syndrome Society.

Madison has been enjoying music from an early age and singing all her life.

"I think the level of Madison's speech and ability to express herself both vocally and physically with feeling has taken a lot of people by surprise and has truly done what Madison asked, which is to inspire and offer hope to people," said her father, Matthew Tevlin.

Madison trains in the studio with her voice coach once a week for one hour.

"I have never seen a girl who loves to sing and loves music more in my life. She has really low muscle tone. It is hard for her to push it down and to keep it on one note, because it takes double the energy," Joy said.

The family is receiving personal notes from people around the world, including Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Philippines and South America.

Madison's 11-year-old sister Zoie has also been supportive. With a shared love of music and dance, Zoie is responsible for setting up and running Madison's social media page.

The budding star plans to continue singing and making videos. "If there were more resources like Madison's video, then maybe we can change the way people look at children with Down syndrome or any special needs," said her mother, Grace Tevlin. ■

See the video at cjnews.com.

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Yachad celebrates 30 years helping special needs people

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Yachad, the National Jewish Council for Disabilities, is celebrating 30 years of advocating for Jewish children and adults with special needs and creating a place for them within the Jewish community.

"Our mission is inclusion of special needs into the mainstream society, and we feel they should be allowed access and encouraged to be included in anything that has to do with Jewish organizations of any kind," said Devorah Marmer, the director of Yachad's Toronto chapter.

Yachad, Hebrew for together, has 17 chapters in Canada, the United States and Israel that offer people with special needs opportunities to take part in events and programs.

"We provide educational and social recreational programs for children and adults with special needs... We have peers, high school students or university students who do programs together with special needs people," Marmer said.

Some of the services include counselling for individuals and families, weekend retreats, vocational training and job placement, Shabbat programs, Birthright Israel trips for people with mobility or special learning needs, and summer camps for members of all ages.

"We have summer camp programs in the Moshava Ba'ir, [a Jewish summer day camp based in Toronto] and for the first time we're doing a program in the Moshava Ennismore sleep-away camp," Marmer said.

Eli Hagler, Yachad's associate director based in New York, said its summer camp program teaches young adults that despite some physical or mental differences, everyone deserves to be included.

"Through our summer programs, more than 5,000 children and teens have had the opportunity to travel throughout North America and Israel. Our programs in association with 10 mainstream summer camps have taught children and teenagers that while someone may appear different from themselves, we are all the same," he said.

As a non-profit that relies on donations to operate its programs, Yachad organizes a number of fundraisers, including marathons that take place annually in Miami, Toronto, New York and Jerusalem. To date more than 1,800 people have run the marathon, and raised more than $2.7 million.

On May 3, Yachad's Toronto chapter will partner with GoodLife Fitness to organize a five-kilometre run to raise funds for the organization. Each runner is required to raise a minimum of $300.

Participants in the 2014 Team Yachad Toronto marathon pose for a picture at Ontario Place.

Yachad is running a Purim-themed fundraising drive, offering custom gift baskets that are assembled by Yachad participants.

Marmer said despite Yachad's 30-year history, there are still many in the Jewish community who don't know it exists. "My goal is to educate people in society about [people with] special needs and Yachad," she said.

"If they have a physical disability or a mental disability, whatever it is, our motto is... 'because everyone belongs.' [People with special needs] have a rightful place in society just like everybody else and it is our mission to include them and accept them just like we accept every other person."

Marmer said many people think that working with people with special needs is a big mitzvah. "But the way we look at it, it's not that you're doing a kindness... we're the ones who are learning so much and getting so much out of it. It's not so much that we are giving of our time and doing chesed for somebody else. We are really getting a lot out of it," she said. ■

More information at www.yachad.org

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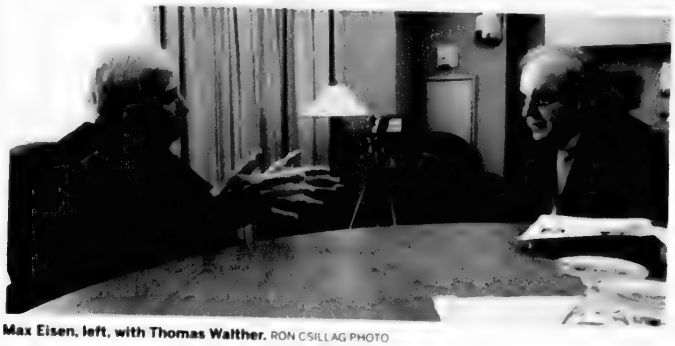
Survivors interviewed for SS trial



Max Eisen, left, with Thomas Walther. RON CSILLAG PHOTO

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Max Eisen's memory is a thing to behold: he rattles off names, places and precise dates with ease. Complementing those is a full palette of sensory impressions: smells, sounds, pains, tastes. Even at 86, which he turns next month, Eisen is as sharp a witness as anyone could wish for.

If the look on Thomas Walther's face was any indication, Eisen's horrific memories of Auschwitz will be useful.

A retired German judge turned Nazi hunter and prosecutor, Walther was in Canada last month to interview survivors of the infamous death camp in the case against Oskar Groening. It's hoped the videotaped testimony of at least 23 Canadian "co-plaintiffs," and dozens of others worldwide, will help secure Groening's conviction as probably the last Auschwitz guard to face justice.

Now 93, Groening has been charged with 300,000 counts of aiding and abetting murder.

Known as "the Bookkeeper of Auschwitz," the SS sergeant was in charge of collecting the cash, jewelry and valuables of Hungarian Jews between May 15 and July 12, 1944. In that time, 437,000 Jews from Hungary and neighbouring territories arrived by train at Auschwitz, and 300,000 were sent to the gas chambers right away.

The testimony of co-plaintiffs—those whose loved ones were murdered at the camp—will be used as evidence against Groening, who, though he did not participate directly in killings and worked behind the scenes, is seen as a cog in the Nazi murder machine.

Eisen, a well-known local Holocaust educator and speaker, was born in the Czech town of Moldava nad Bodvou and arrived at Auschwitz in May, 1944 as a 15-year-old along with his parents, two brothers, a sister, three grandparents, aunts and an uncle.

Sitting before Walther and a video camera last week at a Toronto hotel, Eisen calmly recalled his nightmare, with occasional gentle prodding from Walther on specifics – dates, visuals, times of day.

Eisen arrived at the camp in the dead of night after a hellish train trip from the town of Kassa (Kosice). There were blinding floodlights and shouts of "*Raus! Schnell!*" ("Out! Fast!") There was a horrible stench and he saw "big" flames shooting out from "something."

"We were in total shock. Everyone was numb."

His mother, grandparents, aunts and siblings were shunted to the left for "disinfection," and gassed. Eisen, his father and uncle were directed to the right.

Their hair was shorn and Eisen saw gold crowns yanked out of mouths with pliers. In the shower, he witnessed a new arrival who had dropped his glasses being stomped to death by an SS guard. "I remember hearing his ribs cracking. This was the first killing I saw. I was in total shock. My father said, 'keep your mouth shut.'" The three males were tattooed, given uniforms and sent on back-breaking work details.

One day, Eisen's father asked fellow prisoners when he would see the rest of his family. The reply was: "Your family has gone through the chimney."

A few months later, his father and uncle were "selected" for death. "That's it," Eisen said. "I was an orphan. I was devastated."

Caught "loafing" one day, he was beaten nearly to death. "My head was smashed in. I lost a lot of blood and was thrown into a ditch. I knew my life was over."

Carted back to the camp's hospital, Eisen received surgery, survived and was appointed the operating room's cleaner. He worked 19 hours a day but in relative safety.

In all, he survived five concentration camps. Of his 60 prewar relatives, only three survived the Holocaust.

Groening's trial is set to begin April 21 in the northern German city of Lueneburg.

Eisen said he would like to see the former guard convicted and get a life sentence, but instead of jail, spend the rest of his life doing community work and speaking to students.

"That would be the only productive thing to do," he said. ■

Via Rail plot points to terror threat in Canada, Jewish groups say

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Jewish groups are watching with concern the trial of two alleged Islamic extremists in Toronto accused of plotting to derail a Canadian passenger train and who the prosecution says also planned to target Jews.

One of the accused, Raed Jaser, a Palestinian born in Abu Dhabi who has been living in Toronto since 1993, allegedly told an undercover FBI agent in 2012 that his longer term plans were to assassinate Jews or "Zionists," as well as Canadian political leaders, the court heard on the trial's opening day, Feb. 2.

Jaser and Tunisian-born Chiheb Esseghaeir, a former PhD student in Quebec, are charged in the alleged 2012 plot to derail a Via Rail train travelling between Toronto and New York by tampering with a bridge on the Canadian side of the route.

Their demand was that Canada and the United States withdraw their armies from Muslim lands, the court heard.

Crown attorney Croft Michaelson said Esseghaier was receiving orders from his "Mujahedeen brothers" in Iran where he had trained on two occasions in 2011 and 2012.

In September 2012, Jaser and Esseghaeir brought the undercover agent to the Highland Creek rail bridge in Scarborough and revealed plans to cut a hole in it, the court heard.

Michaelson said Jaser abandoned the train derailment idea after he felt police suspected him, but Esseghaier, with whom he then fell out, tried to find another accomplice.

According to Michaelson, Jaser allegedly said it would have more impact "to kill the expensive Jew, the Zionist" with a sniper rifle and spoke of getting a gun license. In conversation with the agent, he is alleged to have talked about how easy it would be to gain access to "powerful and wealthy members" of the Canadian Jewish community.

Jaser and Esseghaier were arrested in April 2013. Both have pleaded not guilty.

Martin Sampson, national communications director for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said the accusations are further evidence that "radical Islam is real and exists in Canada.

"There are those walking among us who would not only attack their fellow citizens, but our democratic principles."

Jaser's alleged intention to kill Jews is "chilling, but not surprising. Islamists are anti-Semitic," he said.

B'nai Brith Canada chief executive officer Michael Mostyn said media reports of at least one of the defendants allegedly interchangeably using the words "'Jew" and "Zionist" when referring to possible targets warrants attention.

Michael Mostyn

"It has long been standard practice by radical Islamists to conflate these two terms when referring to their intended victims in a transparent attempt to mask their hatred toward Jews," he said.

"This phenomenon can be seen on our university campuses and even the grounds of [the] Ontario legislature, and is something B'nai Brith has been actively exposing and condemning.

"We hope that police, government officials and the broader Canadian society better understand this hateful propaganda as more details from the trial emerge."

Sampson said CIJA is in regular communication with public security agencies across Canada, and "we have no information of a specific or credible threat against the Jewish community at this time. We are following the security protocols in place.

"Obviously, as an at-risk community, we must be vigilant."

Rabbi Reuben Poupko, who chairs the Montreal Jewish community's security committee, said, "First of all, we have to applaud the authorities for disrupting this plot, because I shudder to think of the carnage that would have ensued if it came to fruition."

This alleged plot, and the killing of two soldiers in St. Jean-sur-Richelieu and Ottawa last year by people who were apparently motivated by jihadism, is, according to Rabbi Poupko, "a reminder of the compelling need for Canadian intelligence agencies to have adequate resources to protect Canadian lives from Islamic radicalism."

He also reiterated that local Muslim leaders should be alert to any signs of radicalism in their communities.

The jury trial is scheduled to last between six and eight weeks. ■

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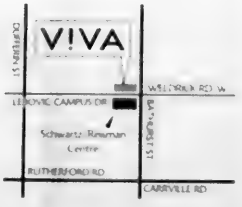

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Volunteer moms build new library at school

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Thanks to a group of dedicated moms, students at the Joe Dwek Ohr HaEmet Sephardic School will benefit from a new library at the Thornhill-based Orthodox Sephardi school.

Rachel Keslassy, who has two children enrolled at Ohr HaEmet, is a volunteer with the school's Mom's Association library committee.

Through the Mom's Association, women raise funds for the school to address the needs of staff and students.

Keslassy said she and a number of other concerned parents decided that a permanent library in the school was essential. She said that until now, students had been able to borrow books from a portable library, a cart filled with books that would go from classroom to classroom.

Now that the school is up to date technologically, having raised money over the years to acquire computers, laptops, Smart boards, iPads and other mobile devices, the volunteers felt it was time to develop a library.

"A lot of the time, children are so engaged in technology-based things, and they may be missing out on what it means to read independently and have an appreciation for something tangible besides an iPad or an iPhone," Keslassy said.

"Having that space is also very important, because it creates a culture within the school where children understand how to behave in quiet space and get excited about reading," Keslassy said.

Maytal Oziel, a library committee volunteer who has a daughter enrolled in the school, said that as an avid reader as a child, it bothered her that students weren't coming home with books to read each week.

"They should be coming home with books at least once a week," said Oziel, who, like Keslassy and Vanessa Benarroch, another volunteer, is a public school teacher.

"At public schools, you visit a library once a week, and you come home with a book. A mobile library can only offer so much. Having a place where the kids can sit on a carpet and have a book read to them, having the ability to come into a space and do research about a topic... being able to be independent and choose a book on their own... being responsible for the book can teach them a lot of things," Oziel said.

"The vision for the library is to be a place where students can lounge, a carpeted area where teachers can sit and read aloud a book to their students... We want bookshelves that are easy to access... we want a teachers' corner with books that are geared for the holidays of that month and are curriculum-based... We want a system so that students can search independently," Keslassy said.

Maytal Oziel, a library committee volunteer, sorts through book donations for the Joe Dwek Ohr HaEmet Sephardic School's new library.

She said the library is currently being developed in the school's computer lab, but the ultimate goal is to expand into a larger space, to build a portable on school grounds.

Of course, fulfilling this vision, which has been in the works since October, requires volunteers, and donations. Keslassy said she's hoping they can raise $50,000, but they will utilize every dollar they manage to raise to its fullest potential.

Benarroch, who also has two children enrolled in the school, said she decided to volunteer on the committee because it bothered her that the school didn't have a library.

"Being a teacher, I know how much my students love to go to the library."

Benarroch added that her children were thrilled when her sister took her kids, aged four and six, to a public library recently.

"You have no idea how excited my son was. He wanted to go back. He was so excited to be able to pick whatever book he liked, whatever book he wanted to read," she said.

"Often times, a teacher says, here, read this book, take this book home. But he wants to choose his own book, even if he doesn't like it."

She added that there is a lot of excitement in the school as the library continues to take shape and book donations continue to come in.

"We're very excited because the school has been in existence for so long... they're celebrating 40 years in May. So we're very excited about this project." ■

THE CENTRE FOR ISRAEL & JEWISH AFFAIRS

CIJA, the advocacy agent of the Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA, is pleased to announce the appointment of David J. Cape of Montreal as National Board Chair

Mr. Cape, President of Groupe Marcelle Inc., has served in numerous leadership positions within the Jewish community, including terms as President of Federation CJA and President of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim.

CIJA's newly-elected Board of Directors is comprised of ambitious and devoted individuals of extraordinaire from across Canada.

CIJA is privileged to welcome the following new members of the Board:
Major General (Ret.) Ed Fitch (Victoria), Ronnen Harary (Toronto), Professor Rosalie Jukier (Montreal), Marilyn Kaufman (Fredericton), Rachel Levy (Toronto), Dan Mader (Ottawa), Jason Murray (Vancouver), Steven Shafir (Edmonton), and Sara Zagdanski (Toronto).

They join returning Directors: Outgoing Chair David Koschitzky (Toronto), Sheila Copps (Ottawa), Stockwell Day (Vancouver), Father Raymond de Souza (Kingston), David Engel (Toronto), David Kroft (Winnipeg), Eric Maldoff (Montreal), Berl Nadler (Toronto), Lorne Nystrom (Regina), Rabbi Reuben Poupko (Montreal), Cheryl Reicin (Toronto), Joel Reitman (Toronto), Moshe Ronen (Toronto), Nancy Rosenfeld (Montreal), Jeff Rosenthal (Toronto), Carol Ryder (Calgary), and Lisa Samson (Ottawa).

CIJA is deeply grateful to our departing directors for their service. Though their term as Board members is complete, their contribution to CIJA will continue to positively impact Canadian Jewry:
Martin Chernin (Sydney), Steven Cummings (Montreal), Heather Fenyes (Saskatoon), Jonathan Freedman (Ottawa), Paul Goldman (Vancouver), Judy Kremer (Montreal), Stanley Plotnick (Montreal), and David Spiro (Toronto). We are particularly grateful to David Koschitzky for his leadership since 2011 and we wish him well in his new role as head of the world Board of Trustees of Keren Hayesod-UIA.

CIJA, the advocacy agent of the Jewish Federations of Canada, is a national non-partisan non-profit organization. CIJA is dedicated to improving the quality of Jewish life in Canada by advancing the public policy interests of Canada's Jewish Community. Nominations to the CIJA Board are guided by [illegible]. To learn more, visit www.cija.ca

cija.ca

Israeli tennis court to be named for Toronto teen

PAUL LUNGEN
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Ben Wilder and Eric Hildebrand were good friends. They attended the same private school together, played on the same soccer and basketball teams together, and Eric admired Ben's skill at tennis.

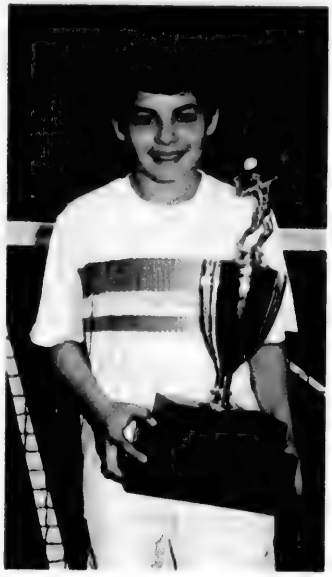
Their bar mitzvahs were scheduled one week apart, but before they could celebrate each other's coming of age, Ben was unexpectedly struck by a fatal illness and died.

To honour his friend and create a lasting legacy, Eric asked guests at his bar mitzvah to make a contribution to the Israel Tennis Centers (ITC) Foundation in Ben's name.

"In lieu of bar mitzvah gifts, please make a donation to the Ben Wilder Fund and honour Ben's life by helping kids in Israel," Eric said in a note to guests.

Nearly $12,000 has been turned over to the ITC Foundation, which has earmarked the funds and other moneys yet to be raised toward the naming of a tennis court in Israel in Wilder's name.

The court will be at the ITC's flagship location in Ramat Hasharon, said Toby Rosner, executive-director of the ITC Foundation in Canada.



Ben Wilder holds the trophy he was awarded after winning an under-18 tennis tournament at York Racquets Club.

Altogether, $100,000 needs to be raised to name the court, and Rosner believes the goal will be reached later this year. Late last month, the ITC added another $10,000, provided by local donors, towards the project.

Ben, who at 12 won an under-18 tournament at York Racquets Club, had just completed Grade 7 at the Sterling Hall School when he died. In a message to parents and students, principal Rick Parsons recalled him as "a warm, kind, active and charismatic young man who will be dearly missed."

Students at the school compiled their own list of things "our friend, Ben Wilder, showed us."

Among the lessons learned were: to look at things from new perspectives; to be self-motivated; to look at the glass as half-full; to make the best of any situation; to make other people feel important; to be yourself; to never give up; to appreciate the value of positive energy, hard work and perseverance; and to get things done to the best of one's ability.

Elyse Hildebrand, Eric's mother, recalled Ben as mature beyond his years, with clear leadership qualities. "He was smart, mature, funny. He was very inclusive, he made everyone feel welcome," she said.

She recalled how much Ben and Eric enjoyed playing on the school basketball team together, and travelling to Vancouver for a tournament.

When the family was planning Eric's bar mitzvah, they wanted to find something connected to Israel to honour Ben. "Eric kept saying, 'I want to do something with tennis,'" she said.

Ben loved tennis, and "he was really good. He had a really wicked serve," Eric said.

Off the court, "Ben was really funny. He was really nice to everyone."

Naming the Israeli tennis court "will help Israel and help the good memory of my friend, Ben," he added.

ITC was established in 1976. It operates 14 tennis centres across Israel, providing instruction and competition to Israelis of all backgrounds, including more than 400,000 children. The ITC is known for providing a structured and nurturing environment, benefiting many youngsters in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. ■

Donations to the Ben Wilder Memorial Fund can be made online at, http://www.israeltenniscenters.org/benwilder.

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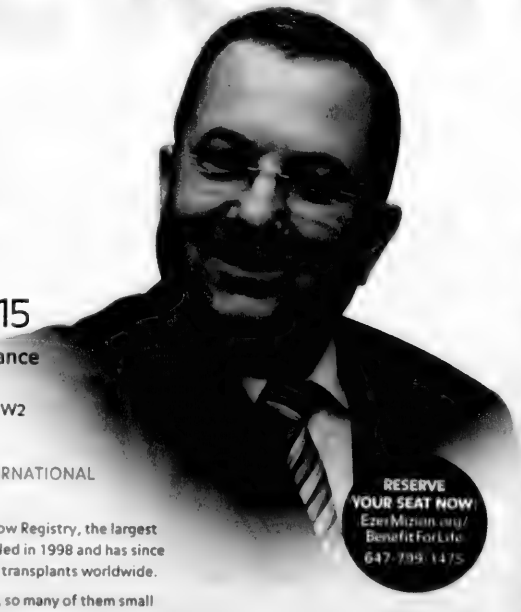

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Mayim Bialik calls herself a 'product of federation'

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

In nearly every sense, Mayim Bialik is an atypical Hollywood star.

It would be difficult to come away with a different impression of the accomplished actress, writer, scholar and observant Jew after listening to her keynote speech at the Feb. 2 UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's annual campaign 2015 closing event.

Held at downtown event space The Carlu and attended by 800 campaign donors, the evening featured speeches and a dessert reception, all to celebrate the $53.1 million – the product of about 16,000 gifts – raised so far to support UJA projects in the 2015 fiscal year (donations are expected to roll in until the fiscal year begins in July).

Funds from the campaign, which launched in September, will go toward Jewish social service delivery in the GTA, as well as community building, education, strengthening bonds with UJA's partner agencies in Israel and advocacy through the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

The $53.1 million outpaces by several hundred thousand dollars the sum raised by this time last year for Campaign 2014, and it doesn't include the $5.6 million collected for last summer's Israel emergency relief fund, federation officials said.

Bialik, 39, was an appropriate guest, calling herself a steadfast Zionist and a "personal product of [UJA] federation" growing up in California.

Best known for her roles as the young Bette Midler in the film *Beaches*, the title character on television sitcom *Blossom* and, currently, as Amy Farrah Fowler on the popular sitcom *The Big Bang Theory*, Bialik's early influences included attending Jewish camp on a federation subsidy.

"Because of federation, I was able to attend Jewish camp for five weeks a year, to meet other Jews and learn," she told the audience. "It's because of people like you who gave to people like me, whose family didn't have money for camp."

A self-described outsider in the television industry, Bialik spoke eloquently about her upbringing, her family's Jewish history, her career trajectory and the Jewish values that have "kept [her] sane in Hollywood."

After her speech, she was interviewed by Erica Ehm, a former MuchMusic VJ and publisher of the lifestyle publication YummyMummyClub.ca.

Bialik's talk was preceded by a roster of speakers, including Morris Perlis, chair of the board of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto; DJ Schneeweiss, consul general of Israel in Toronto; Alison Himel, chair of UJA's women's philanthropy; and Campaign 2015 chairs, Andrea Cohen and David Matlow.

Actress Mayim Bialik was the keynote speaker at the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's annual campaign 2015 closing event.
UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO PHOTO

"Together, we've changed thousands of lives," said Cohen. "We are one people – a people with a big heart, and when united, we're invincible."

Bialik described herself as a bookish and unpopular teen– albeit one with her own hit TV show – who attended public school but felt safest at Jewish summer camp.

She said she loves performing, but hates award shows and observes tzniut. She also has a PhD in neuroscience, is a mother of two, a lactation counsellor and a contributor to the Jewish parenting site Kveller.com.

Born in California into what she referred to as a fairly unobservant family, Bialik said she loved her weekly Hebrew school classes and felt extremely close to her Yiddish-speaking grandparents.

She got her first professional acting gig at age 10 and soon after landed her role in *Blossom*. Bialik took a hiatus from acting to attend UCLA, at which point she became more observant and got involved with groups like Hillel.

After getting her doctorate in neuroscience and having two children, she returned to acting, joining the cast of *The Big Bang Theory*. In 2012, she wrote a book on attachment parenting called *Beyond the Sling*.

Nowadays, she often speaks at Jewish federation events, but noted that this was her first Canadian appearance.

"I'm a liberal person," she said. "I want to change the perception that if you support Israel you're not liberal… I don't always agree with Israeli policies, but I stand with the State of Israel."

Bialik closed the talk by laying out seven Jewish principles she credits for keeping her grounded: family values, a sense of routine, emphasis on joy, the notion of generosity, the notion of otherness, God and Israel.

These things take her out of herself, she explained, instilling in her a sense of responsibility to her family, her community and global Judaism. ■

GUEST VOICE

Lessons for defeating BDS on campus

Judy Zelikovitz

On Jan. 29, the Trent University Central Student Association passed a motion revoking a 2013 policy endorsing boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against the State of Israel. This development – a setback for the divisive and destructive BDS movement – would never have happened were it not for a group of dedicated Trent students. Their remarkable victory is significant in that it offers a four-point blueprint for how campus activists can effectively counter BDS.

First, it's critical that anti-BDS students build a highly motivated coalition of allies to take unified action. The Trent example shows that victories against BDS can be achieved even on campuses with few Jewish students, provided the Jewish community engages and supports our non-Jewish friends who are in a position to make a difference.

At Trent, both Jewish and non-Jewish students organized the successful campaign against the BDS policy and proactively reached out to and worked with the various political clubs on campus. This approach demonstrates that BDS is not just a Jewish or Israel issue, but a Canadian issue concerning student rights and campus discrimination. The same principle was true at the University of Regina, home of the first student union in Canada to pass a BDS resolution in 2012. A year later, a non-Jewish union member who had attended a Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)-organized student leader mission to Israel successfully passed a motion annulling BDS.

Second, successful political campaigns at all levels expend tremendous energy knocking on doors, identifying supporters, and contacting them in the days and hours leading up to the close of polls. An intensive get-out-the-vote effort is no less critical in student votes.

Overturning a student union policy at Trent required securing a two-thirds majority of votes at the student union's annual general meeting. This was no easy task, and it certainly could not have been achieved without a strong push for supporters to attend the meeting and vote. There is value in having brilliant messages, online ads, eye-catching posters, and persuasive

Signs that appeared recently at Trent University in Peterborough, Ont.

flyers. Arguably, however, nothing makes a greater difference than in-person outreach and repeated reminders to supporters about why, how, when and where to vote.

Third, it's critical that students work with supportive faculty members. While students will only spend a few years on campus, faculty have a wealth of experience. They can offer invaluable advice to students on how to work with the administration, frame their messages, engage other student groups, and navigate campus policies. At Trent, the anti-BDS campaign enjoyed strong support from a number of faculty members, including Prof. Asaf Zohar, who chairs a CIJA-affiliated group called Canadian Academics for Peace in the Middle East (CAP). As Zohar noted: "The events at Trent speak to the power of a determined group of students who were successful in mobilizing and engaging their colleagues to make a difference."

Many Canadians are unaware that student union votes on BDS have no tangible effect on a university's policies or investments. Faculty have significant credibility with university officials and can serve as a vital bridge between students and administrators to help ensure the latter disavows BDS when resolutions are passed. When administrations publicly criticize BDS and applaud academic partnerships with Israelis, it signals to Canadians that BDS is a fringe movement that warrants rejection.

Fourth, we cannot overlook the value of students working with the broader Jewish community. At Trent, members of the Jewish and pro-Israel community in Peterborough provided advice and support, assuring students they were not alone and enjoyed backing from residents with strong local roots.

Students also received resources and materials from CIJA, which provides advocacy training, programs, and support for Hillels and students across Canada. As Rebecca Hubble, a student and key organizer in the Trent campaign, remarked: "After the first email that I sent to CIJA, I immediately received full support and guidance for how to approach and plan the anti-BDS campaign…a great deal of advice on how to strategically plan the campaign, reach out to students and get the message across effectively… Everything that CIJA provided for me and my team helped us immensely."

It is important to reaffirm that BDS generally garners only a weak level of support among students, and it often takes fewer votes than one would think to thwart anti-Israel resolutions. Pro-Israel students at Trent have shown that BDS can be defeated with hard work and the right strategy. By doing so, they have provided a case study in effective advocacy that can prove instructive for similar efforts by Hillels and student activists across Canada. ■

Judy Zelikovitz is vice-president, university and local partner services at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

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GUEST VOICE

A Shoah survivor who found kindness in unexpected places

Mira Sucharov

As the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz approached last month, discussion turned to the shrinking number of survivors. My father-in-law, Bill Gluck of Vancouver, was one of them, having been deported to Auschwitz from Hungary in 1944, a beautiful boy of 13 with piercing green eyes, a compact frame and a knockout grin. We mentally celebrated his life on that anniversary. But not 24 hours later, his ailing body gave out.

As we began to grieve my father-in-law's death, I became aware of the delicate dance between remembering Holocaust survivors for the individuals they were and invoking their identity as survivors.

Esteemed psychoanalyst and child survivor of the Holocaust Anna Ornstein specializes in trauma. Yet she bristles at being called a "survivor," she told the *Washington Post* on Jan. 23.

"That's almost like another crime," she said, adding, "We were reduced to a race… This is my name. I had parents who raised me a certain way, and that was not washed away."

Mourners don't have the luxury of asking the departed how they wish to be remembered. And in any case, we each carry our own points of salience with us when we remember.

At my father-in-law's funeral and shivah, Bill's nephew recalled dancing on his uncle's feet. My husband recalled the invisible love that had been all around him, like clean air. Bill's daughter reflected on the heartiness of autumn's last remaining leaves as she helped make her father comfortable during his final weeks. And then there were his fellow Holocaust survivors, coming to pay respects to a departed member of their own.

Before I met him some 20 years ago, my father-in-law had visited Vancouver schools, telling students his personal story of survival and freedom. For some of the audience, this was their first experience of learning about the Holocaust. One of these students later befriended a young man from Toronto when they studied together at Queen's University. That young Torontonian would, a few years later, become Bill's son-in-law.

My stepmother encountered Bill years before I met him, hearing him relay his personal account one evening at the Vancouver Jewish Community Centre. I, too, recall reading about Bill's journey in the pages of the *Jewish Western Bulletin* before meeting his son, whom I would go on to marry.

Survivors manage to touch so many people, both directly and indirectly. Yet, as each one is, my father-in-law was so much more than the sum of his harrowing experiences. Along with his wife, my beloved mother-in-law, Bill built a life of love out of the depths of inhumanity. He lavished a great deal of affection and nurturing on his family, and found his own moments of serenity and solitude as he took up distance sailing around the islands of British Columbia in his later years.

As the rabbi spoke about my father-in-law at the graveside service, he spoke of the godliness that surely ran through him. In young Bill's harrowing months at Auschwitz, he found ways to help his fellow inmates.

Perhaps most profoundly, Bill had also committed to memory details of instances of kindness amid the horror. Sometimes a certain German guard in the camps would help him – pulling him out of a work line to give him a less strenuous task, placing him on a bicycle during a long march, or even giving him his gun to hold. These stories of goodness didn't die with Bill, for my father-in-law had taken pains to impress these anecdotes upon his children.

So perhaps the godliness of survival is also the godliness of looking for kindness wherever it happens to be, and instilling goodness in the everyday. Bill wanted life to be simple and good. He wanted to find kindness around him, and he hoped others did, too. ■

Mira Sucharov is an associate professor of political science at Carleton University.

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INTERNATIONAL

Biden, other Democrats will not attend Netanyahu's address

RON KAMPEAS, JTA
WASHINGTON

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right, with U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden in January 2014. Biden has said he would be out of the country when Netanyahu is to speak to the U.S. Congress. FLASH 90 PHOTO

In a blow to Israel's efforts to contain the controversy over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's upcoming speech to Congress, U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden announced he would not attend Netanyahu's upcoming address.

Biden's office told media last Friday that he would be out of the country and would not fill his role as the president of the Senate during the joint meeting of Congress on March 3. The announcement came as leading black and Hispanic Democrats indicated they too would not attend. A Jewish lawmaker, Steve Cohen, told *JTA* blacks in his district were asking him not to go because they saw the speech as disrespecting U.S. President Barack Obama.

Meanwhile, Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, publicly urged Netanyahu in an interview with the *Forward* last week not to follow through with his plans to address Congress, saying the fracas had devolved into a "circus." Rabbi Rick Jacobs, the president of the Union for Reform Judaism, made the same call in an interview with the paper.

Administration officials had already said that the president and other senior officials would not meet with Netanyahu, ostensibly because the speech would be just two weeks before the Israeli election.

Congressional Democrats say the speech is unacceptable because John Boehner, the House of Representatives speaker, invited Netanyahu to rebut Obama's continued backing of nuclear talks between the major powers and Iran. Netanyahu, like most Republicans, believes the talks are headed for a bad deal that will leave Iran on the threshold of a nuclear weapon.

Netanyahu has phoned senior Democrats, and Israeli Ambassador to the United States Ron Dermer has met with many of the rank and file in an effort to smooth over their differences. Netanyahu and Dermer have said the speech will emphasize bipartisan support for Israel and will praise Obama for his backing of the country at critical times. They also say Netanyahu is determined to keep the date because he feels he needs to urgently convey his warning about a nuclear Iran ahead of a March 24 deadline on achieving the outline of a deal.

Democrats, however, have grown more adamant in opposing the speech, with a growing number of prominent minority Democrats saying they will stay away. Party leaders in both chambers say they will attend but are warning that the speech might backfire.

Jewish lawmakers have met with Dermer and expressed their displeasure with the timing of the speech. Cohen, who is circulating a letter among colleagues urging Boehner to postpone the speech until after Israeli elections and congressional votes on an Iran sanctions bill, told Dermer last week that black leaders in his Memphis district were asking him not to attend.

"It's become less and less attractive" to attend, Cohen told *JTA* after the meeting. "My district is majority African American and a lot of people see this as dismissive of the first African American president."

Cohen said Dermer told him Netanyahu is determined to go ahead with the speech.

The Israeli deputy foreign minister, Tzachi Hanegbi, suggested that Boehner misled the Israelis about the invitation, which Boehner said was made in the name of both parties. Within hours of Boehner announcing the invitation on Jan. 21, Democrat Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, and the White House said they had been kept out of the loop.

"It appears that the speaker of Congress made a move, in which we trusted, but which it ultimately became clear was a one-sided move and not a move by both sides," *Reuters* quoted Hanegbi as saying on an Israeli radio station.

A slate of 48 Republican House members signed a letter countering the one circulated by Cohen asking for a speech delay. The letter thanked Boehner for organizing the speech, saying "it is necessary now for Congress to hear from Prime Minister Netanyahu, and welcome his expertise on Iran's regional designs."

Matt Brooks, the director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, suggested on Twitter that his party would use the issue against Democrats in elections.

"Dems have a choice- stand w/PM Netanyahu and the Jewish com against Iran or w/Pres Obama," he said. The RJC "will make sure people know what they choose."■

Bibi sounds warning on Iran

JTA
JERUSALEM

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel "will take any action" to prevent the world powers from signing a "bad and dangerous" deal with Iran over its nuclear program.

Netanyahu made the remarks Feb.8 at the start of the regular weekly cabinet meeting after Iran's foreign minister said his country and world powers intend to complete a framework agreement by the end of March.

"From this stems the urgency of our efforts to try and block this bad and dangerous agreement," Netanyahu told the cabinet. "The major powers and Iran are galloping toward an agreement that will enable Iran to arm itself with nuclear weapons, which will endanger the existence of the State of Israel."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif met last weekend on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

Zarif called for the lifting of sanctions on Iran, calling them a "liability" and saying that, "You need to get rid of them if you want a solution." He said he did not believe an extension of the nuclear talks past the June 30 deadline would be "either necessary or useful."

"I don't think if we don't have an agreement it will be the end of the world," Zarif added.

The two sides set a March deadline for a framework agreement last November.

Zarif criticized Netanyahu, saying that Israel is hiding behind an existential Iranian threat.

"They cannot create a smokescreen to hide their atrocities against the Palestinian people, their continued violation of Palestinian human rights, their continued acts of aggression against Palestinian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Syrian people under the guise of a hypothetical Iranian threat that is more hype than anything else," Zarif said during a speech at the conference.

"Iran is not threatening anybody. We are not threatening to use force, we are not saying that all options are on the table."■

Shiite cleric reaches out to Jews

ELHANAN MILLER
JERUSALEM

Israelis usually associate Shiite clerics in Lebanon with the terror group Hezbollah, a powerful religious organization committed to the destruction of the Jewish state. But a Beirut-based cleric is surprising the public by spreading messages of peace and non-violence in Hebrew on social media.

"We call on rabbis, priests and Muslim clerics – both Sunni and Shia – to underplay religious traditions and texts that call for violence, since they are more dangerous than nuclear weapons," wrote Sayyed Muhammad Ali Husseini, secretary general of the Shiite group the Arabic Islamic Council, in Hebrew on his Facebook page last Sunday.

Just days after Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah warned of a possible war with Israel following an attack by his organization that left two Israeli soldiers dead on the border with Lebanon, Husseini said that religious texts must be historically contextualized rather than used to incite perpetual violence.

"Various religious texts calling for the use of violence and ruthlessness to achieve goals are extremely dangerous when used by groups we have warned against in the past," he continued. "These texts religiously sanction acts of violence and murder. Obviously, these are texts that were implemented in specific, limited situations; they cannot necessarily be applied to our time, since every situation has its own unique circumstances."

Sayyed Muhammad Ali Husseini FACEBOOK

This was not the first time that Husseini directly addressed an Israeli audience. On Jan. 19, he posted a video on Facebook directed at "our cousins, the children of Isaac son of Abraham."

"We believe that not all Jews are bad [just as] not all Muslims are terrorists. Let us cousins put our conflicts aside and stay away from evil and hatred. Let us unite in peace and love," he said in broken Hebrew.

Following the burning alive of Jordanian pilot Muaz Kasasbeh last week by the Islamic State in Syria, Husseini wrote on Facebook, "We heard and saw yesterday how our brother in humanity was burned. Has the Holocaust returned once again?"

Breaking from the traditional Shiite loyalty to the Iranian leadership, Husseini has also spoken out publicly against what he dubbed the complete Iranian domination of Lebanon.

"It is not new for the Iranian regime to explicitly proclaim its security, economic, political and even religious control of Lebanon," he told Emirates TV channel *Al-Aan* in May 2014. "We have warned of this and condemned it, and shall never accept it."

Eddy Cohen, a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University's Communications Department who has helped Husseini translate his messages into Hebrew, told Israel's Army Radio last Sunday that he did not know how representative Husseini's ideas are in Lebanon, but noted that the Shiite cleric seemed unconcerned about spreading his posts in Hebrew and boasted some 1,800 followers on Facebook.

"He is a moderate, and most Lebanese are sick of war and hostilities," Cohen said. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Arab minority invisible to Israeli Jews, Rivlin says

ELHANAN MILLER
JERUSALEM

Israel's President Reuven Rivlin criticized Israeli-Jewish ignorance of Arab society at a conference hosted at his residence last Sunday, warning that both groups are "blind to each other."

"How many of us Jews know colleagues at work who are Arab? How many of us have true friends who are Arab? How many of us know the agenda of the Arab public, or the differences dividing their society?" Rivlin wondered at an event dedicated to the integration of Arab citizens in the private sector, addressing a crowd of business leaders and civil society representatives.

"A huge gap has grown over the years between two societies that live next to each other and with each other, and yet are blind to each other," he said. "We must admit the painful truth: namely, that for the majority of Jewish-Israeli society the Arab public occupies a blind spot."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

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OPINION

Israel's role as nation-state of Jewish People needs repair

Reuben Berman

Since the birth of Israel, the Diaspora community has been counted as a strategic asset to the Jewish state. The political and financial resources of the Jews outside of Israel, especially in North America, have consistently been harnessed to protect the security of Israel and help the Jewish state flourish. In moments of crisis, Jews stood shoulder to shoulder in support of Israel, a nation that was viewed as a unifying force between Jews, regardless of location or denomination.

Unfortunately, this paradigm is shifting, and the relationship between the Jewish world and Israel is in danger of disintegrating. Because of factors within the Israeli government, Israeli society, and the Jewish world, Israel's role as the nation-state of the Jewish People, and the unified partnership that this instils between Jews around the world and Israel, is in dire need of reconsideration and repair.

In Israel, institutions – both governmental and religious – rarely take into account the beliefs and positions of Diaspora Jewry when making decisions. For example, whereas more than 70 per cent of Jews outside of Israel align themselves with movements other than Orthodoxy, in Israel there is an Orthodox monopoly on the state's regulation of religious practice. This dissonance causes tensions on issues such as recognition of conversions done by Conservative or Reform rabbis.

In addition, Israel's sustained control over Palestinian populations occurs in the context of increasingly frequent and violent rounds of conflict alongside continuous erosion of the viability of a negotiated two-state solution. This reality escalates tension with the liberal political and social affiliations of the majority of Diaspora Jewry.

The Israeli public, and especially young people, also lack a strong connection to their cousins in the Diaspora. Until 2008, there were no chapters in Israeli history textbooks that covered the shape of modern Jewry beyond the borders of Israel. Generations of Israelis have gained only a vague unidirectional understanding of the partnership, in which world Jewry supports Israel politically and financially. General opinion states that since members of world Jewry don't serve in the army or pay taxes, their criticisms and concerns are illegitimate.

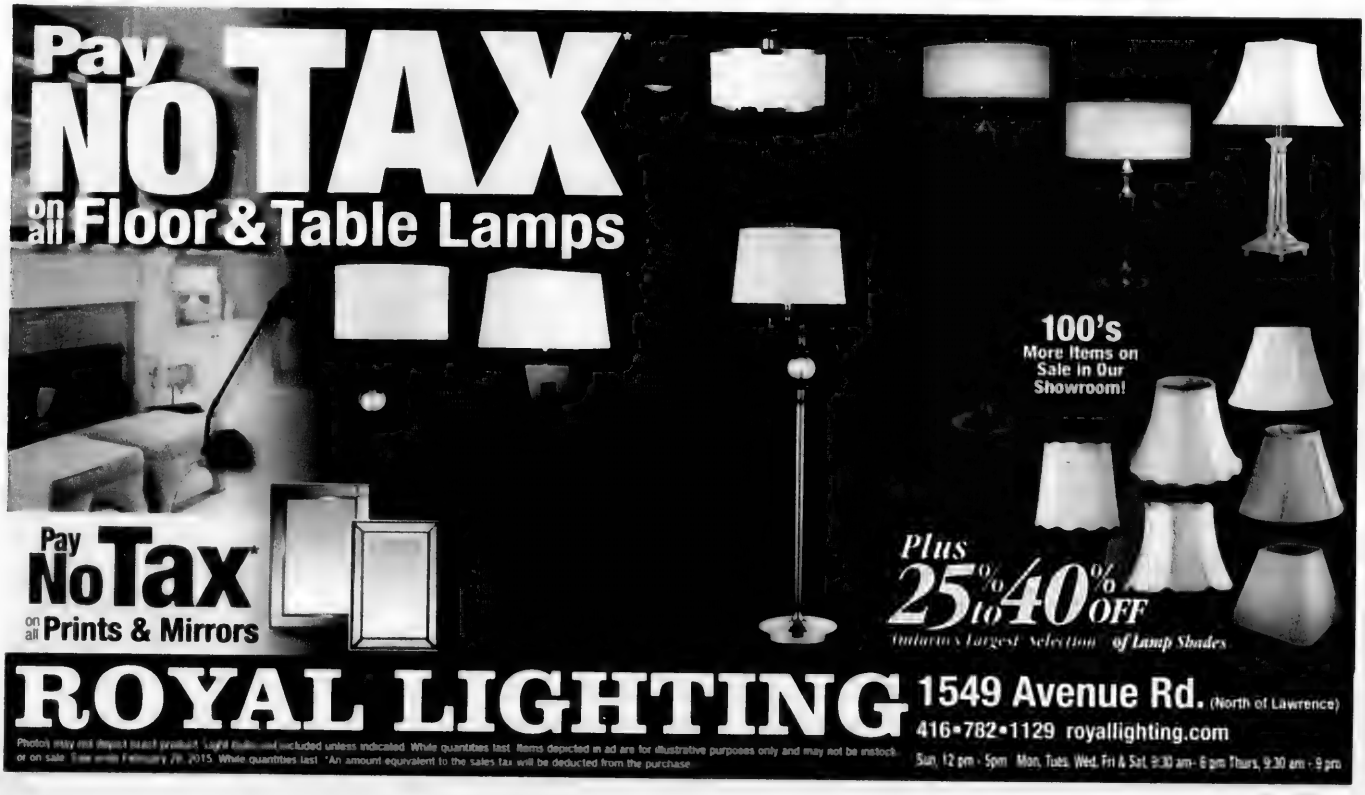
At the same time, the traditional Jewish establishment that has acted as the centralized mediator of the Israel-Jewish world relationship is weakening. In North America, for example, synagogues are struggling, core institutions of the community are having a difficult time making ends meet, and, most importantly, there has been a steady rate of decline in the commitment of young Jews to Jewish life and Jewish institutions.

The major Jewish world institutions are having an extremely difficult time proving their relevance to a generation for whom their Jewishness and Israel is increasingly unimportant. The generation currently coming of age is increasingly disengaged with its cultural identity as Jewish, and, by extension, to the Jewish state. The 2013 Pew study of American Jewry showed that one out of three millennials (born after 1980) are Jews of no religion. People in this category are far less likely to see Israel as important to their Jewish identity.

When combined, these issues point toward clear generational and geographical fractures that have already begun to threaten the basis of the partnership that has connected Jews the world over to the Jewish state. The unity that it fostered is in many respects giving way to a bitter divide.

If Israel loses its place as the nation-state of the Jewish People, it loses its raison d'etre. If world Jewry loses its connection to the Jewish state, they will forsake the greatest unifying factor among Jews since the creation of the Bible. The time has come for the entire Jewish community, the world over, to have a frank discussion of the role Israel plays as the nation-state of the Jewish People. ■

Reuben Berman is a Steinhardt fellow at the Reut Institute.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Prosecutor considered asking for Kirchner's arrest

JTA
BUENOS AIRES

Alberto Nisman

Argentine special prosecutor Alberto Nisman considered asking for the arrest of the country's president, according to a draft warrant found at his apartment.

In the legal complaint found by police in a trash can at Nisman's Buenos Aires apartment following his unexplained death last month, Nisman called for the arrest of Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner and Foreign Minister Hector Timerman, who is Jewish.

Had the warrants been issued, "it would have provoked a crisis without precedent in Argentina," a political analyst, Sergio Berensztein, said in the *New York Times*.

Nisman seems to have ultimately decided to denounce Kirchner and her government but not seek her immediate arrest.

Nisman, 51, who was heading the probe into the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish centre, was found shot dead in his apartment on Jan. 18, hours before he was to present evidence to Argentine lawmakers that Kirchner and other government officials covered up Iran's role in the attack, which killed 85 and injured hundreds.

Clarin, the largest newspaper in Argentina, reported the discovery of the draft warrant on Feb.1. The document, which asked for stronger measures against the president than the one that was to be presented finally by Nisman, is dated June 2014.

Anibal Fernandez, secretary general of the presidency, said last week that "somebody" prepared the warrant for Nisman in the last hours before he was to present it and that the prosecutor just signed it.

Viviana Fein, the prosecutor investigating Nisman's death, confirmed last week that Nisman had prepared the draft warrant, whose existence she had initially denied, according to the *New York Times*.

A federal judge in Argentina who has authored a book about the Holocaust was tapped to pick up Nisman's case against Kirchner.

Daniel Rafecas, who is invited often to speak about the Holocaust, was chosen by lottery Feb. 4. He is well known for applying Argentina's anti-discrimination law in a case centring on skinheads, ordering them to visit the Holocaust Museum in Buenos Aires as part of their probation. ■

Arabs only make up five per cent of employees in business sector

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

Since taking office in July 2014, Rivlin has dedicated much of his time to bridging the gap between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Last October, he became the first Israeli leader to acknowledge the "terrible crime" of the Kfar Kassem massacre in 1956 in which Israeli border police killed 48 Arab civilians. And last week at a meeting with Arab municipal leaders, Rivlin endorsed the construction of a new Arab city.

"The Arab public in Israel long ago stopped being a minority," he told the gathering. "The task of building bridges and forging a sense of partnership between Jews and Arabs is for me a human, Jewish and Zionist task of the first order."

Research presented on Sunday by Shaldor, an Israeli strategic consulting firm hired by a group of young Arab entrepreneurs, showed that while Arabs comprise 20 per cent of Israeli society, they make up just five per cent of the employees in Israel's business sector. According to Shaldor's data, presented by company vice-president Yakir Lazarov, some 70,000 Arabs were identified as either over-qualified or underemployed (working part-time), a number expected to grow to 126,000 by 2020.

The study found that just seven of Israel's top 47 companies employed Arabs at levels equal to their 20 per cent representation in Israeli society, but none of the companies employed Arabs in mid-level managerial positions or higher.

"The good news is that many of the companies have identified a 'business case' in employing more Arabs, especially in the retail sector," Lazarov said, identifying the main obstacle to Arab integration as the lack of employer access to potential employees. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Rabbi leads middle-aged first-timers to Israel

Visiting Jerusalem is a highlight of a tour of Israel. FILE PHOTO

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

A person can learn all there is to know about Israeli history, culture and politics through books and videos, but there is nothing that can replace the experience of travelling to the Holy Land, said Rabbi Gary Zweig, who is organizing a tour to Israel for middle-aged first timers.

"I feel like, people are so tied into their iPhones and YouTube videos, they feel like they don't have to go. You have to go, you have to see the place, not just look at it through a Facebook page. It's not the same," Rabbi Zweig said.

At the end of this year, Rabbi Zweig and a Canadian-born Israeli tour guide who has been living in Efrat for the past 20 years, Zvi Bessin, will lead a group of Jews in their 40s and beyond on a 10-day tour of Israel.

"I have at least a dozen people here who I've spoken to in the last six months who haven't been. It's a pity… By this age, around 50, people put going to Israel on their bucket list of things to do," he said, adding that he's been running similar tours since 2004.

He said he wanted to offer an opportunity for the "older than 40" crowd, who have never been on a organized trip to Israel, and are too old to make the cut for other tours like Birthright Israel.

"A lot of people go on their own and it's not the same as going with a group. You miss so much without having a tour guide, you miss so much explanation. I go every two years and I get so much more explanation hearing about the places and the history and it's well worth it to get a tour guide."

Unlike Birthright Israel, the trip is not free. Participants are required to book their own airfare and pay a group rate for accommodations and the guided tours.

Included in the itinerary is a four-day stay in Jerusalem, the exploration of the ruins of Caesarea, a trip to Akko to learn about the famous Akko prison break, a visit to the Zippori National Park, and a tour of the city of Safed visiting old shuls and its artists' colony.

Rabbi Zweig said that he's been working on putting this particular trip together since December 2013.

"Because of the wars, like the [Israel-Gaza War in 2014], some people cancel their trips and then they don't rebook it. A lot of times that happens," he said.

"The first time I went with another tour, there were maybe 100 people booked. This was before the terrorist attacks in 2001 and then 20 people ended up going. It was pretty sad," he recalled.

"When I was doing these trips in 2004, 2005, 2006, there wasn't as much hesitation as other trips. This year, it's more than others," he said, adding that he hopes to bring about 15 people together for this tour.

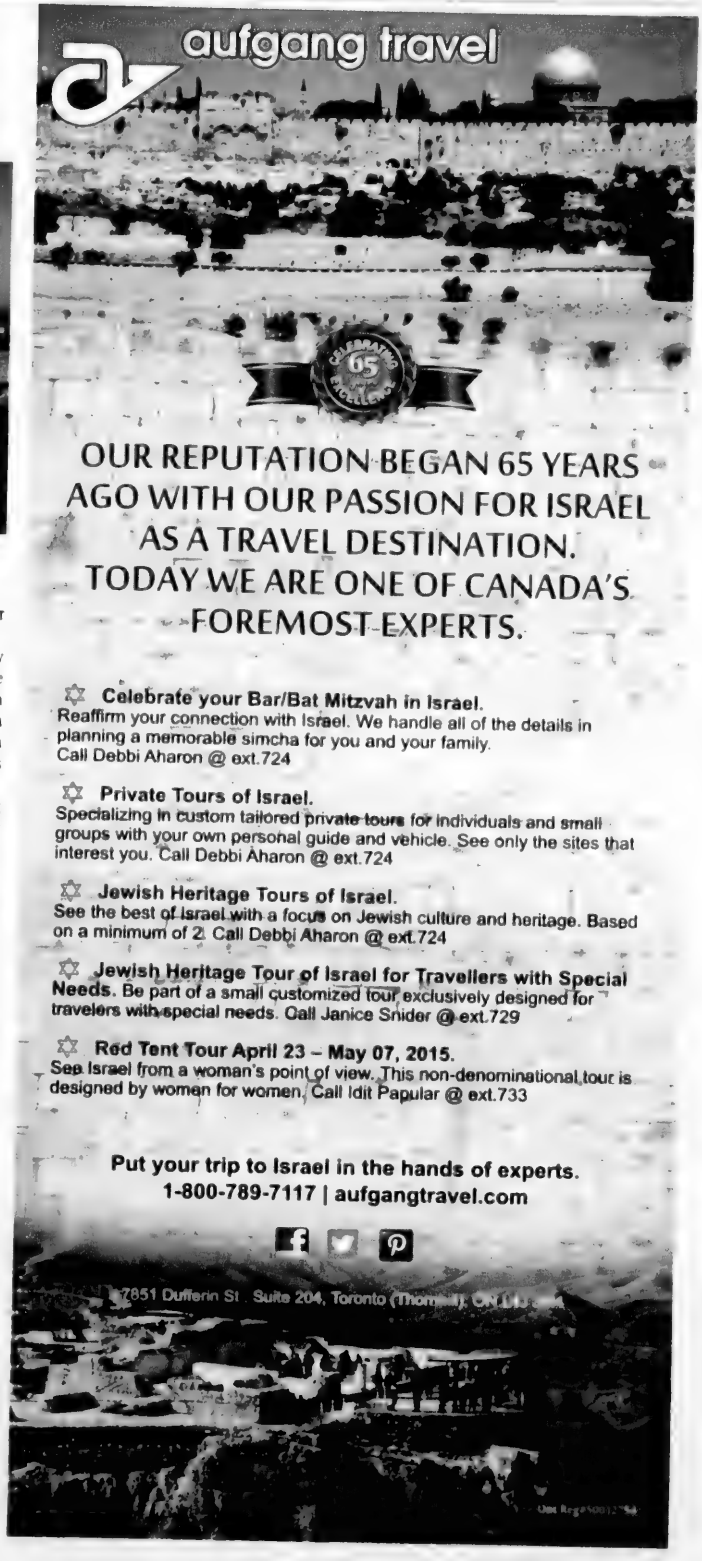
Although the trip is catered to people who have never been, it's not limited to them.

"I realize there may be a scenario where the husband has been, but the wife hasn't been, or one brother has been and the other brother hasn't been. I'm not limiting anything like that."

Rabbi Zweig said he wants people to experience Israel as it should be experienced.

"People come back and say they had a great time – no it's a life-changing time, especially for first-timers." ■

For more information, or to register, contact Rabbi Zweig at gszweig@gmail.com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Jewish Life

Images from Lodz Ghetto each tell a story

Henryk Ross photos courtesy Art Gallery of Ontario

TOBY SALTZMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The images captured by the little Leica camera that Henryk Ross ported around the Lodz Ghetto from 1940 to 1944 may be black and white, but the stories they tell are vivid, beyond the iconic views of the Holocaust.

How these images came to light is stunning. When the Germans overtook Lodz – the largest industrial city in Poland – they renamed it Litzmannstadt – and divided it into two sections, cramming some 204,000 Jews into the 2.4-sq.km Lodz Ghetto.

Ross worked as an official photographer for the Statistics Department of the Judenrat (Jewish Council), under the auspices of Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski – the Ghetto Elder who exploited Jews for labour with the motto "Unser Weg is Arbeit!" ("Our way is work!") – to satisfy the Nazi administrator of the ghetto, Hans Biebow.

Ross was mandated to take identification photos, official portraits and propaganda photographs showing Jews being industrially productive.

Judging by his personal photos with his beautiful wife and photographic muse Stefania, and images of gatherings with elegantly dressed guests, Ross arguably enjoyed privileged status as long as he satiated the Nazi penchant for shots of textile workers, mattress makers, shoe cobblers and women embroidering pieces of velvet.

When Ross grasped the menacing annihilation of his fellow Jews, his conscience shone through and he became obsessed with the forbidden act of documenting the realities of ghetto life.

Shooting images on the sly, Ross exposed his Leica lens between folds in his coat and peered through cracks in doors, risking being caught by the Gestapo. When the final liquidation of the ghetto started, Ross remained behind, delegated to search buildings for caches of valuables for Biebow.

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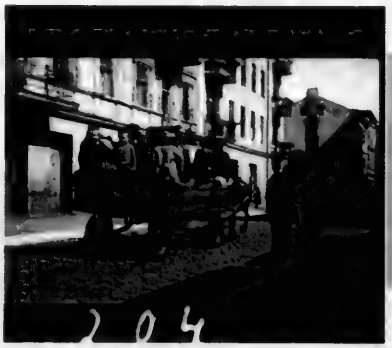

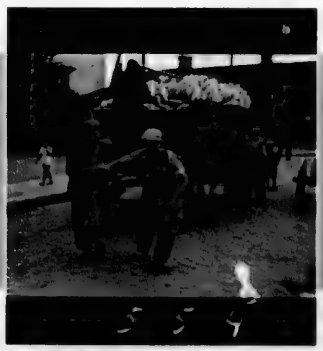

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

THE VEILED SUN, HOLOCAUST MEMOIR, NEWLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

Toronto translator **Vivian Felsen** has produced an English version of **Paul Schaffer's** French Holocaust memoir *The Veiled Sun* (*Le Soleil Voilé*), which has recently been published by Vehicule Press of Montreal.

Schaffer spent his teenage years on the run from the Nazis in Austria, Belgium and France, and then in Auschwitz from 1942 to 1945. He survived to become a successful industrialist. His story provides insights into a middle-class Jewish childhood in prewar Vienna, attitudes to Jewish refugees in Vichy France, arrest and detention in France, survival in Auschwitz, and the return to postwar France to face the challenges of re-integration into French society.

First published in France in 2001 and republished in 2009, Schaffer's memoir was written in a highly literate style, which made the experience of translating it all the more rewarding for Felsen, who has previously translated several Yiddish memoirs for the Azrieli Foundation.

"This book is a little different in terms of the quality of the writing and particularly the author's reflections on the Holocaust, including his three years in Auschwitz," she said. *The Veiled Sun: From Auschwitz to New Beginnings* features a foreword by **Serge Klarsfeld** and introduction by **Simone Veil**. www.vehiculepress.com

• • •

Names in the News

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival has named **Stuart Hands** as its new director of programming. Hands, who has been with TJFF in lesser capacities since 2006, holds a master's degree in film studies from York University and specializes in Jewish culture and film and well as gender and ethnicity in American cinema. He has also worked for the New York Jewish Museum and the New York Jewish Film Festival.

"Stuart's brain is an encyclopedia of film," says TJFF artistic director **Helen Zukerman**. "It enables him to reach way, way back and unearth facts and films, long forgotten by us mere mortals. He is a constant delight!"

• • •

Film Screenings

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *The Matchmaker* (*Pa'am Hayiti*), Israeli director **Avi Nesher's** film about a teenager working for a mysterious matchmaker, a Holocaust survivor, in Haifa in the summer of 1968. With guest speaker **Prof. Kalman Weiser**. $15, $10. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday Feb. 15, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

• TJFF also co-presents *Sound of Torture* at the Toronto Black Film Festival. The hour-long subtitled documentary by director **Karen Shayo** examines the human trafficking of Eritrean asylum seekers in Egypt's Sinai Desert. $10. Carlton Cinema, 20 Carlton St. Sunday Feb. 15, 7 p.m.

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents two screenings of *Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem*, award-winning film drama by directors **Ronit Elkabetz** and **Shlomi Elkabetz** about the difficulties of divorce in Israel. Chai Tea, Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. $15. Sunday Feb. 22, 1 and 4 p.m.

• • •

Music Notes

• Toronto's Winterfolk XIII Blues and Roots Music Festival is a combination of pay-what-you-can and ticketed concert stages featuring more than 150 artists at five clubs near the Danforth-Broadview intersection. Feb. 13 to 15. www.winterfolk.com

• **Mike Anklewicz Trio** plays two sets of klezmer music at Free Times Café, 320 College St., Sunday Feb. 15, 10:30 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Reservations, 416-967-1078. ■

Play looks at the impact of blacklisting in the 1950s

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When playwright Jeffrey Sweet's friend Kate Draper was working in her first Broadway show, Tommy Tune's *A Day in Hollywood, a Night in the Ukraine*, in the early 1980s he asked her a theoretical question.

What would her father say if it was in fact directed not by Tune but by Jerome Robbins, who had named people to the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the 1950s.

Her father, dancer Paul Draper, was implicated in that list.

Draper told him that while he would disapprove, he wouldn't likely say anything. "And I thought that if the father would say something, that would make a play," Sweet says.

And out of that idea, *The Value of Names*, running at the Toronto Centre for the Arts from Feb. 19, was born.

From left, Allan Price, Justine Lewis and Jack Newman star in *The Value of Names*.

"It is about an actor who is blacklisted," Sweet says. "He made something of a comeback in a sitcom, but he's now in retirement and lives in California. His daughter who he doesn't see very much because she lives in New York, is a young actress. She comes to stay with him because she's been cast in a show in Los Angeles. In the middle of the rehearsals for the play, the director takes sick. So, they bring in a new director and he's the guy who named her father to the House of Un-American Activities Committee."

This puts her in a difficult situation because her father has never forgiven this man who used to be his best friend. Does she stay with the show or does she leave?

"She makes noises that she might leave and the director hears of this and comes up to the house, ostensibly to persuade her to stay with the play, but really because he's looking for an excuse to meet her father. Not to get him to forgive but to get past it so that they can be friends again."

A big conversation ensues between these two former friends. Both wishing there were terms that they could reach each other and at the same time trying to win the other over to their view, so that they can build some kind of a bridge.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Actor relishes role of 8-year-old boy

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Caity Quinn may be 28, but she's starring as eight-year-old Joseph in Pleiades Theatre's production of *The Sound of Cracking Bones*.

"It's a very, very powerful play," says director John Van Burek. The show, which starts Feb. 14 at Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille, follows Joseph and 13-year-old Elikia after they escape from a group of rebel forces who are using them as child soldiers.

Canadian playwright Suzanne Lebeau penned her 2009 Governor General Award-winning play in French and Van Burek translated it to English with Julia Duchesne. The cast will perform it in its original language in the final week of their run.

Though Quinn may seem like an unusual choice to play Joseph, Van Burek describes her as "an incredible find." Since he couldn't use child actors due to the show's "harrowing" content, he needed to find adults who could convincingly play these roles.

Quinn relishes the complexity of her character and must strike a balance between Joseph's innocence and his slow realization of the world's cruelties – all while believably portraying an eight-year-old boy. "As an actress," she says, "I can sink my teeth into that challenge both emotionally and physically."

Caity Quinn

Though she was immersed in the arts since early childhood, Quinn ventured to the United Kingdom to audition for post-secondary theatre schools. She attended a Tom Stoppard play in London's West End one night and happened to sit beside a film director. "I started talking with him and I told him, 'I've been auditioning here, but I'm not sure if I want to go here, I don't know what I want to do,'" she remembers saying.

The director gave her Jack Garfein's contact information. Garfein – an Auschwitz survivor – has been associated with the likes of Lee Strasberg, James Dean and Marilyn Monroe. Quinn heard that he didn't usually teach young actors, but he accepted her as a student at the tender age of 17. Luckily, she had enough credits to graduate early and spent her last semester of high school learning from Garfein in Paris.

Her career also brought her to New York City where she attended the American Music and Dramatic Academy (AMDA). She earned an undergraduate degree in French language and literature from Hunter College and also studied French while in Paris.

At 19, Quinn was a principal dancer in Disney's *Enchanted*. In the same year, she appeared in the off-Broadway show *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, which starred Cynthia Nixon in the title role. "It just was a fabulous experience being able to go to theatre every day to work for a long extended period of time," she recalls.

Originally from Lee, N.H., Quinn moved to Canada and received her MFA in acting from York University in 2013.

Following graduation, she participated in the Paprika Festival – a Toronto-based, theatre training program for emerging artists. There, she worked on her original play titled *Ties of Blood: The Brontes*, about the ill-fated literary family. The show, which she also brought to the ARTS Project in London, Ont., combines elements of folk music and Japanese kabuki theatre.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49

First time one of Sweet's plays is being performed here

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The Value of Names was first produced as a one-act play at the Actors Theatre of Louisville in 1982, and soon became Sweet's most produced play to date. It so resonated with actor Jack Klugman, he took to the stage in it at six different theatres.

Sweet says that frequently when you find yourself working on something, you become a magnet for exactly the information you need.

"I was starting to work on the play, but I was having trouble writing this from the perspective of the director because I disagreed with him."

Sweet happened to attend an event that featured Elia Kazan, the writer and actor who testified at the committee hearings in 1952 for which he received strong, negative criticism.

"Someone in the audience brought up blacklisting and was taking a shot at Kazan, who gave over names. In that moment, I thought wherever he goes, whoever he meets, Kazan knows this is what people think of him, an SOB who informed on his friends. And that gave me the ability to write from the inside of that character."

Ironically, he wrote the play two years before Kazan's autobiography came out and there are actual lines in it almost word for word, that Sweet had written in his play.

Sweet, whose mother is Jewish, says he grew up loving and identifying with satiric comedy which largely is a product of Jewish comedic voices from the '50s like Mel Brooks, Lenny Bruce and Joan Rivers. He addresses this in his one-man show *You Only Shoot the Ones You Love* about Jews fleeing Cossacks.

This is the first time one of Sweet's plays is being performed in Canada. A big fan of the Toronto and Stratford theatre scenes, he is thrilled that he has finally gotten his foot in the door here. ■

Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre presents Jeffrey Sweet's comedy/drama The Value of Names *starring Allan Price and Justine Lewis and directed by Ari Weisberg at the Toronto Centre for the Arts Studio Theatre from Feb. 19 to March 1. www.teatrontheatre.com.*

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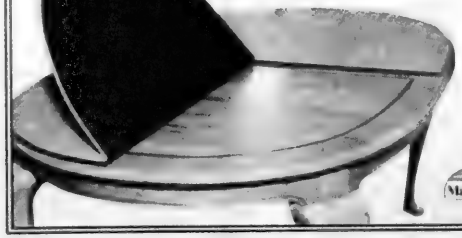

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Gather around the table for a great meal

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Netivot HaTorah Day School recently launched *Gathered Around the Table*, its new kosher cookbook, the project organizers had a winning marketing plan.

They created buzz by inviting the whole community to the Warehouse for a party with recipe tastings and food demonstrations. Some 450 people attended and 700 cookbooks were sold.

Guests noshed – or feasted (depending on how hungry they were) on finger foods and bite-sized desserts, all prepared from the recipes from *Gathered Around the Table*.

Chef Mitchell Lipperman of Exquisite Gourmet, a sponsor of the book, gave recipe demonstrations.

It was an evening with panache and style orchestrated by event planner, Amy Stopnicki. She also happens to be the co-editor of the book.

Stopnicki said *Gatherings*, the first cookbook put out by Netivot in 2003, had been a big success and so parents were eager to do a followup book. She said she was asked to pilot the project back in 2011.

She stressed, though, that there was a team of people who worked hard to make the cookbook a success, among them, her co-chair Shana Dale Aronson, and Ya'ara Saks, who did business development.

A call was sent out to the school community for recipe submissions and a committee of 55 people volunteered to test them, Stopnicki said, explaining that it took two years to complete the testing and tweaking of the 200 recipes in the book. "It was like having a full-time job for three years."

Gathered Around the Table can be purchased on Amazon, at Netivot HaTorah and Jewish bookstores across the Greater Toronto Area.

Rice Paper Spring Rolls With Dipping Sauce

- ❑ 1-2 tbsp. oil
- ❑ 2 carrots, julienned
- ❑ 2 celery stalks, julienned
- ❑ 1 red bell pepper, julienned
- ❑ 1 onion, julienned
- ❑ 1 zucchini, julienned
- ❑ 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- ❑ 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste
- ❑ 12 rice paper sheets

Dipping Sauce

- ❑ 2 tbsp. honey
- ❑ juice of 1 lime
- ❑ ¼ cup soy sauce
- ❑ 2 tbsp. rice wine vinegar
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste
- ❑ 1 tsp cayenne pepper (optional)

Heat a large saucepan with oil over a medium-high temperature. Sauté vegetables.

Add garlic, soy sauce, salt and pepper and mix well. Let cool.

Place 1 sheet of rice paper in warm water for approximately 15 seconds, until paper softens and becomes translucent. Remove from water and place on a flat surface. Place a heaping tablespoon of sautéed vegetables in the centre of the rice paper. Fold in the sides and roll up the rice paper like a jelly roll. Then fold in both sides resembling an envelope. Repeat with remaining rolls.

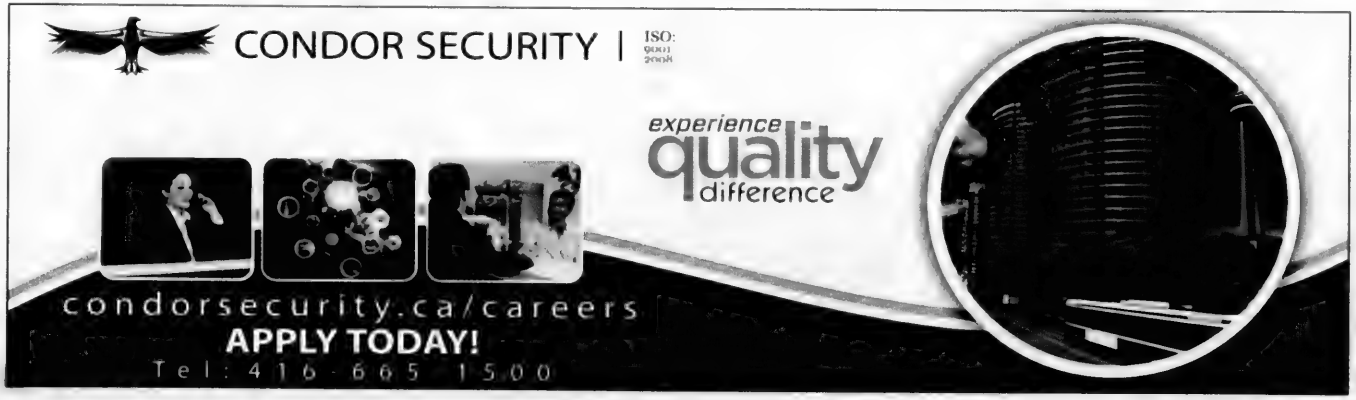
Mix dipping sauce ingredients together and serve alongside rolls. Makes 12 rolls

Parsnip Pear Soup

- ❑ 5 to 6 large parsnips, peeled and cut into small chunks
- ❑ 4 tbsp. olive oil, divided
- ❑ 2 tbsp. pure maple syrup
- ❑ 6 pears, peeled and diced
- ❑ 3 onions, diced
- ❑ 10 cups chicken broth
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400. Place parsnips on a large roasting pan in a single layer and drizzle with 2 tbsp. olive oil and maple syrup. Roast in oven until soft and golden, approximately 10 minutes, checking to make sure the parsnips do not burn.

Meanwhile, in a large stockpot over medium heat, sauté pear and onion in remaining 2 tbsp. of olive oil until soft. Add roasted parsnips. Add broth and bring to a boil. Simmer, covered for 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Purée with a hand blender until smooth. Makes 8 to 10 servings. ■



THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

The great inventors return, in farce and darkness

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Léon Theremin's name does not yet have the cachet of his inventor compatriot Nikola Tesla, whose moniker sits curb-side these days on sleekly shaped automobiles. Tesla's life in the United States began in the 1880s, with work for Thomas Edison, which led to substantial discoveries connected with AC current before his inventions related to wireless electricity and global communication systems failed to gain mass appeal.

Theremin's best-known invention is the musical instrument named for him. The theremin, which is played without the thereminist touching its controls, is among the first electronic musical instruments. Its two antennas sense the player's hands, allowing her to manipulate pitch and volume while sending the sound to a loudspeaker.

Sean Michaels' Giller Prize-winning novel *Us Conductors* opens late in the game, in 1938, with Léon Theremin locked in a cabin on the Stary Bolshevik, traveling back to his native Soviet Union. He considers the dark direction his life has taken and we get a lesson in how to play the theremin: "You wait to give the tubes the chance to warm, like creatures taking their first breaths. . . . You stand before a cabinet and two antennas and immediately the space itself is activated, the room is charged, the atmosphere is alive. . . . Raise the right hand first, toward the pitch antenna, and you will hear it: DZEEEEOOOoo, a shocked electric coo, steadying into a long hymn. Raise the left hand, toward the volume antenna, and you will quiet it."

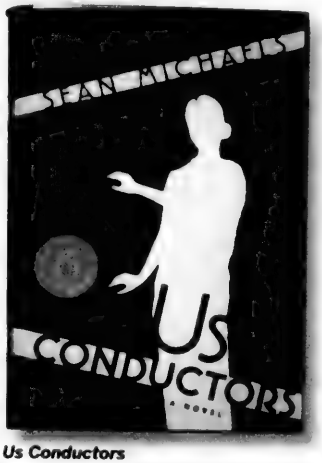
This semi-magical vocation never quite comes clear to the reader, though we meet dedicated thereminists and follow their bodies in motion. The machine and its eerie approximation of traditional musical sound remains foreign. But Michaels is expert at weaving a light-handed, fanciful narrative – an historical roman à clef – around Theremin himself, his undertakings as a Soviet scientist, which lead to fruitful years in flapper-era Manhattan before he is hauled back for a taste of the true awfulness of Stalin's gulag system.

Theremin's edge over Tesla as a fictional character is the fact that his many inventions include something so strangely ahead of its time as the theremin, with the potential to enchant, to attract a coterie of trainees and supporters who sought it out in community gatherings on the Russian steppe, at Carnegie Hall, as a complement to the excitements of jazz era New York or Ravel's *Kaddish*.

Though Theremin is sent to the United States as a Soviet agent, he finds plenty of time for performances, for tinkering with his instrument's possibilities, as well as for a failed effort to popularize the theremin via a sales deal with RCA. The Depression intervenes, as do murky machinations among the Soviet fixers for whom Theremin is acting as a front. He is packed off one day without the chance to tell his American wife where he is being taken. The Stary Bolshevik is his first European prison, and like a forgotten invention, he disappears into the gulag archipelago, among the hundreds of thousands of wasted lives sent east on the whim of NKVD agents.

The front two-thirds of *Us Conductors* is largely lightness and fun, a portrait of a naïf at loose ends in the big city, of the romances that come his way along with haphazard friendships. George Gershwin makes an appearance, as does Tommy Dorsey.

Michaels' style is hard to pin down as he follows Theremin's New York ups and downs. There is whimsy and wit, and a certain poetic otherworldliness to his descriptions of his hero's progress. At times one feels the influence of F. Scott Fitzgerald's



Us Conductors
Sean Michaels
Random House

1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* in Michaels' portrayal of speakeasies and their denizens' repartee:

"What are you doing on New Year's?" I asked.

"Haven't decided," you said. "Trying to find either the biggest bash or the smallest."

If the bulk of *Us Conductors* is a portrait of an innocent abroad in the big city, then its final movement is pure descent – Theremin, back in Moscow, is soon penniless, friendless, and because of a clueless request for help from an old contact who has become a major Soviet military figure, he is packed off to the edge of Siberia at Kolyma. Here Michaels has done careful reading in the historiography of the gulag, but his presentation – sharply imagistic and concise – bears a resemblance to Primo Levi's picture perfect presentation of his year of survival in Auschwitz. Michaels' presentation of gulag life is gritty, pungent, full of sharply drawn scenes that decry the totalitarian approach to men's lives without a hint of didacticism.

Theremin catches the interest of the man running the slave labour camp at Kolyma by suggesting a way to improve efficiency in the brigade of workers who use wheelbarrows to transfer loads over kilometres of rocky ground. Suddenly, he is released, into another chapter of indentured labour: a dark period under the watch of Lavrentiy Beria, head of the NKVD, seeking new kinds of listening devices to place in the embassies of the Soviet Union's many enemies.

Michaels gives Theremin the benefit of the doubt regarding these undertakings. The inventor recognizes Beria's fearsome authority as the darkest expression of Soviet policy. But after his release from prison in the late '40s it's understood that Theremin continued to work for the KGB on a range of spy-related technologies. This detail does not quite match the novel's portrait of the man as unlucky dupe.

On the subject of historical accuracy *Us Conductors* lets itself off the hook with an introductory epigraph: "THIS BOOK IS MOSTLY INVENTIONS." The reader appreciates the double-entendre, and yet, there is so much that is historically accurate in *Us Conductors* it is difficult to know when Michaels allows himself the freedom of invention.

The choice by the Giller Prize jury of *Us Conductors* represents a satisfying turn by the country's major literary prize. Michaels' novel is no breezy entertainment, although he does manage to present his fascinations with technology, music and political history using a wily and captivating voice. As a first novel *Us Conductors* is undoubtedly a breakthrough, representing the arrival in our literature of a voice worth following for its next idiosyncratic choices. ■

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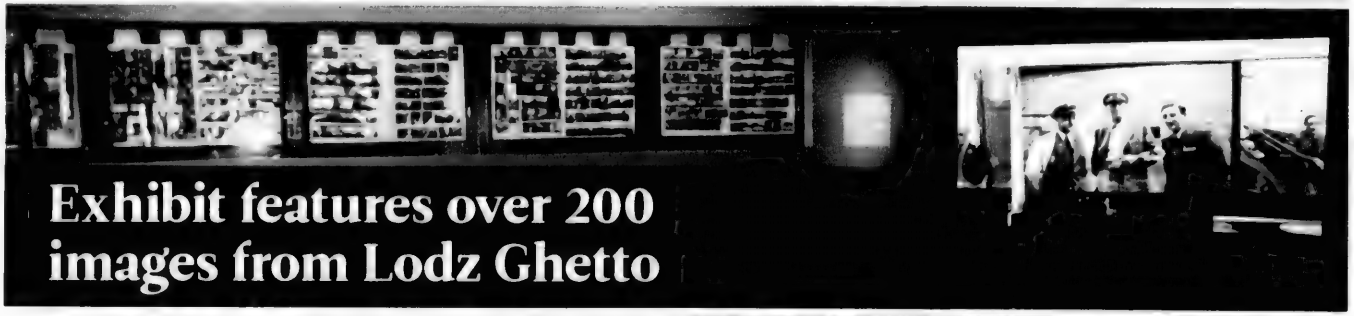

Exhibit features over 200 images from Lodz Ghetto

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

This gave Ross opportunities to photograph mass deportations, as well as time to bury his life's work of 6,000 negatives along with artifacts in the ground at 12 Jagielonska St.

After the Red Army liberated the ghetto in January 1945, Ross excavated the negatives. As, Matthew Teitelbaum, AGO director and CEO writes: "The images – and memories – were freed in parallel with the survivors in his community."

The images numbered more than the 877 ghetto survivors. Half of the negatives were darkened by moisture, many had deteriorated. In 1956, Ross and his wife immigrated to Israel and in 1961, his brutal ghetto images accompanied his testimony at the trial of Adolf Eichmann.

In 1987, Ross created a folio of select contact prints, most measuring four-by-six centimetres. Shot with 35 mm cellulose nitrate film, some of the prints show light swirls of degraded emulsions. The folio and 3,000 surviving negatives are now preserved at the Art Gallery of Ontario, a gift in 2007 from London's Archive of Modern Conflict.

On exhibition now at the AGO, *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross* features over 200 images by Ross, the complete original folio along with a screen projection of the blown-up images, video clips of Ross testifying at the Eichmann trial, plus several contemporary images by Toronto photographer Yuri Dojc.

Ross's images are also compiled in a splendid publication edited by Maia-Mari Sutnik, AGO's curator of photography, special projects, that features insightful essays by Holocaust scholars.

En masse, the folio reads like a photojournalist's diary, a visual narrative of true moments captured spontaneously. Arranged as if without thought or sequential reasoning, the folio suggests that Ross aimed to project the extreme, incoherent juxtapositions of ghetto life.

While iconic Holocaust images typically focus only on the anguish, with heaps of bodies and emaciated concentration camp inmates, Ross portrayed the happy and sad elements of Lodz Ghetto life: the elite Jews reveling in ordinary lives, joyful celebrations and seemingly carefree garden strolls, as well people mired in misery, lining up at soup kitchens, digging their own graves, or huddled on a wagon en route to Chelmno extermination camp. Viewing Ross's images, it lurks in your mind that – for all the elite's perceived joy – by September 1944 their only road from the ghetto would lead to the camps.

Maia-Mari Sutnik, AGO's curator of photography, with Yuri Dojc. TOBY SALTZMAN PHOTOS

Every image tells a story. One contrasts two boys, one standing seemingly nonchalant as another lies on the ground, wasting from hunger. A suite of four pictures evokes emotions of joy turning to despair: depicting a mother tenderly kissing her baby and the father tickling the precious child's chin, it makes you wonder if they know their fate, or if they will lose the baby to Rumkowski's controversial call for parents to give up their children under the age of 10 for "resettlement."

As a child of parents who experienced the Lodz Ghetto, I found myself searching the folio for their faces. With these images, Ross validated stories that my parents had told of happy times and heinous, and authenticated the ghetto experiences for future generations. ■

Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross runs until June 14 at the Art Gallery of Ontario. For information: www.ago.net

'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

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The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

AUTHORS & POETS

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS CJN

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original short stories or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

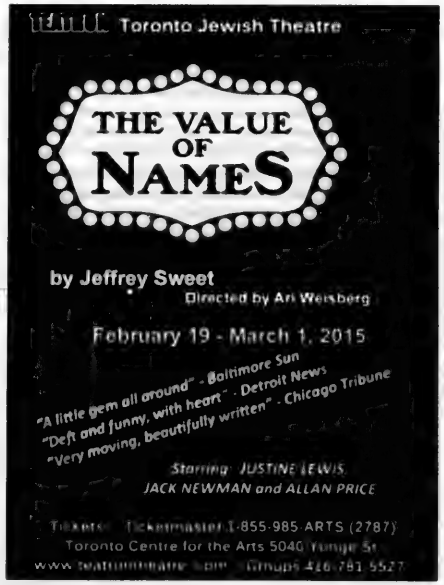
They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 2, 2015. Not all submissions can be published, and not all those selected will appear in both Toronto and Montreal editions. We look for originality. Please don't send more than three entries. We cannot correspond with submitters.

Deadline for submissions is Feb. 27, 2015 at 3 p.m.

E-mail submissions to:

cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com

We can only accept email submissions. We prefer Word documents.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What's New

FEB. 12 - FEB. 19

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Feb. 12

TAI CHI
Explore Tai Chi, 7:30 p.m. at Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Contact agol@shaarshalom.ca.

JEWISH PIONEERS
Frank White talks about the Jewish farming communities in Western Canada, 7:30 p.m., Lodzer Synagogue, 12 Heaton St. 416-636-6665.

FINDING OUR WAY IN PRAYER
The clergy at Beth David Synagogue present a 4-part series on "Finding our way in traditional prayer." Tonight: "Prayer and Song," 7:30 p.m. Feb. 19, "Prayer in practice."

Friday, Feb. 13

SHABBAT ITANU
Ellen Schwartz is the guest speaker for a Shabbat service focusing on inclusion, 7 p.m., Danforth Jewish Circle, at Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Ave. 416-580-6303.

Saturday, Feb. 14

WOMEN'S SHABBAT
Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold is the guest speaker at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 9 a.m.

Sunday, Feb. 15

BRUNCH TALK
Eli Rubinstein discusses "Significant Jewish anniversaries in our lifetimes," 11:30 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. $10. RSVP 416-633-3838.

Tuesday, Feb. 17

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Circumcise me: the comedy of Yisrael Campbell*, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz**, 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of Feb. 26 is Feb. 16. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Prayer

Prayer, by Dvora Barzilai, explores the Hebrew language in liturgy, songs, contemporary Hebrew proverbs and forgotten texts, brought to life through mixed media including wine, sand, cement, ashes, oils and canvas. The exhibit is on display at the Miles Nadal JCC until Feb. 19.

TAI CHI
Temple Har Zion presents a Tai Chi class, 8 p.m. $5. 905-889-2252.

Wednesday, Feb. 18

LEADERS OF MODERN ZIONISM
Rabbi Philip Scheim discusses "Leaders of modern Zionism," 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. Tonight, Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Feb. 25, David Ben-Gurion.

DECONSTRUCTING THE MEGILLAH
Laya Crust discusses the process of creating the Megillah Project with the Pomegranate Guild, Temple Sinai, 7:30 p.m. info@pomegranateguild.com.

Thursday, Feb. 19

MIKVAH CLASS
Rebbetzin Goldie Plotkin discusses the mitzvah of mikvah, 10:30 a.m., Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Markham.

Coming Events

GIRLS NIGHT OUT
Canadian Hadassah-WIZO presents an evening of improv comedy, silent auction and desserts, Feb. 26, 7 p.m., St. Michael's College School Centre for the Arts, 1515 Bathurst St. Tickets $50/ $118. For tickets, 416-630-8373 (on weekends 416-219-3098).

HEBREW READING
Beth Emeth Synagogue offers a free 6-session Hebrew reading class for those who can read Hebrew slowly. Classes start Feb. 22, 9:15 a.m. Call 416-633-3838.

MORASHA
Barrie Wilson presents "The lost gospel, a Jewish perspective," Feb. 25-April 1, 11:15 a.m. at Beth Emeth Synagogue. **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner** teaches a class on "Sociology and the Synagogue," Feb. 25- March 28, 10 a.m. Call **Loretta,** 416-789-7400.

ORTHODOX FEMINISM IN ISRAEL
Hannah Kehat, founder of Israel's first Orthodox feminist organization, speaks Feb. 22, 7 p.m. at the Miles Nadal JCC. Sponsored by the New Israel Fund of Canada.

YOUNG JUDAEA ANNIVERSARY
Canadian Young Judaea celebrates Camp Solelim's 50th anniversary, March 7 with a party at The Warehouse. Tickets at www.campsolelim.ca

JEWISH ACTIVISM IN AFRICA
Adam Hummel, founder of Youth Ambassadors for Peace, is the guest speaker at Chabad of Markham, Feb. 20. RSVP for dinner, 905-886-0420.

TRIVIA AND SILENT AUCTION
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a trivia and silent auction, March 7, 8 p.m. For tickets, email trivia@shaarshalom.ca.

SHARK TANK NETWORKING EVENT
NCSY hosts a "Shark Tank" and business networking event Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m., Vaughan City Hall. $25/$50. For tickets, call **Jane Farkas,** 416-995-0130 or jane@ncsy.ca.

JF&CS Groups

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- High-conflict divorce: A workshop for parents in a high conflict but not abusive situation. Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.
- When you're about to separate, what to tell the kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. Feb. 17, 6:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Film critic **Shlomo Schwartzberg** discusses "Romance on film," Feb. 12, 1:30 p.m.; Musician **Jordan Klapman** discusses "All that Jewish jazz," Feb. 19, 26, 1:30 p.m.; Purim Party and Shpiel with the WEL Group Players, March 5, 1 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, Feb. 18; Spa day, facials, manicures, barber and hairdresser, Feb. 12, 10 a.m. Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Feb.16, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Great Jewish painters of the 20th century," Mondays until March 16, 1 p.m.; Feb. 17, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Nazi loot and the 'Portrait of Wally,'" 10 a.m.; Feb. 18, **Mordechai Ben-Dat** discusses "Israel and Middle East update," 1:30 p.m.
- **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. Feb. 18, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays until Feb. 25, **Osnat Lippa** discusses "The Great Artists," 1 p.m.; Thursdays to Feb. 26, **David Chandross** discusses "Nature, philosophy and adventure," 2 p.m.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve by calling 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com.
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call Maureen, 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with Rabbi Meir Gitlin, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabad-markham.org.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com.
- Engage with your grandchildren during PJ Plus, a structured Jewish program for children 18 months to 3 years. Contact adina@srcentre.ca.
- Teens aged 13-17 are invited to join the JCC Maccabi ArtsFest delegation. Specialties include acting/culinary, dance, musical theatre, rock band and more. Contact Jennifer@srcentre.ca.
- The Yiddish group meets for conversation, Mondays at 1 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele," Feb. 17, 24 at 1 p.m.
- **Galya Sarna** shares recipes as she prepares an Israeli-style meal with a French twist, March 19, 6:30 p.m.
- JCC book club discusses *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats*, by **Jan-Philip Sendker,** March 30, 1 p.m.
- Create a story of your life with **Ariella Damelin,** March 2-April 20, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *The Matchmaker,* Feb. 15, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker: **Kalman Weiser.** Box office opens one hour before screening start time.
- Free family day activities all day Feb. 16, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Enjoy a dance party, jungle gym, face painting and more.
- Shabbat family party (ages 0-4 with an adult), Fridays at 11:15 a.m. Shabbat club (ages 3-5) meets Fridays 12:30 p.m. Call ext. 388.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- *Prayer,* the art of **Dvora Barzilai,** is in the gallery until Feb. 19.
- The gallery is looking for submissions on the theme of "Shmita/Seven Generations." Submissions are welcome from artists of all backgrounds. Email deannad@mnjcc.org or call ext. 250.
- KatKa Team, a program for youths in grades 2-6 co-presented by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, Feb. 22, 1 p.m. Email: Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com.
- Fitness: Winter Wellness Workshops: Stronger hips for better balance, Feb. 22, 2:30 p.m.; Holistic approach to hormones, Feb. 23, 1 p.m.; How healthy are you? Feb. 25, 6:30 p.m.; Meditation 101, Feb. 26, 4:30 p.m. MELT Full body method, Feb. 24-March 24 at 7 p.m.; Feb. 25-March 25, 11 a.m. Email fitnessguru@mnjcc.org.
- Accessible yoga: a fully inclusive yoga class open to people of all abilities. Feb. 22, 1 p.m. athletics@mnjcc.org.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in community-building and entrepreneurship. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Hockey night in Shushan, ball hockey tournament for the whole family, Feb. 28, 7 p.m. Registration closes Feb. 25.
- **Iain Scott** teaches a course on "Opera and Shakespeare," Mondays, starting March 2, 1:30 p.m.
- **Annie Matan** explores Purim with improv games and storytelling, ages 18+, March 5, 11 a.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- **Kevin Courrier** presents "What's so funny: The complex world of comedy," Feb. 18, 7 p.m.
- Teens aged 13-17 are invited to join the JCC Maccabi ArtsFest delegation. Specialties include acting/culinary, dance, musical theatre and more. Jennifer@srcentre.ca.
- **Rachelle Shubert** presents "Here's to Music! Here's to Life," March 5, 2 p.m. at Four Elms Retirement Residence.
- Engage with your grandchildren during PJ Plus, a structured Jewish program for children 18 months to 3 years. Contact adina@srcentre.ca.
- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs presents "Israel, conflict and the media: how to talk to our children about issues facing Israel and the Jews," March 24, 1 p.m.
- JCC book club discusses *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats,* March 31, 7 p.m.
- Single and over 50? Enjoy an evening of live entertainment March 14, 7:30 p.m. Pre-registration required.
- **Marcela Rosemberg** teaches a glass fusion workshop on making your own seder plate, March 10, 7 p.m. ■

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Ask Ella

Harassed in the workplace?

Ella Burakowski
ellacjn@gmail.com

Dear Ella,

I started a new job and feel very fortunate to have been hired. I enjoy my work, but am having trouble with two co-workers who have figured out that I'm Jewish, probably from my last name. These women have made a couple of comments which made me very uncomfortable. I was in the lunchroom getting a coffee when they both approached and asked me what my thoughts were about Jews killing Christ. I was shocked and quite shaken. I left and went back to work without acknowledging them.

On another occasion, when there were many people in the lunchroom, the conversation turned to food. Again, one of the women pointed me out and said maybe Janice can educate us on bagels. I don't want to fight. I just want them to go away. I don't want to stand out in any way.

Feeling Threatened

Dear Feeling Threatened,

Your problem is serious and common enough that there are laws in place to protect you. In Ontario, about three-quarters of all human rights claims come from the workplace.

You are the victim of anti-Semitism in the workplace. I realize that you're new in the company and don't want to make waves, hoping these two will just go away. That's not going to happen.

Take steps to protect your comfort and safety at work. You have that right, the same as they do. If you don't want to confront them directly, arrange a private meeting with the head of HR and explain your situation. State that you don't want any problems or to stand out, you just want to do your job and be respected and feel safe.

We live in a culturally diverse country, and I'm sure your workplace is made up of people from many different backgrounds. Suggest that your company have a zero tolerance policy for hate. They should distribute a statement or handbook explaining the requirement to respect diversity and practise tolerance in the workplace. They should already have a policy in place, but it needs to be reviewed with all employees regularly. Bill 168 in Ontario, which addresses workplace violence and harassment, states: "Regularly train and educate employees at all levels to treat others respectfully and professionally."

On a personal level, you can tell these two to please not refer to your religion in any way. Ask that they respect your boundaries and say that you will do the same. However, it sounds like these women are troublemakers, and it may not be that easy. Don't be alone with them, and make sure there are always witnesses to their conversations with you. Above all, make sure you are safe.

Dear Ella,

Ever since the terrorist incident in Paris, I've felt very uneasy, not only for myself, but for my children. My son works for a Jewish organization and I worry about him. My daughter is a teacher, and I worry about her safety as well. The 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz has just passed, and I can't help think that the world has learned nothing. I'm not looking for answers, just venting and hoping that I'm not alone in my feelings.

Looking over my Shoulder

Dear Looking over my Shoulder,

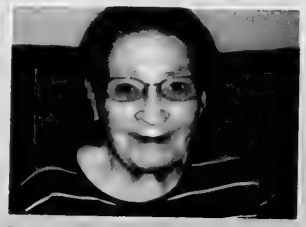
I can assure you that you're not alone in your uneasiness.

You watch television, read news stories and are bombarded with stories of innocent people going about their day-to-day activities, being targeted. You are also living in a time where information is everywhere. You can't turn your computer on without reading or seeing information and videos of terror. ISIS beheadings have become a regular visual, as have other terror incidents. It's very difficult to avoid, but when you rationalize that the motive of the terrorist is to scare you and the motive of the news outlets is to keep up ratings, you may have a more logical answer to why you live in constant worry.

Don't ignore it, but don't focus on it, either. Focus instead on your family, your life, your routine and try not to let other peoples' hatred and agendas rule your life. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Family Moments



Feb. 18. I'm 91 and going strong. Happy birthday Love Carol and Wendy

A happy and healthy birthday to the best mom, Ruth Golosky on your 80th! Love Lori, Charles, Matthew, Melissa, Irwin, Mindy, Jessica, Mitchell and Daniel

Mazel Tov to Sylvia Sheil on becoming a great-grandmother, Jan. 12 when Dagny Sarah Louise Sheil made her arrival in Toronto! Love from your children and grandchildren.

Happy 90th Birthday to Harold Dolman! Lots of love and best wishes from your many friends and family!

Mazel tov to our daughter, Sandra and her husband, Patrick on their wedding that took place in Lyon, France, Nov. 30. Benny, Fabienne and David Salem.

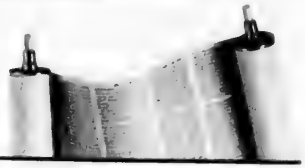
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Mishpatim | Exodus 21:1 - 24:18



Rabbi Ilan Acoca explains why now is a good time to reconnect with God through nature
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl urges us to employ our sensual imagery to imagine God
Rabbi Catharine Clark analyzes why the Torah reminds us about Passover right now

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

Mishpatim deals with Jewish civil law.

Rashi notes the parshah starts with the verse, "And these are the ordinances that you shall place before them." The conjunction "and" indicates there's a connection between this chapter and the previous one, which describes the giving of the Ten Commandments. Just as those commandments were given at Sinai, so, too, were these.

The Ben Ish Chai says the word *har* (mountain) is composed of the Hebrew letters *hay* and *resh*. The two letters preceding *har* are *kuf* and *daled*. The letters following the word *har* are *vav* and *shin*, thus making the word *kadosh*, holy. By receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai, Israel was surrounded by holiness. HaShem similarly described Israel as holy while they resided near the mountain, as the Torah tells us, "you shall be a priestly kingdom to me, a holy nation."

It seems the Ben Ish Chai describes holiness as being close to God or spirituality.

It's interesting to note that the holidays of Tu b'Shvat, Purim and Pesach, which follow each other on three consecutive months, fall on the 15th, the 14th and the 15th of the month, respectively.

The word *yad*, hand in Hebrew, equals 14 and one of the names of God equals 15. The message of these three holidays is that we must see the hand of God and connect to Godliness.

Tu b'Shvat represents the beginning of the year for trees. It's a good time to reconnect with God through nature. On Purim, we read Megillat Esther, where the name of God is never mentioned. The message is that even when God seems to be out of the picture, He's always in the picture. On Pesach, we celebrate the Exodus, and we remember that God took us of Egypt.

The message is clear: in order to become holy, we must connect with God in all aspects of our lives. Doing so makes life more fulfilling and meaningful. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo states: "Seeing and visualization stand at the heart of Greek culture, [but] hearing plays a central role in the Torah." Much earlier, the German-Jewish historian, Heinrich Graetz, wrote, "Paganism sees its god, Judaism hears Him." But is this actually the case?

Although later in Exodus we are told that God said, "You cannot see My face, for a mortal may not see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20), in our Torah portion we read: "Then Moses and Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, and 70 elders of Israel ascended; and *they saw the God of Israel*... Yet God did not raise His hand against the leaders of the Israelites; *they beheld God*, and ate and drank" (Exodus 24:9-11).

Abraham Ibn Ezra explained that they saw God in a prophetic vision, while Maimonides, who battled stridently against all anthropomorphic language, declared, "All this refers to intellectual apprehension and in no way to the eye's seeing" (*Guide of the Perplexed*, I:4). But scattered throughout the Bible, there are hints of a visual tradition that is emphasized in the powerful images found in Jewish mystical literature against which Maimonides struggled.

In *Anim Zemirot* (*Hymn of Glory*), the 12th-century Ashkenazi pietistic poem, Rabbi Yehudah HeHasid, writes, "I will recount Your Glory, though I have not seen You/ I describe You though I have not known You." Then we find a proliferation of visual images of the Divine based on Song of Songs and other biblical and rabbinic texts: "His hair is curled and black"; "dazzling and ruddy is He"; "His head is like pure gold."

Once we know that all descriptions of God are mere metaphors, then we are free to use the gamut of our sensual imagery to imagine God. "All my bones shall declare, 'Who is like you!'" ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto. Follow him at www.beth-tzedec.org and www.facebook.com/bfrydmankohl.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

I was not born to a Jewish family, and it was a long decade between when I converted and when I met the man who would become my husband. For the first half of that decade, reading Parshat Mishpatim always made me anxious.

Parshat Mishpatim informs the Israelites that three times a year they shall hold a festival for the Lord. The stressful part for a single Jewish woman who converted to Judaism was the first holiday mentioned – Passover. Even though we read Parshat Mishpatim in the middle of winter and don't celebrate Passover until spring, this passage signalled that it was time to find a place for seder. With no family of my own and no Jewish family to go home to, it was always my fervent hope that invitations for both seders would be forthcoming by Purim at the latest.

Fortunately, my friends came through. Some years I would go to seders in their apartments or dorm rooms. Other years, I would venture to the suburbs to celebrate Passover with a friend and her parents, aunts, uncles and cousins. One year, a friend proposed that we host seders together, one night at my apartment, one night at hers. Never have I felt more certain of my place among the Jewish People than I did that evening as I welcomed friends and their friends into my home for my first time hosting seder.

Now I understand that Parshat Mishpatim reminds us of Passover's approach to inspire us, not scare us. If you have always hosted a seder, the parshah teaches that it is time to buy more folding chairs, double recipes and expand the guest list. If you have never hosted a seder, the parshah teaches you to team up with a friend and make a seder for yourself and anyone you know who needs a place for one. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is the spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ont.

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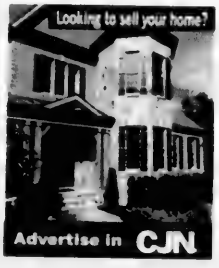

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Play carries a message of social justice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

Quinn was inspired by the mystery surrounding the Bronte sisters, but for her, the play also touched on issues of sexual and domestic violence – areas that she's passionate about addressing. *The Sound of Cracking Bones* also carries with it a powerful message of social justice and this production is affiliated with The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative.

Throughout the run, *Proof Media for Social Justice's Child Soldiers: Forced to be Cruel* photo exhibit – which illustrates the prevalence of child soldiers in different areas of the world – will be on display in the Theatre Passe Muraille lobby.

For director Van Burek, the play is about sparking discussion on this troubling global issue. And with her portrayal of eight-year-old Joseph, Quinn is part of that conversation. ■

Pleiades Theatre's production of The Sound of Cracking Bones *runs at Theatre Passe Muraille from Feb. 14-28 in English and from March 3-7 in French. Visit www.pleiadestheatre.org*

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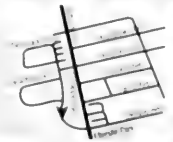

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William Schabas: No evidence of bias against Israel

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

William Schabas, the Canadian international law professor, resigned last week as head of a UN panel investigating possible war crimes during last summer's Gaza conflict.

Schabas, 64, stepped down Feb. 2 after Israel provided evidence to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva that he had authored a seven-page legal opinion on behalf of the PLO for which he was paid. Israel contended the contract with the PLO was a serious conflict of interest in the investigation. Schabas responded that he had acted with full "independence and impartiality" as head of the inquiry, but was resigning to prevent distractions from the panel's findings, scheduled to be published next month.

Schabas was replaced by commission member Mary McGowan Davis.

Following his appointment last August, Israeli officials and Jewish groups accused Schabas of anti-Israel bias. Schabas has accused Israel in the past of war crimes, and in 2011, he said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "should be in the dock of an international court."

Israel refused to co-operate with the investigation, though some Israelis did testify before the committee members.

In response to Schabas' resignation, Netanyahu urged the UN to shelve the report. Schabas responded to Netanyahu and similar statements from Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, calling them "masters of extravagant and ridiculous statements."

Schabas spoke to *The CJN* last week via email from London, England, where he teaches at the University of Middlesex.

Why did you resign at this time? I understand it is connected to your work for the PLO, which created a conflict of interest. Why did you not disclose that at the time you applied for the position?

I did not apply for the job. I was approached by the UN to do it. There was no question of disclosure of previous activities, because my record was well-known within the UN as well as by the states that were consulted on my appointment, including Israel. Earlier in the year, when I was being considered as a candidate for special rapporteur on the occupied territories, Israel was quite active in its opposition to me. Israel knew all about my past and my activities. The record is public. And Israel has a rather effective intelligence service, too.

William Schabas

In retrospect, do you believe it was a mistake not to do so, or do you take the position that a lawyer doing work for a client should not disqualify him from this post?

My work for the PLO consisted of being sent five questions by email and providing a written response. I was given no documents by the PLO. I have had no relationship with it either before or after this brief request for an opinion in October 2012. I was not involved in advocacy or in campaigning for the PLO. I merely gave a technical legal answer to technical legal questions. There are many, many examples of judges sitting in cases where at some point in the past they were involved in providing legal advice to one of the parties.

At the time the inquiry was established, there was quite a bit of criticism of the UNHRC for being biased and of yourself for also being biased, or at least having the appearance of bias, based on your comments on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel in the past. What do you say to those criticisms?

The word "biased" gets thrown around a great deal in this discussion. Some people seem to think that it is the same thing as having an opinion that is contrary to their own. But bias refers to someone who is asked to provide an impartial judgment and who is incapable of doing this because of personal views. Someone without bias is someone who is capable of putting their personal views aside in order to reach an objective, neutral and impartial position. There is lots of evidence that, in the past, I have expressed views that do not correspond to those of the government of Israel. But I can only be accused of bias if it can be shown that I cannot detach myself from those views. Is there any evidence that I cannot? I don't think so. I think most of those who have criticized me for "bias" really only want to have a commission composed of people with views that lean in their direction.

> *There is lots of evidence that, in the past, I have expressed views that do not correspond to those of the government of Israel. But I can only be accused of bias if it can be shown that I cannot detach myself from those views.*

Since your appointment, a good number of respected experts in international law said you should resign. How did you feel when colleagues such as Irwin Cotler, Alan Dershowitz, Joseph Wieler and others said you should not head the inquiry?

I was disappointed to receive criticism from Irwin Cotler, who is an old friend for whom I have always had great respect, as well as Alan Dershowitz and Joseph Wieler, although I cannot say I was surprised. Like me, they have their own strong views on the relevant issues. When they judge me, you might ask if they are really capable of a neutral, balanced, objective and fair determination, or if their own vision is clouded by their political perspectives. Maybe they suffer from the same faults that they attribute to me.

I understand the inquiry will report in a month or two. That suggests most of its work has been done. Is that correct? And if so, doesn't your resignation at this late stage taint its findings, whatever they may be?

The commission has made no findings yet. It finished its hearings and meetings in late January, and provided a deadline of Jan. 31 for written submissions. The work of writing the report is only beginning.

The inquiry was criticized from the start for its terms of reference, which focused on alleged war crimes, abuses, etc. in the Palestinian territories. That omitted war crimes committed by Palestinians in Israel and suggested the one-sided nature of the inquiry. Did the inquiry look into Palestinian violations of international law? In what areas?

From the very beginning, the three commissioners indicated that they were going to investigate all allegations of violations, regardless of the combatants who were thought to be responsible. For example, when they met representatives of UN Watch in September 2014 they made this very clear. There has been considerable publicity in Israel about the victims of mortar attacks in the region near the Gaza border who travelled to Geneva to meet with the commission and talk about what had happened to them. I believe they reported that they were welcomed with courtesy and that the commissioners were very interested in their accounts. This is well known in Israel. I don't know why the question keeps arising.

Anything you wish to add?

I would like to make it clear that I do not accept the allegations made against me by Israel. A problem was created on Feb. 2 when the Human Rights Council decided to investigate the complaint by Israel against me. The process that was to start by seeking a legal opinion from UN headquarters in New York was likely to take a matter of weeks. I think that when the impartiality of a member of a tribunal is challenged, it is normal for the matter to be determined as a matter of priority. Its other work cannot continue until that issue is resolved. In my judgment, the consequence of the decision to investigate the complaint would have been a suspension of the work of the commission.

This would probably have meant that it would not be able to present its report to the March session of the Human Rights Council. My judgment, then, was that the best way to resolve this impasse was for me to withdraw. That way, the commission can get on with its work without the disruption and distraction caused by the complaint against me. ■

This interview was edited for style and clarity.

When Winnipeg had too many shuls

Backstory

ALLAN LEVINE

There's an old joke about a shtetl in the Russian Pale of Settlement with a population of only 100 Jews but 125 synagogues – and every Jew in the village was a synagogue president! It's only a joke, yet it gets to the heart of the passionate and often divisive religious questions that permeate modern Jewish history, everywhere from Minsk to Manitoba.

Since the mid-18th century, when Moses Mendelssohn and other like-minded intellectuals formulated the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) and launched the great debate about what it means to be a Jew in the western world, Diaspora Jewish communities have been torn apart on issues of religious observance and ritual.

In the early 1880s, this contentious dispute was played out on the Canadian prairies in Winnipeg, then a frontier city with a total population of about 26,000. That number included less than 1,000 Jews, most of whom had arrived from the Pale in 1882 and 1883. Apart from not being able to speak English, their most distinguishing feature was their poverty. Yet, given the significance of the synagogue in Jewish daily life, within a short time, Winnipeg had a dozen synagogues.

There was the Beth El Synagogue, established by the handful of English Jews – the community's so-called aristocracy – who wanted to show that Jews could be part of mainstream society. At the synagogue's inaugural service on July 11, 1884, Rabbi Joseph Friedman from Montreal delivered the sermon in English, setting the tone and style of the city's first Reform service. For good measure and to display their true Anglo-Canadian spirit, the congregants sang *God Save the Queen* before the prayers had concluded.

These Reform rituals proved too much for some of the more Orthodox members of the new synagogue, who departed to form their own congregation, which they called Beth Israel.

Not to be outdone, several groups of Russian Jews established their own, more traditional-style synagogues as well. There was Anshay Roosia (People of Russia) above a soap factory on Henry Street, headed by young clothing merchant Ben Zimmerman, a Russian Jew who came to Winnipeg after living in Philadelphia. There was also a small synagogue called the "Milchige," since everyone, from the president of the synagogue on down, were milkmen. Yet another was the Shtall Shulach or "Little Stable Synagogue," so named due to its location beside a livery barn.

With so few Jews in the province, it was clear that Winnipeg's small community could not sustain so many synagogues. Finances and common sense had to take precedence over religious principles. The result was various mergers during the latter part of the 1880s.

Winnipeg's vibrant and diverse Jewish community reached its peak in the early 1960s with a population of about 19,400, along with many synagogues, kosher butchers and schools that catered to every Jewish ideology on the spectrum. Not every Winnipeg Jew was religious, but nearly every Jewish family belonged to a synagogue. At some synagogues, you had to book a bar or bat mitzvah five years in advance.

But times have changed. The city's Jewish population has declined to less than 15,000, and as is the case for Jews everywhere, belonging to a synagogue is not as important as it used to be. Partly it has to do with the expense of membership and High Holiday seats, but mostly it is about the secularization and assimilation of Jews into Canadian society.

In Winnipeg, this has meant a drastic reduction in the number of synagogues. A decisive moment occurred in 2002 with the merger of three Conservative synagogues into the Etz Chayim Synagogue. Now, the Etz Chayim and Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, established in 1889 and the city's largest Conservative synagogue for many years, are exploring the possibility of a merger. Both synagogues have older buildings that require costly upgrades, as well as dwindling and aging memberships. Both, too, have been fighting an uphill battle to make their institutions more relevant in the lives of their members. ■

Historian Allan Levine's most recent book is Toronto: Biography of a City.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Sone, Joyce	Jan. 22, 2015	2 Buchan Crt
Nusbaum, Edith	Jan. 23, 2015	31 Prue Ave
Reznikova, Ida	Jan. 23, 2015	Private
Feuerstein, Tibor	Jan. 23, 2015	2 Neptune Dr
Reti, Marianne	Jan. 24, 2015	Private
Weinman, Shereen	Jan. 24, 2015	Strictly Private
Gaum, Elliott	Jan. 25, 2015	1166 Bay St
Newman, Anne	Jan. 25, 2015	56 Duncan Dr
Heber, Morris	Jan. 25, 2015	17 Palm Dr
Baram, Harvey Walter	Jan. 25, 2015	32 Camden St
Rosen, Garry	Jan. 26, 2015	19 Invermay Ave
Lasky, Sam	Jan. 26, 2015	Private
Gorelik, Sergey	Jan. 27, 2015	79 Chaya Sara Gardens
Bespaly, Solomon	Jan. 27, 2015	Private
Volovik, Mila	Jan. 27, 2015	Private
Schwalm, William George	Jan. 27, 2015	115 Antibes Dr
Bicevs, Victor	Jan. 28, 2015	Private
Yutman, Gussie	Jan. 28, 2015	131 Torresdale Ave
Gerhard, Aron	Jan. 29, 2015	3181 Bayview Ave
Vinnikov, Yefim	Jan. 29, 2015	53 Skipperhill Cres
Vaisberg, Sonia	Jan. 30, 2015	35 Cedarcroft Blvd
Adler, Shlomo	Jan. 30, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Kaufman, Lenka	Jan. 31, 2015	7420 Bathurst St
Keller, Lila	Jan. 31, 2015	318 Laurentian Blvd
Weiszberger, George	Jan. 31, 2015	Private
Magid, Jankiela Moishe	Feb. 1, 2015	493 Glengarry Ave
Farber, Lillian	Feb. 1, 2015	205 Cummer St
Landsberg, Reva G.	Feb. 1, 2015	18 Steeles Ave. E

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Pearl Dwosh	Jan 24/15	205 Cummer Avenue
Slomo Rabinovits	Jan 25/15	100 Antibes Drive
Lenke Rosenfeld	Jan 25/15	17 Glencairn Avenue
Anne Abrams	Jan 25/15	10 Naldolny Sachs Private
Dr. Lionel Tanzer	Jan 26/15	23 Ardmore Road
Dr. Sigmund H. Ein	Jan 25/15	100 Taunton Road East
Henrietta Wiener	Jan 28/15	3 Concorde Place
Mickey Swartz	Jan 28/15	355 St. Clair Ave. W.
Serkie Skulko	Jan 28/15	55 Ameer Avenue
Joseph Kerzner	Jan 28/15	26 The Bridle Path
Joseph Rotman	Jan 27/15	142 Forest Hill Road
Reva Zarnett	Jan 31/15	90 Whitley Avenue
Jim Ruderman	Jan 29/15	31 Ava Road
Ernie Dicker	Jan 31/15	10 Fairway Heights Cres

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Youth groups up the ante

Gone are the days when kids were content to hang out in shul basements playing Ping Pong. Jewish youth groups need to get creative if they want to attract crowds. How are they responding? **PAGE 8**

Can we ever really be happy?

Our rabbis on why Jews seem to have trouble finding true joy.

Rabbi 2 Rabbi, PAGE 4

Don't write the deli's obituary yet

Jewish food is alive and well in T.O. as new eateries replace old faves. **PAGE 32**

Twin guitar players head to Hollywood

YouTube video lands 10-year-olds Sarah and Abby Ginsburg a gig on *The Ellen Show*. **PAGE 40**

Inside

Ottawa's lone Jewish high school to close

Low enrolment leaves $250,000 annual shortfall. **PAGE 12**

Opinion: Sustaining quality, affordable day schools. **PAGE 10**

Wedding season is coming

Our supplement will help you prepare for your big day.

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	5:31 p.m.	6:35 p.m.
Montreal	5:10 p.m.	6:15 p.m.
Toronto	5:36 p.m.	6:39 p.m.
Winnipeg	5:37 p.m.	6:46 p.m.
Calgary	5:43 p.m.	6:53 p.m.
Vancouver	5:22 p.m.	6:31 p.m.

6 27843 39403 7

A Shoah relic is recovered, and newsman didn't make it all up

Torah scroll drum heads to Israel

A Holocaust commemoration group brought a drum from Poland to Israel that belonged to a Nazi sympathizer and was made from a Torah scroll. The drum was found last month by volunteers of From The Depths, a Shoah commemoration group, in the estate sale of a former Hitler Youth member who lived in a village near the city of Lodz. Jonny Daniels, Israeli founder of From The Depths, bought the drum and, after consulting with the Israeli chief rabbinate on how it should be treated in view of religious laws on handling Holy Scripture, decided to incorporate it into a traveling exhibition the group is preparing. Daniels said its parchment is "incredibly well-preserved."

At least he's got Lebanon

An Israeli army officer who was on a helicopter with Brian Williams during the Second Lebanon War told *Bloomberg* Feb 9 the *NBC News* anchor's reporting of the incident "was representative of the experience." Williams, who the *Washington Post* reported has given several different versions of the 2006 flight, was suspended as anchor of the *NBC Nightly News* after admitting he was not on a helicopter that was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq in 2003. His accounts of incidents elsewhere are also being questioned. In a 2007 interview, he said that during a flight over northern Israel during Israel's 2006 conflict with Hezbollah, there were "rockets passing just beneath the helicopter I was riding in." Jacob Dallal, a reserve major in the IDF's media liaison, confirmed there was Katyusha rocket fire beneath the craft.

Brian Williams was truthful about some stuff.

Bob Simon

Emmy Award-winning *CBS News* and *60 Minutes* correspondent Bob Simon was killed in a car accident in New York City Feb. 11. He was 73. Simon covered nearly every major overseas conflict and news story since the late 1960s, starting in Vietnam. He was held captive in Iraq for 40 days in January 1991 after being captured with a *CBS News* team while reporting on the Gulf War. He also worked in CBS' Tel Aviv bureau from 1977 to 1981. ■

Gematria

6,222

The number of Israelis on a 2007 list of more than 100,000 secret Swiss bank accounts with HSBC that were leaked online last week. The Israeli accounts were reportedly valued at over $10 billion (US).

16

The number of years Jon Stewart hosted Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*. He announced last week that he's leaving the iconic satirical news show later this year.

Quotable

"Ultimately, my primary identity is as a Canadian. I was born Jewish. I acknowledge that I'm a Jew, but I'm primarily Canadian. I don't like practices that go against Canadian values."

— *Walrus* editor Jonathan Kay. See page 50.

Inside today's edition

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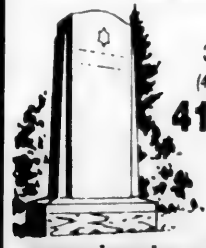

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Letters to the Editor

Ethiopian Jews still struggle

Prof. Gil Troy ("Made-in-Israel success stories at IDC," Feb. 5) commends the Interdisciplinary Center for its Ethiopian scholarship program as an example of the joyous welcome accorded Ethiopian Jews. By doing so without reference to the hardships the vast majority continue to endure, he unwittingly distorts the true state of affairs.

Their path toward acceptance into the mainstream is an ongoing battle marked by discrimination and racism. Tzago Malko, an Ethiopian Jew and former director of Israel Radio's Reshet Alef station, who fills the No. 3 slot in Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu party list contesting the upcoming elections, puts it quite succinctly. "To this day I still get asked, 'Lady, I need cleaning twice a week. Are you available?' Yes, I'm available for cleaning, but not houses. I'm ready to clean up corruption, to clean up the view of the other as inferior because of his/her name, accent or skin colour."

Examples of residential, job and even school discrimination are legion. It is but one more journey this extraordinary community has yet to traverse. To only speak of the remarkable few wholly out of context of the humiliation visited upon the many is to dodge our responsibility to double up in our efforts for klal Yisrael.

Dov Harris
Toronto

Free speech has limits

I believe that freedom of speech does not exist unless it applies to the right to speak without fear ("University free speech can be unsettling," Feb. 5.) However, freedom is not license, nor absolute. Therefore, there are limits. The obvious one is shouting "fire" in a theatre. Not so obvious is targeting a minority group with abusive slander and threats of violence that cause harm by perpetuating negative myths and stereotypes. That is hate speech, which in Canada is a crime.

Certainly the university environment encourages all kinds of rebellious behaviour and language, and so it should. Yet even there, abusive behaviour, both verbal and physical, should not be condoned. That kind of behaviour on university campuses, including York, is what many of us object to.

Dorothy Shoichet
Toronto

Balance good news with bad

I know that, unfortunately, domestic abuse exists in the Jewish community, but I could not believe that it was as prevalent as claimed in the articles by Sheri Shefa. So I did my own research in the Orthodox Jewish community to which I belong. Although the professionals were not sure of the statistics, they corroborated that abuse is much more widespread than the average person would imagine.

However, I would caution the community to balance the bad with the good. The Jewish haredi community runs unbelievably dedicated volunteer organizations such as Bikur Cholim, Hachnassat Kallah, and Hatzolah. We now have one more difficult challenge to take on.

Rebecca Birnbaum
Toronto

Preserving a piece of history

I have recently returned from a trip to Berlin to deliver a silver Torah shield that has been in my family for close to 200 years. After extensive research, I decided that the Berlin Jewish Museum would be the most appropriate home for the Torah shield, which was made in Dresden, Germany, around 1712.

I recall that for all the years that we had the Torah shield in our home, it was kept in the original wooden box in a cupboard. And it was so until 2009, when my parents moved to Baycrest and I became the keeper of the Torah shield.

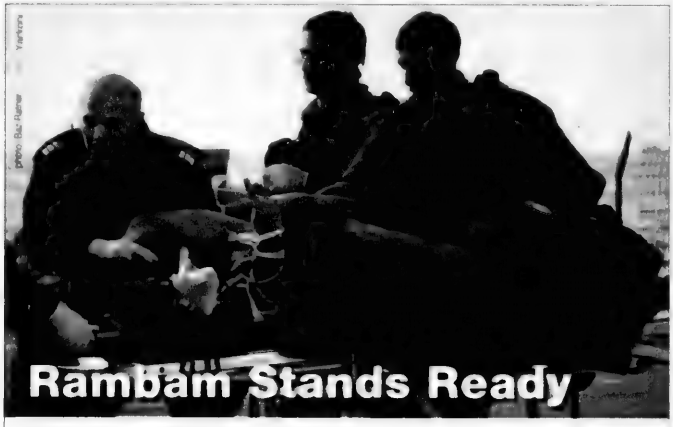
Realizing that this Torah shield has a special history and is a fairly unique piece of Judaica, and that the Berlin Jewish Museum has a mission to commemorate Jewish life over time in Germany, I decided to place it there. This museum has a collection of family memorabilia, documents and any kind of item that would reflect personal histories and life in Germany.

For generations to come, my sons, their families and progeny will be able to visit this museum and see our Torah shield on display together with other family items, that will reflect the story of their heritage.

The museum is still in the process of gathering items from families with German origins and welcomes contributions. I recommend a visit. ■

Loretta Helman (Falk)
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcomed if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com** *We reserve the right to edit all unsolicited letters, which must bear the reader's name, address and phone number.*



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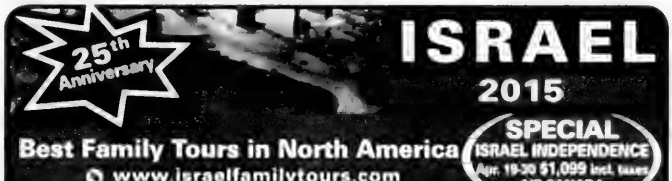

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Can we Jews ever be happy?

Some branches of Judaism emphasize joy in daily life and practice, and having so much sadness in our history makes it important to cherish true simchah moments

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RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Scheim: As we enter Adar, we are reminded of the talmudic injunction to make this a month of celebration. But easily overlooked is the reality that the discussion in Tractate Ta'anit is primarily focused instead on the intrinsic sadness of the month of Av – "Just as we minimize our joy when Av arrives, so too, when Adar arrives, we increase our joy." Being happy in Adar because of Purim becomes an afterthought in the greater context of the pains and tribulations of Jewish history.

My years in the rabbinate have taught me that happiness does not come easily to us. We traditionally wish each other at Rosh Hashanah a "shanah tovah" – a good year, rather than a happy new year – because goodness, unlike happiness, is always attainable.

But the question remains: why do we Jews have such a hard time with happiness?

Rabbi Finegold: While I acknowledge it certainly appears the way you describe, I often think much of it depends on perspective.

I would venture to say that your observation does not appear to be true among younger populations, or among different branches of Judaism. I used to joke that in our previous congregation, which skewed much younger than our current one, the two-day-a-year Jews were ones who attended on Purim and Simchat Torah. There is also the fact that certain branches of Judaism – Chassidism, Neo-Chassidism, Jewish Renewal and others – place great emphasis on joy in their daily lives and practice. Having met many of these people, I can certainly say they have no difficulty being joyous.

In the two dicta you mentioned from the Talmud, the default position is that of joy, not sadness. The Talmud does not instruct us to increase our melancholy in Av and decrease it in Adar. To me this seems to indicate that the authors of the Talmud, and presumably the greater population, might have been quite a happy bunch.

Rabbi Scheim: It is reassuring that there are communities where simchah overtakes sadness, which, I would agree, is in keeping with our tradition. But our happiness is rarely unbridled. Thus the joyous holiday of Purim is preceded by the Fast of Esther, Yom Ha'atzmaut, by Yom Hazikaron (Israel's Remembrance Day). Likewise, wedding ceremonies include the breaking of a glass.

I do not criticize these memorials – they are critical to our identity. But having so much sadness in our history makes it incumbent upon us to cherish the true simchah moments, and to seek out the *simchah shel mitzvah*, the joy of Jewish involvement. I fear that the joy of mitzvah often eludes us. Those steeped in tradition and observance can be overcome by the minute details of the law and miss its inherent joy.

On the other extreme, many simchah guests sit in synagogue with pained expression, as if longing to be anywhere else. They have not (yet) had the opportunity to experience the joy that comes from involvement, engagement with tradition and serious identification with the holiness of Jewish time and space.

Rabbi Finegold: You seem to point out that we are good at tempering our joy with a dose of sombre reflection. What if we try to temper our moments of sadness with touches of hope and joy as well?

People coming to services exclusively for *Yizkor* could be reminded that we say *Yizkor* on joyous holidays, and those days should be celebrations as well. The experience of a family sitting shivah and speaking animatedly about the wonderful memories they have of the deceased can be powerful and is, I think, precisely the reason we are compelled to spend the week after a death surrounded by friends and family.

Imagine if we as rabbis become known as peddlers of joy rather than those who preside over long boring services. A friend of mine is doing just that in Omaha, Neb. Without removing any of the core features of the Shabbat morning service, he tripled his attendance by changing the format of the service to mimic a talk show, complete with monologue about the parshah and a featured guest for an on-the-couch-interview about a timely topic.

This is not to say we all need to become comedians. But hopefully the mood of our communities can be shifted with us leading by example. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Decorated brothers

Winnipeg politician A.A. Heaps with his sons, David and Leo Heaps, on leave from the front at the Park Lane Hotel in London, 1944. David and Leo were the only Jewish brothers to receive the Royal Military Cross during World War II.

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

SeeJN | Outdoor breakfast

HADAS PARUSH/FLASH90 PHOTO

Supporters of the Zionist Camp political party make a group breakfast in front of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's home in Jerusalem on Feb. 10, in a demonstration over the recent affair of Netanyahu spending 20,000 NIS ($6,500 Cdn) on breakfast for 20 guests. The activists held the breakfast with the banner saying that a meal for 20 people only cost 48.70 NIS ($16).

From Yoni's Desk

The challenge of sustaining Jewish day schools

Jewish education in this country took a significant hit last week when the Ottawa Jewish Community School (OJCS) announced plans to close its high school program. In a letter, Aaron Smith, president of the OJCS's board of directors relayed the unfortunate news: "A recent examination by OJCS leadership… has determined that the high school is not financially viable."

"Put simply," he added, "not enough families are choosing to send their children to grades 9 through 12."

The high school needs "a minimum additional subsidy of $250,000 on an annual and ongoing basis, on top of regular operating costs, to avoid a deficit," Smith explained. It requires 50 students a year to be sustainable, but this year just 24 are enrolled, and the school was expecting total enrolment of only 20 students for the next scholastic year. (The elementary school program, meanwhile, "is strong, sustainable, and is receiving continued support," Smith noted.)

The continuing viability of Jewish day schools is one of the greatest challenges facing Canadian Jews, and while the situation in Ottawa is a particularly dramatic example, declining enrolment is an issue across Canada. As Daniel Held, executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education in Toronto, and a *CJN* columnist, admits in this week's paper, the issue "keeps me up at night."

According to Held, there are two issues at play: Affordability and sustainability. "Day school financial sustainability requires a longterm plan to ensure that revenue covers costs," he writes. "Affordability necessitates a demonstration of the value of day school vis-à-vis the cost of tuition."

In the wake of its closure, the OJCS administration has vowed "to begin a community engagement process to understand what the community is looking for in a supplementary high school program." Supplementary Jewish schooling may not be as effective a tool of communal engagement as full day school, but, like summer camps, it can offer an affordable Jewish experience. It seems clear that's an option more and more families are looking for.

Similarly, youth groups can also contribute significantly to Jewish education. And, as reporter Lila Sarick documents in this week's *CJN*, many Jewish youth groups are exploring new ways to attract kids. Modern Jewish youth groups, Sarick argues, "have to offer more than playing Ping-Pong in a shul basement on Shabbat afternoon."

And yet, youth groups face their own issues when it comes to remaining relevant: "Groups which focus on a specific niche," Sarick writes, are facing "a challenging landscape." The groups that appear to be having the most success in recent years, including NCSY, are responding by "making partnerships across denominations and reaching beyond the traditional high school age to younger students and alumni." That's a model that might have once seemed unthinkable; now it appears to be working well.

The closure of Ottawa's Jewish high school underscores the serious challenge of sustaining Jewish day schools in Canada. As we work to solve that problem, it's worth remembering there are educational alternatives to day school. The community must invest time and resources to make these options attractive to young Jews, and affordable for their parents. The future could depend on it. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

China's Harbin City courts the Jews once again

Ng Weng Hoong

When Chinese tour guide Eric Liu found out that Jews were fleeing Paris and other European cities to escape their worsening anti-Semitic environment, he asked if they might want to "return" to his city of Harbin, once among the most vibrant and important Jewish centres in the Far East.

"We welcome them. They are smart, educated and hard-working, and will be a very positive influence for the city," he said as he recounted the role of Jewish businessmen, musicians, writers, bankers and engineers in making this northeastern Chinese city one of the country's most prosperous early last century.

The Jewish story is particularly fascinating and tragic as they were the only foreigners to share the same fate as Harbin's Chinese residents in being racially targeted and robbed by Russian and Japanese occupying forces that were competing with other European countries to colonize China in the first half of the 20th century.

At its peak in the 1920s, the prosperous Jewish community in Harbin numbered 25,000, according to Dan Ben-Canaan, an Israeli academic married to a Chinese woman who has been living and teaching in the city since 2002. Most of the Harbin Jews had fled from Russia, and made their fortune from developing the city into a major centre trading and supplying coal, timber, soybeans, grains and foodstuff from China to Europe.

The first wave of Jews arrived shortly after 1898 when Russia had constructed a railway to connect this resource-rich corner of the country with Russia.

In China's frontier environment with no history of anti-Semitism, the Jewish community thrived through hard work and their knowledge of international commerce. They were also free to practise their way of life and religion as the Chinese viewed them no differently from other foreigners. In 1903, the community grew sufficiently to establish the Harbin Jewish Association and the city's first synagogue. At one point, nine of the 17 city's council members were Jewish and had a role in building Harbin's main commercial street, hospitals, schools, cinemas, concert halls, a soup kitchen and even its main brewery. Many of these buildings remain intact, with the still-vibrant 1.4 kilometre-long commercial street linking the railway station to the riverbank, a legacy of Harbin's rise.

But Europe's problems eventually befell China as more Russians and remnants of the defeated czarist army fled to Harbin following the 1917 Russian Revolution. Hungry, poor and armed, the new arrivals began targeting Harbin's citizens especially its well-off Jewish community. Many young Jews who had grown up in the city's relatively sheltered environment encountered acute anti-Semitism for the first time in their lives.

The power struggles that followed took its toll on both the Chinese and Jews. Some of Harbin's Jews began selling off their assets to mark the first major wave of emigration.

In 1931, the Japanese became the dominant power. Though they generally treated the Jews well, the strain of collaborating with the Japanese Imperial Army which was allied to Nazi Germany and was conducting biochemical experiments on the Chinese population, became too much of a moral burden. Many Jewish businessmen packed up and left China for good.

The Jewish population went into terminal decline after Mao Zedong conquered China in 1949 and appropriated all private property.

In 1963, the last Jewish family left, ending the community's six-decade involvement in Harbin's colourful, turbulent and brutal history. The community's last resident, Hannah Agran, died in 1985, leaving behind a treasure trove of documents, photographs and memorabilia in her apartment that she had collected from other Harbin Jews. While her relatives and friends left, she insisted that she would die in the city that she was born in.

Harbin's Central Street. Inset: A plaque outside the restored synagogue of Harbin

"Her belongings were removed and locked away by the central government. Together with the local government and various groups, we've been lobbying Beijing to open up the archives, but to no avail," Ben-Canaan said in an interview.

China has been quietly growing trade and investment with Israel and Jewish businesses. From about $2.6 billion (US) in 2005, Israel's bilateral trade with China had grown to $15.59 billion in 2013, just slightly below the $16.3 billion worth of business conducted with the United States.

Given recent growth rates, China could soon overtake the United States as Israel's largest trading partner, said Ophir Gore, the head of trade mission at the Israeli embassy in Beijing. With China hungry for Israeli water expertise, information technology and farming know-how, the government of Israel has set a target to double its exports to the Asian nation over the next five years.

As if catching up with its own past, Harbin is eager to attract a new wave of Jewish businesses and settlers to replicate the success that the earlier legendary generation had brought. Mayor Zhang Xiaolian is leading a delegation to Israel this month to invite Israeli investors to his hometown.

Against the bright lights and connectivity of Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, Harbin stands little chance of pulling in the heavyweight investors. But just like a century ago, events in Europe might once again shine favourably on this almost forgotten corner of China. ■

Ng Weng Hoong is a Vancouver journalist.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Not your bubbie's youth group

'It can't be just sitting and chilling... You've got to make it more exciting'

LILA SARICK

At left, members of Bnei Akiva organized a challah bake last summer in honour of Israeli soldiers fighting in Gaza. At right, members of NCSY participated in a painting night for Tu b'Shvat.

Jewish youth groups have to offer more than playing table tennis in a shul basement on Shabbat afternoon, says Rabbi Glenn Black, who remembers doing exactly that in his Montreal synagogue as a kid.

Today, Rabbi Black heads NCSY Canada, a Jewish youth group that has so thoroughly re-invented itself, that even its name, which once stood for National Conference of Synagogue Youth, has been changed. Now, the organization, one of the largest Jewish youth groups in the country, goes by just its initials.

"Across Canada, a lot of programs are shul-based. In Toronto, that model's shifted away from being shul-based. You do not see that many teenagers in shuls today," says Rabbi Black. "In the old days, kids hung out at the shul playing Ping-Pong. Today, you have to be much more creative."

For NCSY, and many of the other youth groups in Canada, that has meant making partnerships across denominations and reaching beyond the traditional high school age to younger students and alumni.

"It can't be just sitting and chilling," says Liza Rozen-Delman, director of Camp Hatikvah and Young Judaea in Vancouver. "You've got to make it more exciting, you've got to up the ante."

In Vancouver, she runs three programs a year and pitches them at younger kids. "The moment they have their own car, they're not wanting to go to Jewish youth groups."

Youth groups generally operate below the media's radar, but in December, the Conservative movement's United Synagogue Youth made headlines when its leaders voted to drop a ban on interdating for its youth executive.

The change affected no more than about 100 young people, but it provoked a much wider debate. Clearly, while youth groups may have more difficulty attracting young people in an age of shrinking religious affiliation and competing interests, they still carry a lot of influence.

Across the country, BBYO (which was formerly called B'nai Brith Youth Organization) and NCSY are the two powerhouses, with representatives in many Jewish communities and attracting kids across religious denominations.

In the Toronto area, NCSY took its quest to make Orthodox Judaism attractive to non-observant kids into 14 public high schools, where it offers cultural clubs. After school, NCSY's Torah High offers subsidized high school classes on Jewish subjects to about 350 teens. About 90 per cent of NCSY's membership in Toronto comes from non-Orthodox homes, said Rabbi Black.

Last summer, NCSY staff went to Camp Northland-B'nai Brith, to reinvigorate its Jewish programming. They also met dozens of campers, whom they later invited to the group's Shabbatons and courses.

Across Canada, the program is growing: a second couple has just been added to work in the Vancouver office, said Rabbi Black. Between 2,200 and 2,500 teens nationally participate in NCSY programs.

Rabbi Black praises his staff, who host Shabbat programs in their homes and engage with young people at summer camps and high schools. "Kids like the warmth, they like the encouragement. They don't get that everywhere," he says.

Another key to NCSY's success is its deep subsidies. Torah High charges students $499 per credit, but it costs the organization $1,800. Its Israel summer trips are also significantly cheaper than those offered by other organizations.

About 90 per cent of NCSY's funding is generated locally (with 10 per cent coming from the Orthodox Union). "I spend 70 to 80 per cent of my time thinking about affordability," says Rabbi Black.

BBYO, which is a non-denominational youth group, is also on a growth curve in parts of the country.

In Winnipeg, where BBYO has little competition from other youth groups, membership has grown to 186 members this year, up from 137 the year before, says Gabi Kneller, youth and BBYO co-ordinator.

BBYO "is such an ingrained thing. Everyone's parents were in BBYO, everyone's grandparents were in BBYO."

Kneller's own parents met in BBYO, she says, and she grew up as a leader in the movement herself.

The greatest challenge BBYO faces is explaining the intricacies of youth groups to immigrant Jewish parents in the city, she said.

Kneller also reaches out to summer camp and synagogue directors, inviting their youth leaders to come on board and help plan events, such as a recent Shabbaton that attracted 80 teens.

"It brings everyone together. I would think it's an advantage to be pluralistic," she says.

Youth groups that focus on a particular niche, either political, such as the Zionist Hashomer Hatzair, or religious, such as the Reform movement's North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) or USY, face a more challenging landscape.

Both NFTY and USY have taken a similar tack, attracting youths who do not necessarily belong to a congregation and reaching out to capture the attention of younger middle school students before they make decisions about how to spend their time outside of school.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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York University student paper is deaf to Jewish concerns

Danielle Shachar

Two weeks ago in *The CJN*, a group of past and present directors of the Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University aired their thoughts on a recent campus controversy. In the aftermath of the tragic attacks in Paris, an editorial in the *Excalibur*, York's student newspaper, ignored the deadly assault on a kosher supermarket, outrageously equated ultra-Orthodox Jews who refuse to sit next to women on airplanes with Islamist radicals who murder innocent civilians, and twisted the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* to condemn Zionism.

The authors of the *CJN* piece argued that the university ought to be a place for the free exchange of ideas and that York's thousands of Jewish students and other community members should be content to simply condemn articles that incite hatred against them.

I agree with the first sentiment, but as a Jewish student at York who wants to feel safe on her own campus, I strongly disagree with the authors' laissez-faire approach.

The offensive and insulting piece on the Paris terrorist attacks was hardly the newspaper's first misstep as far as Jews and Israel are concerned. Over the past few years, *Excalibur* has consistently given front-page coverage to the bigoted campaign to force York to divest from the Israeli economy and boycott interactions with Israeli professors, students and universities. In addition, the paper has repeatedly carried opinion pieces by Hammam Farah, a notorious anti-Israel instigator at York who was even banned from campus for a few months due to his inability to obey York's very lenient rules for organizing protests.

Excalibur has repeatedly failed to question or fact-check ridiculous assertions in its anti-Israel pieces. And at the same time, it has refused to carry pro-Israel articles written by students, claiming that they are "biased." Jewish students have been robbed of their ability to reach the student body with their side of the story – in essence, their right to free speech was unfairly suppressed in favour of those harassing our community.

The authors of the Feb. 5 *CJN* submission also claim that the situation at York is little different from other Canadian universities, but this is simply untrue. It is hard to imagine another Canadian university where Jewish staff and students would be besieged in a Hillel office by a mob of violent Israel-haters, as occurred at York in February 2009.

Excalibur is not a private publication that lives or dies based on the quality of its journalistic output. Rather, as the official campus newspaper, it derives much of its revenue from fees collected from each York student by the university administration along with their annual tuition payments. This fee is mandatory. There is no way for a student to opt out. Hence, Jewish and pro-Israel students at York are being forced to prop up a newspaper that fans the flames of hatred against them.

Student newspapers at other Canadian universities honour students' role in keeping them afloat by remaining accountable to them. For example, the *Varsity*, the University of Toronto's campus publication, hosts twice-yearly meetings for students to air their feelings about the newspaper and cast binding votes on its activities. *Excalibur* does no such thing and gives every appearance of being a self-replicating echo chamber disconnected from the students who pay its bills and whom it is supposed to serve.

According to York University guidelines, organizations such as *Excalibur* that benefit from mandatory student contributions must be held accountable to those very same students, but these guidelines are not being strictly observed. Jewish students at York and other members of the community can help us fend off these attacks on our beliefs and our identity not by "censoring" *Excalibur*, but by personally informing York's administration that it cannot continue to aid the newspaper in hoarding student fees while it remains deaf to their legitimate concerns. ■

Danielle Shachar is a student at York University in Toronto.

Balancing school financial sustainability and affordability

Daniel Held

A year ago, concurrent to my starting work at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education, I published a report on Jewish day school financial sustainability and affordability for the Jewish Funders Network and the Avi Chai Foundation. On several occasions, I've shared ideas from the report in this column. During this past year, working alongside Toronto's day school leadership, some ideas in the report have been reinforced and others have shifted in my thinking. What has become clear is that ensuring long-term sustainability will require disruptive changes to the ways we currently operate.

Day schools face two interrelated but distinct challenges: affordability and financial sustainability.

Affordability is the individual parent's perception of cost and value – knowing that what their children are receiving is worth the investment in tuition. Affordability factors in both the perceived value of the school and the cost of tuition in relation to household income.

Sustainability is the long-term financial viability of the school –balancing its budget year after year and being able to withstand short- and long-term financial challenges, including the steady demand for increased financial assistance and the need to invest in a quality educational program.

A school could be affordable (with low tuition and high perceived value) but not sustainable. Similarly, it could be sustainable with high tuition (and sufficient families willing to pay), but not affordable to the breadth of students it hopes to reach. Day school financial sustainability requires a long-term plan to ensure that revenue covers costs. Affordability necessitates a demonstration of the value of day school vis-à-vis the cost of tuition. It also involves a realization that even with high perceived value, some families will require tuition assistance. The challenge is a delicate balancing act between sustainability and affordability.

In Toronto we are blessed to have one of North America's most robust affordability programs. Decades ago, the leadership of UJA Federation dedicated itself to ensuring that day schools would be affordable to the widest swath of students. This manifests in an annual allocation of $10 million, matched by schools, that assists 2,300 students each year. While the program is not perfect, it goes a long way toward making school affordable.

What keeps me up at night is the financial sustainability of this program and of our system. Year over year, increases in the costs of day schools significantly outpace increases in inflation and household income. As a result, each year, tuition bills take up more and more of the average family's disposable income and our affordability program, like those across North America, endures greater strain.

I believe we can address the current issues of affordability through interventions on the revenue side of a school budget. We've seen these kinds of interventions through endowments, middle income programs, annual development, etc. The more I am kept awake at night thinking about sustainability, however, the more I come to the realization that a sea change can only come through a change in schools' cost structures.

Upward of 70 per cent of a school's budget is spent on human resources – teachers, administrators, support, etc. A meaningful reduction of expenses necessitates rethinking the structure of our schools and what teaching and learning looks like. These changes, however, can only take place with the recognition that perceived value is the most important predictor of enrolment and a critical ingredient in parents' calculus of affordability. Our schools must be top quality.

Rethinking the cost structure of Jewish day schools requires an audacious embrace of out-of-the-box thinking balanced by a healthy dose of conservatism that is necessary in any educational change.

In collaboration with professional and lay leaders in Toronto, we've started this thinking, but it will take many more dreamers and doubters to develop the models that will propel day school into a sustainable future. ■

Do new anti-terror measures go too far?

Jean M. Gerber

"Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear of it, men would swallow each other alive" (Pirkei Avot 3:2).

Let me tell you a true story.

In the early days of Simon Fraser University, during the roiling '60s, SFU had its student demonstrations, its quotient of radical organizers. Today most are retired boomers, no longer on the barricades. But in those days, demonstrations and demonstrators were a sign that the enemy was at the gates – of the university, that is.

So the RCMP, ever attuned to the trends of the day, began surveillance of, among many other groups, students and their campus organizations. I quote from Steve Hewitt's *Beaver* article of August/September 2002, "Spying Goes to College," written in the fresh aftermath of 9/11.

"The list of materials passed on to Ottawa in 1970 included... an assessment of the Canadian University Press, a mention of Marxism at the University of Waterloo, a report about an SFU history-student organization, derisive comment about an all-female student executive at Brandon University [!], and descriptions of the formation of a Jewish student group at SFU and a gay organization in Vancouver."

I'm telling you this because that "Jewish student group" was us: my husband and I, along with a few Jewish SFU students and some other friends who wanted to enhance their knowledge of Judaism, Zionism and social justice. God knows what the Mounties made of our meetings, or how they even knew about them.

Hewitt's article chronicles the decades in which the RCMP and the Canadian government assiduously pursued what they felt were dangers to Canada from below, including student conspiracies they believed would undermine, if not overthrow, the established order. What was at the base of all this? Only slowly did it become apparent that the enemy, as Pogo said, was often us.

Now, in 2015, we have fresh anxiety. Our emotions have been stirred by events of the past weeks: deaths in Paris; arrests in Canada of suspected or avowed jihadist cells; and accusations and the creeping fear that, once again, Jews in Europe face a rise in anti-Jewish attacks. Can it happen here?

In Canada, two soldiers have died, although it's pretty clear the men who killed in Ottawa and Quebec were mentally unstable, and had, if anything, used the Internet to turn themselves into radicals. They weren't "turned" by fiery local imams, but by their own mental anguish.

This might have triggered a call for better mental health treatments, but no.

Never mind that recent arrests of alleged terrorists came because current laws produced their capture. We're told we need new ones, even more intrusive and stripped of the protections we expect as citizens of a democracy. Yes, we need the government to protect us from those who wish us harm, but we also need to trust the democratic processes guaranteed by law.

Do we teeter now on the edge of decisions we may regret, such as passing more and more laws that attempt to protect us from every conceivable (and some not-so-likely) terror attacks? Ottawa has reportedly spent $1 billion just on a security building in Ottawa. Many more billions will be spent on security services.

Are we so fearful that we will easily give up any sense of protection from the mistakes that zealous security agents can make that we will override common sense?

Since 9/11, the United States has barricaded itself behind growing security walls, ever more intrusive and constitutionally precarious. Like our sister to the south, is Canada ready to toss overboard freedoms and protections that we hold as the right of citizens living in a democracy?

Our government should be more than a fence keeping us from attacking each other. It should be dispenser of justice – surely the higher honour.

Or is this just an election ploy? That would be cynical beyond belief. ■

A defiant Iran continues to pose a nuclear threat

Paul Michaels

No one can say the warning signs weren't everywhere.

That is, no one can say the entire international community wasn't warned repeatedly that Iran was playing games and having its way with the P5+1, led by the United States, in the now twice-extended nuclear talks now scheduled to end this summer.

According to highly informed experts, despite all the international community's efforts to prevent it, Iran will almost certainly, before long, be a breakout nuclear weapons state.

While the barbarity of ISIS in Syria and Iraq has grabbed recent headlines, Iran – a more dangerous threat to international peace and security, given its aggressive designs from Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, its terrorist plots in Europe and Asia, and even in the Western Hemisphere (see Argentina) – continues to push ahead with its nuclear program.

A quick review: more than a decade ago, after Iran was repeatedly caught cheating on its obligations as a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including developing secret centrifuge sites, the UN Security Council passed a series of six resolutions demanding that Iran stop enriching nuclear fuel or face sanctions. Insisting it had a "right" of enrichment under the treaty, which it doesn't, Iran was subjected to Security Council-imposed sanctions.

Iran continued to defy the UN, its nuclear weapons inspectors, and both the United States and the European Union, which imposed even tougher economic sanctions against Tehran.

Only in November 2013, when these sanctions began to bite, did Iran agree to hold talks with the five permanent Security Council members plus Germany (hence the P5+1) to reach what was called the Geneva Interim Agreement. According to this plan, Iran would roll back its enrichment program in return for limited sanctions relief.

But instead of insisting, as the Security Council resolutions demanded, that Iran cease all enrichment activities, the P5+1 only required Iran to convert 20 per cent-enriched nuclear fuel to five per cent, but allowed it to continue to enrich fuel to this level – thus, in effect, accepting Iran's "right to enrich" while trying (ineffectually, as it turned out) to persuade Iran to diminish its centrifuges from nearly 10,000 to 2,000. Iran insists it will limit only the efficiency, not the number, of its centrifuges – which can quickly be reversed.

The interim plan, begun in January 2014, was intended to lead to a comprehensive agreement by last July, but the deadline was extended first to November and then to June 30, 2015, with a framework agreement to be in place by March.

Almost no one expects this to happen. The options are a further extension or the American's acceptance of a bad deal.

Iran is seen, foremost by Israel, as simply playing for time. Leveraging a loophole in the interim agreement that allows for research and development "practices," Iran is reportedly hard at work on advanced centrifuges that can dramatically accelerate the enrichment of nuclear fuel to weapons-grade at a time of Iran's choosing, thus giving it a quick "breakout" capacity to produce a nuclear bomb.

Since the interim agreement didn't address Iran's nuclear warhead research (made off-limits by Iran to IAEA inspectors) or its ballistic missile development, Tehran has managed to counter interference in its overall nuclear program. Limited sanctions relief is worth several hundred million dollars a month to Iran while it pushes ahead with a nuclear weapons program in which it repeatedly – and disingenuously – denies any interest.

Summing up where things stand, Emily Landau, Israel's leading expert on arms control, recently wrote: "Negotiations so far show that Iran's steadfast defiance in resisting any significant concessions with regard to its nuclear program has been met time and again with concessions by the P5+1."

The "P5+1" might better be seen as a short-hand for the U.S. administration that is dedicated to nuclear talks with Iran while it also, in effect, counts on Tehran to fight ISIS in Iraq – yet a further dangerous development, especially for Israel. ■

News

An annual subsidy of $250,000 is needed to avoid a deficit.

Ottawa to close its only Jewish high school program

SHERI SHEFA
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A unanimous decision by the Ottawa Jewish Community School's (OJCS) board of directors will see the city's only Jewish high school program phased out by 2017.

"An extensive examination by OJCS leadership, which included a study by the school's sustainability committee, has determined that the high school is not financially viable," Aaron Smith, the OJCS board president, said in a Feb. 10 letter to parents about the decision to close the high school.

"Put simply, not enough families are choosing to send their children to grades 9 through 12. This has been a challenge in the high school over [its] 20-year existence."

In 2006, Ottawa's Jewish elementary school, Hillel Academy, amalgamated with Yitzhak Rabin High School and the new school was renamed the OJCS.

Despite having both schools under one roof, the high school continued to struggle to sustain itself.

Smith said it would require a minimum annual community subsidy of $250,000, on top of regular operating costs, to avoid a deficit.

"We require a minimum of 50 students to be sustainable given our current cost structure. This year, we have 24 students, and next year, at best, we expect 20 students total enrolled," Smith said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

GUEST VOICE

Save my school!

Ella Sabourin

My name is Ella Sabourin. I'm in Grade 10. I've attended a Jewish school for 11 years. I am writing this article right after finding out that that journey is over. The Ottawa Jewish Community High School, formerly called Yitzhak Rabin High School, is rejecting all new applicants for the coming school year. Only current Grade 10 and 11 students will be allowed to finish, which would leave the entire high school next year with 12 students, give or take.

I have witnessed this high school's struggle for students first-hand and have participated in the constant efforts to increase attendance within the Jewish community. It breaks my heart how many people have passed it up without a second thought.

Of my Grade 8 class of 37 kids, only six of them continued on to the high school. I've published articles in the *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*, created advertisements, and made a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/hoojcs) to raise awareness of this school and the wonderful opportunities it provides.

Now, I'm reaching out to the international Jewish community. I'm making one final effort to save something beautiful and to provide a Jewish high school to the community of Ottawa.

This support isn't only because of religious beliefs. I'm a Reform Jew, and I don't go to synagogue nearly enough. It's because this school is something special. It's such a shame to watch it crumble and be powerless to hold it together.

When I first heard it was closing, I didn't think of what I'd do or where I'd go. All I could think of was an image in my head of an empty funeral. You see, even though this will devastate those who have experienced the former Yitzhak Rabin High School first-hand, the vast majority of the Jewish community in Ottawa won't even notice the change.

So, why am I reaching out to you, the international Jewish community? Well, I've always been an idealist. I'd like to raise funds for the Ottawa Jewish Community School through the Jewish community at large.

I know the odds are against me, but I'd feel better going out having tried my best.

I got this idea from Don Draper, the character on *Mad Men*, who also put an article in the news when he was in a tricky predicament. He said, "If you don't like what's being said, change the conversation."

I've created an account for the school on Go Fund Me, which is the world's No. 1 fundraising site. You are welcome to donate at www.gofundme.com/saverabin. The money that is donated will be used to sustain the school. If enough is provided, the seven Grade 8 students who were planning to attend the high school will be able to.

Every donation is appreciated. ■

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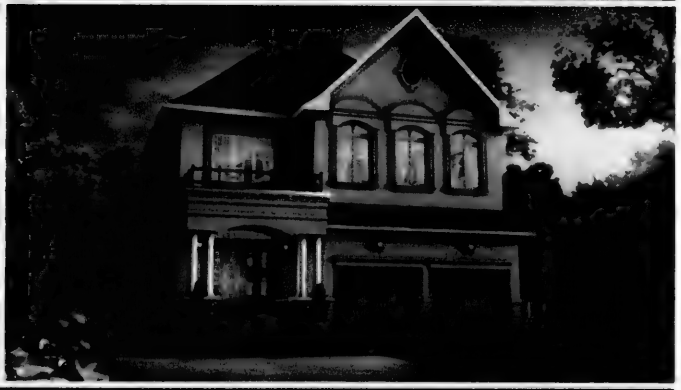

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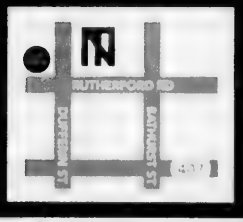


THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Canadians to run in Israel for kids with special needs

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Some 50 Canadians will join more than 300 runners from around the globe to represent Shalva in the annual Jerusalem Marathon next month.

Shalva is one of Israel's premier institutions that cares for and supports children with special needs and their families. The Hebrew letters *shin, lamed, vav, heh* comprising the name Shalva stand for "liberating the child with special needs and their family." In Hebrew, the word *shalva* means, "peace of mind."

Team Shalva, now in its fifth year, unites runners of all backgrounds and ages in preparation to walk, run, or both, in the upcoming Jerusalem full, half, 10-km, and 5-km runs. Participants can also take a Shalva child on an 800-metre community race. Runners are raising money for Shalva – the Association for Mentally and Physically Challenged Children in Israel.

"The Canadian Friends of Shalva will have 50 participants lacing up to run the marathon this year including mother-daughter and father-son teams," said Johanna Brooks, executive director of Canadian Friends of Shalva.

"Bnei Akiva Schools of Toronto are the first organized school group from Toronto participating. They have close to 25 participants who have helped raise awareness of Shalva and the community through their students and parents."

This year's run will take place March 13 and raise funds for Shalva's therapies and programming. Shalva's children also train for the marathon.

With awareness and commitment, Team Shalva's spirit and passion continues to grow.

"Four years ago, we had 17 international runners. One year later we had 50. Last year, there were 170, and this year, Shalva has over 300 runners from Israel and around the world," said Brooks.

Dedicated Toronto supporter Marla Buck has participated in the marathon year after year.

"We think hours of training, rest and proper nutrition prepare us to run a marathon, but there is no preparation for the marathon of disability.

"We run surrounded by 5,000 fellow Jews, a tapestry of life and history, and a people who challenge adversity daily. Blind veterans tethered to fellow soldiers, army platoons with packs on their backs, and flags waving proud, all running with

Eitan Cohen, right, and Ofra Zarbiv at the 2014 Shalva event

the kids of Shalva, as they burst with joy and elation. These are our trainers and our role models. They teach us the lessons we think we teach them," Buck said.

Toronto participant Lisa Erlick has raised $19,000 so far for Shalva.

"I lost a child to cancer. I am dedicating this run/walk in memory of my beloved son Evan who, less than a year after having his bar mitzvah in Israel, succumbed to the brain tumour that took his life," Erlick said.

"The whole idea of going to visit Shalva, raising money for them and pushing a child in a wheelchair resonated with me. Evan would be very proud," she added.

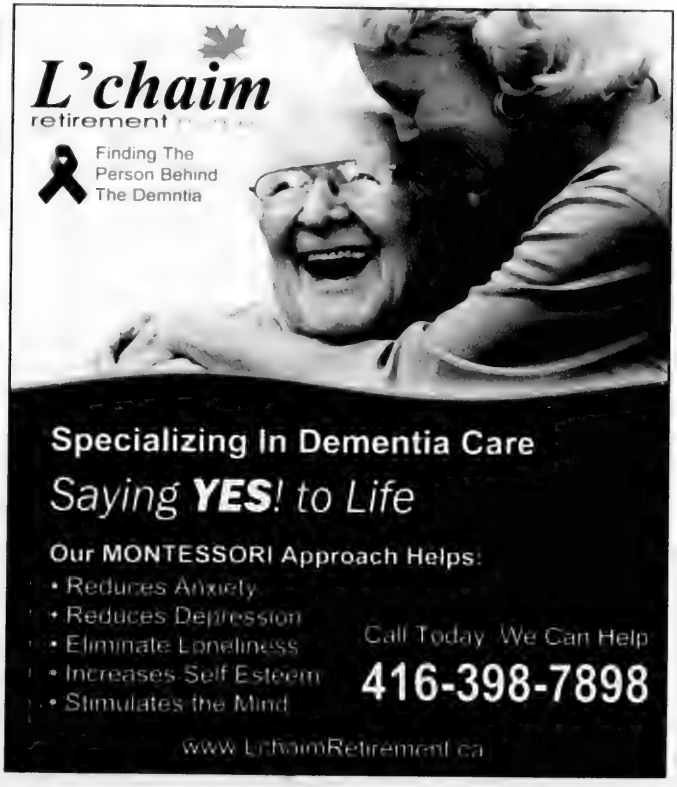
"If you raise a minimum amount of $3,600, Shalva will cover your round trip airfare and hotel stay during the marathon, from March 12 to March 15. Participants will attend a pre-race party where they will meet fellow runners from across the world, enjoy the music of a Shalva band made up of Shalva children and a post-race victory party, including a weekend Shabbat experience," Brooks said

Shalva was founded in 1990 by Kalman and Malki Samuels after their experience raising their son, who was rendered blind, deaf and hyperactive by a routine vaccination at the age of 11 months.

Believing that the care of children with special needs should not be left to the family alone, Malki and Kalman tried to create a therapeutic environment in which children with special needs could thrive and grow. From humble beginnings, today Shalva has become a leader in disability awareness and intervention in the Middle East. All programs and services are provided free of charge.

"For the parents of special needs children, our race is run every single day. There is no Shabbat. There is no vacation. There is no time off from training, not even for an injury," said Nicole Schiavi Jansezian, a Shalva mother who participates in the marathon every year. ■

To learn more, visit: www.shalva.org.



Agency raises funds for affordable housing

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A fundraising initiative by the Kehilla Residential Programme will enable more Torontonians to enjoy affordable housing.

Kehilla, Toronto's non-profit housing agency, runs a rental assistance program that provides up to $300 per month to help families in need meet rental costs.

Kehilla currently supports 26 households that are forced to pay more than 35 per cent of their gross incomes on rent.

Nancy Singer, Kehilla's executive director, said that in an attempt to add more funds to the rental assistance program and potentially help more families struggling to make ends meet, the agency has reached out to successful community developers for help.

"We put together a list of developers who have done well in the community, and the ask was to give back to the community. It is also a product that they know really well - housing," Singer said.

"They were extremely supportive."

To date, the campaign has secured 19 gifts of $10,000 each, substantially increasing funding for the program.

Singer said what's great about the initiative is that it provides "immediate gratification.

"The advantage of a rental assistance program is that you can help people immediately," she said.

"We're not waiting five years, eight years, to build an affordable housing unit that can cost a lot of money and time," she said, adding that the $190,000 that was raised for the rental assistance program will help sustain the program for more people.

"We have nearly 100 people on the waiting list and it grows every day."

Another positive development at Kehilla saw 24 people placed into affordable housing units at the Heathview, a new rental building in the heart of the Forest Hill Village.

Singer said that through an agreement with the City of Toronto, Kehilla worked closely with Morguard, a real estate investment company, to provide 24 affordable units at the Heathview for 10 years.

Bachelor units at the Heathview are available for rent for about $1,300 a month, but under the agreement with Kehilla, clients pay $725. The market value for one-bedroom units runs between $1,600 and $1,800 a month, but Kehilla clients pay $950.

"But after 10 years, the rent could go up 30 per cent a year," Singer said.

She said half the residents of the subsidized units are referred by Jewish Family & Child, and the other half come from Kehilla's waiting list.

Late last year, Kehilla was also involved in addressing a "crisis" following the closure of a North York Jewish nursing home called Ahavas Achim Retirement Home.

"We called an emergency meeting, and we had everybody who has anything to do with housing in the area," Singer said.

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and Kehilla were notified about the closure in October and learned they only had until the end of 2014 to find new housing for 23 residents, most of whom have long-standing mental illnesses including depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

After collaborating with a number of Jewish community organizations, along with the Community Care Access Centre, an agency that delivers home and community health care, all of the 23 residents were successfully transitioned to alternate housing and care sites by the end of the year.

"Although this was a retirement home, what we discovered is that quite a number of the residents were under 60, living with challenges and inappropriately housed," Singer said in a statement.

Nancy Singer, executive director of Kehilla

"There is a serious lack of supportive housing for this population that ends up in seniors homes or other inappropriate facilities."

Singer said that although Kehilla had a productive year, the housing agency still faces many challenges.

"We're in a [good] position now because we have a premier who gets it, we have a mayor who gets it. We probably need a change at the federal level on social housing policies, but it's very hard to move forward," she said.

"It hard to move ministries forward to get them to work together to use funding more efficiently. There are no new dollars. We know that. Everyone is dealing with budget restraint... but we expect more efficient use of existing dollars and collaboration." ■

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Talented Israeli hockey player moving up quickly

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David Levin

If you check the bios of current NHL players, you'll find places of birth that would have astonished pro scouts from days gone by. Forget Timmins and Flin Flon. Today's hockey players come from places like Margate, Fla., Phoenix, Ariz., and Las Vegas, Nev.

Not a snow-covered mining town among them, so if we're talking sub-tropical locations, why not throw Netanya in northern Israel into the mix?

David Levin, 15, hails from that ice-challenged locale, but his superior talent and dedication have vaulted his name to the top ranks of potential draftees into the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), one of Canada's three premiere major junior leagues.

As a highly regarded right winger with the Don Mills Flyers AAA minor midget team, Levin is eligible to be drafted into the OHL, where he'll develop his skills with the world's best junior-aged players. It's a stepping stone – a tall one, with many chances to stumble and fall – to the National Hockey League.

But Levin is determined to be among the best in his sport. He's been like that since he was eight years old and got his first exposure to North American hockey on TV back home. His father, Pavel, had immigrated from Latvia, where he played pro soccer and was an avid sportsman. One evening, David asked his father what sport he was watching. "It's the NHL," his father told him, "the best hockey league in the world."

The next day, he told his dad, "That's where I want to play, too." Today he's just as determined: "I want to go as far as I can and make my dream come true, to play in the NHL."

Many kids share the dream, but as a potential OHL first pick, Levin is on the right track. At the Titans Minor Midget Tourney, in December, he won the scoring title, with seven goals and seven assists in eight games.

Last week the Flyers, the top-ranked minor midget team in Ontario, began a seven-game series with the Toronto Marlboros in the GTHL championship. Levin got a goal. In March, the Flyers, the number 1-ranked team in Ontario, will participate in the OHL Cup, a showcase for top players on 20 top minor midget teams, which attracts OHL scouts by the bushel.

"I have to show up and play good," he said.

Darren Ferris, Levin's agent, is confident Levin will be an early selection in the OHL draft. Ferris said he's been around lots of top players who've gone on to careers in major junior and the NHL. Levin handles himself the same way as the stars, he said.

Ferris marvels at Levin's ability, pointing out he's only been playing on ice for three years, yet he dominates play. "He's a very special player. He sees the ice very well," he said. "If you look at the skill level of kids eligible for the draft, he's the most talented."

When you speak to Levin, the teen sounds mature beyond his years. He's willing to put in the hard work to excel, and he's got the mental toughness to overcome obstacles.

He's always been a top player. In Israel, he played in his father's inline hockey league and excelled. From his home in Netanya, he made it to the Canada Centre rink in Metullah only a few times a year, so most of his hockey experience was the dry-land variety. Three times at inline tournaments in Europe he was named MVP.

From his performance in inline tournaments, it was clear he had special talent.

Three years ago, Levin moved to Canada to develop those skills. He lives with his aunt and uncle. The transition from skating on asphalt to ice was difficult, but manageable, he said. The transition from life in Israel with his parents to life in a new country, with a new culture and language was more difficult. And he was only 12.

David communicated with his folks at home via Skype and he visited regularly, but it was still very difficult, said his aunt, Alla Tovberg. "It was a very hard decision for his mother," Tovberg said.

Not speaking English was a barrier as well. "It was a very hard adjustment, the new environment, the snow. It was completely different than Israel," she said. "And he had to adjust to a new family."

Levin's uncle, Yafim, drives him to games and practices, and Alla marvels at how dedicated David is to his sport.

He's on the ice five times a week, adding gym training to his routine. He's always thinking of ways to help his team. And even in the summer, when he takes time away from hockey, he's never too far from it. "There's not a day that I'm not doing something with my stick," he said. ■

Getting teens' attention is tough

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Although denominational affiliation is shrinking, being part of a synagogue framework can have its advantages, the leaders find. "It gives young people a real voice, especially in synagogue. There's no curriculum telling them otherwise," says Josh Dubell, regional adviser for NFTY – Northeast Lakes Region, which includes Reform synagogues in Ontario, except Windsor, and some in upstate New York and Cleveland.

In Toronto, a recent event attracted 70 kids, a small turnout given the large Reform synagogues in the city, but the largest numbers seen in about seven or eight years, Dubell said. The Toronto area's ranks have been bolstered by new Reform synagogues downtown and in the northern suburbs, which have started chapters.

For USY, synagogue affiliation lets young people become involved with a congregation's children and seniors, breaking down generational boundaries and appealing to teens who need to earn community service hours, says Andy Pascoe, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's youth chair for Eastern Canada.

About 150 youths come to at least one USY event during the year, a number that has remained fairly steady over the last few years, he says.

Especially in Toronto, getting teens' attention is tough. They can be involved in Jewish schools and camps, as well as have a wide range of options for socializing.

"We don't get the numbers coming out to conventions, but that's true for all [denominations]," says Pascoe. "But the kids are just as committed and just as engaged."

While some youth groups have altered their names and their orientation, others have found success by remaining resolutely unchanged.

Two of the oldest Zionist youth groups, the modern Orthodox Bnei Akiva, in its 80th year and the left-wing Hashomer Hatzair, which recently celebrated 90 years, still hold weekly meetings that attract a steady core of youths.

Between 40 and 50 kids, many of whom are Israelis or the children of Israeli immigrants, meet Saturday afternoons for games, holiday celebrations and discussions, says Hashomer Hatzair's Uri Ron Amit, director of Camp Shomria, the movement's Ontario summer camp.

In Montreal, where the chapter closed 25 years ago, local leaders are being trained and a parents committee has been started in the hopes of reviving the chapter.

Promoting a progressive, Zionist movement is an uphill struggle, says Amit. "We do love Israel and we sometimes look at Israel in a critical way," he says. With its emphasis on youth-led programs, Hashomer Hatzair "has the opportunity to provide kids with the peer group to explore around Zionism and progressive Judaism.... We provide this platform to explore these questions with their peers."

Religious Zionism is the driving force behind Bnei Akiva, which holds weekly programs in three Toronto synagogues, as well as in Hamilton and Montreal, says Jonny Lipczer, Bnei Akiva shaliach.

Like many youth group leaders, he grew up in the movement, which had a life-changing effect on him.

"One of the beautiful things about Bnei Akiva is the presence of shlichim, somebody who has a real care and passion for Israel," he says. "I made aliyah from Britain because of the impact my shaliach made on me." ■

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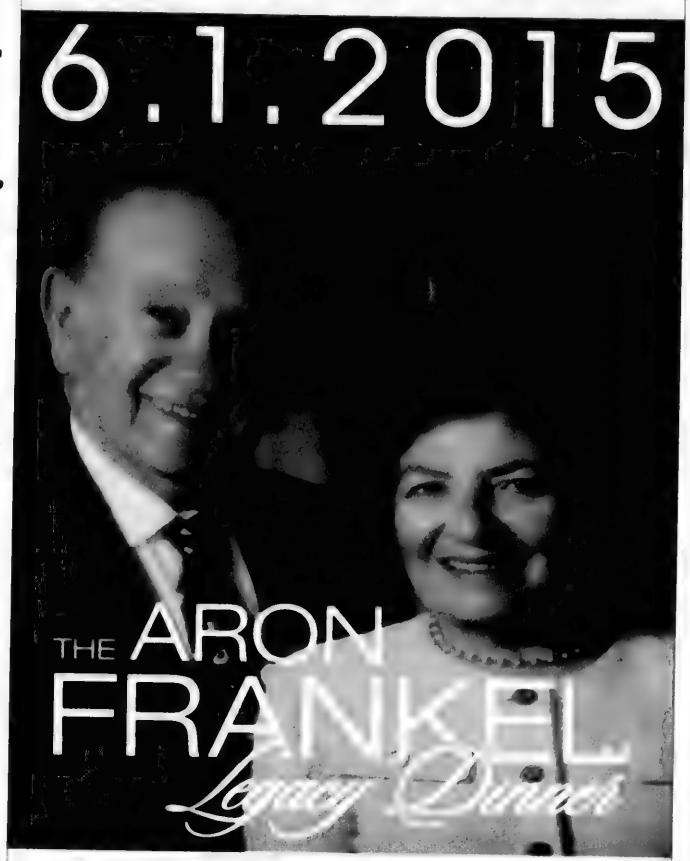

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JNF recreates biblical agriculture in hills of Jerusalem

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Gidi Bashan

If you look out your window, you might forget that Tu b'Shvat is the new year for trees in Israel, not snow-shovelling season.

With that in mind, Gidi Bashan donned his *gatkes* and made the trek to snow-covered Canada to tell one and all about the work Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael (the Jewish National Fund) does in recreating biblical-era agriculture in the Holy Land.

In Sataf, in the Jerusalem Hills where Bashan lives, he and another family tend the biblical park that was established in the early 1980s to mimic the agricultural processes of 2,500 years ago.

There they grow figs, olives and grapes, three of the seven species of plants that are mentioned in the bible. (The others are barley, wheat, pomegranates and dates.)

Bashan relies on modern science – to determine that the current crops are genetically close to those grown in ancient times – and the ancient technique of terracing the land to avoid soil erosion, to recreate farming as it might have been in biblical times.

"We do a lot of what our ancestors did to eat," he said. "That's what grows in our fields."

The result is a biblical park that attracts 500,000 visitors every year and which educates Israelis and others about the Jews' ancient connection to the land.

Bashan, KKL's community and forest Sataf project director, was in Toronto last week as part of a two-week cross-Canada tour that took him to Jewish communities and schools in Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Windsor, London, Halifax and Ottawa. His visit was part of JNF Canada program to familiarize Canadian Jews and others with some of the work done by the organization in Israel, and demonstrate JNF does more than plant trees in Israel, said Franklin Simkevitz, executive director of JNF Canada's Ontario region.

In addition to reforestation, there's work in land use, water preservation and providing Israelis with cycling routes throughout the country, he said.

Cycling is another one of Bashan's passions. In addition to his work in ancient agriculture, he was responsible for providing the country with its first dedicated, environmentally friendly bike trail.

Growing up in Kiryat Chaim, along Haifa Bay, Bashan was an avid cyclist. When mountain biking really took off in Israel around 15 years ago, Bashan went along for the ride.

As the sport grew in popularity, people would use dirt roads and then hiking trails for their mountain biking needs. Then they'd start hacking their way through undeveloped forested areas, causing environmental and even archeological damage. So KKL (JNF), with its mandate to preserve Israel's forests, got involved and Bashan created the first groomed single track mountain bike trail in the country.

Since 2006, KKL has added 1,200 kilometres of single track trails and it manages another 1,000 kilometres of dirt road tracks.

One of the more popular biking trails was developed with financing from Toronto developer Joe Lebovic. It runs 125 kilometres between the port of Tel Aviv and the Jerusalem zoo.

Another even longer trail is designed to run from Mount Hermon in the north to Eilat in the south. So far, only 300 kilometres are open, running from Mitzpeh Ramon in the Negev to Eilat. That trail is a joint project of KKL, the Ministry of Tourism and the Israel Nature and National Parks Protection Authority.

With Israel's biking season lasting nearly the entire year, some 100,000 cyclists take advantage of the country's trails.

A lot of what the KKL/JNF does is unfamiliar to Canadians, including non-Jewish Canadians, said Simkevitz. So while in London, Bashan addressed members of the city's urban forest strategy department.

"It's telling people there's more to Israel than the conflict you read about in the paper," he said. "We just give them a completely different perspective." ■

Barrie synagogue gets new spiritual leader

JODIE SHUPAC
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Audrey Kaufman

One doesn't normally equate Simcoe County, just north of the Greater Toronto Area, with Jews.

But Barrie's Am Shalom Congregation, in existence since 2004, is about 75 families strong, and, as the only synagogue in the area, it also serves Muskoka, Collingwood, Newmarket, Innisfil and Beaton.

Since Jan. 1, the Reform congregation has had its first full-time cantor and its first full-time spiritual leader, Audrey Kaufman.

Kaufman, who lives in Thornhill and commutes to Barrie for services, has worked as Am Shalom's part-time cantor for the past 10 years or so, after being invited by synagogue president Stephen Sperling to lead services one Shabbat.

Kaufman was offered a three-year contract to be the shul's full-time cantor and spiritual leader after the congregation's former rabbi, Rabbi Ilyse Glickman, moved to the United States.

"I'm going to be a sort of jack of all trades," said Kaufman, who previously worked for 13 years as the cantorial soloist at Toronto's Temple Sinai Congregation.

She also spent 16 years working as a High Holiday cantor at a synagogue in the United States.

Kaufman said she will work to make the services, which are a mix of Hebrew and English, accessible and to ensure congregants understand the Torah on a deep level.

"I tell them there is no soap opera, no miniseries, that compares to the Torah," she said. "I want them to understand that it's not just an ancient scroll, but that the lessons of the Torah apply to everything we do in our life today. Sometimes, at the end of the service, I'll ask, 'Is there anyone here who didn't learn something today? And if they say no, I'll say, 'Let's stay and do the service again," she chuckled.

"The community finds Audrey very enlightening, very warm and approachable," said Rosa Ringhofer, Am Shalom's vice-president and a resident of Barrie.

"She's very involved, passionate and has a keen interest in the different things being offered at Am Shalom, like the sisterhood, brotherhood, adult education programs, religious school and social action."

Kaufman has been working closely with the religious school associated with the synagogue – 30 students are currently enrolled – bringing her knowledge of Torah study and music.

She is also working with the synagogue's Shirat Am Shalom Choir, teaching new music and encouraging them to become more involved with Shabbat and holiday services.

Ringhofer said about 20 to 30 people typically attend Shabbat services, while around 60 come to special holiday events such as those tied to Purim and Chanukah, and more than 100 – members as well as guests and other cottagers from the area – tend to come to High Holiday services.

Am Shalom was founded by developer Henry Bernick, who grew up in the Barrie area and subsequently moved to Toronto.

Wanting to give back to Barrie's Jewish community, he donated land for the synagogue and this, plus additional donations, allowed the synagogue to be built.

Prior to 2004, a group called the Simcoe County Jewish Association operated for about 40 years, its members meeting for holiday services and events at each other's homes and in rented premises.

Until 2003, the community was guided, for 13 years by Rabbi Bernard Baskin, rabbi emeritus of Hamilton's Temple Anshe Sholom.

Am Shalom's members, who typically range from age 30 to 60, are primarily individuals from the GTA who have moved further north for "the lifestyle," Kaufman said.

"There are more and more Jews living up north," she said. "People who want to get out of the hustle and bustle of the city... they love the outdoor recreation, the slower pace."

Many of them are still active professionals, she said, including doctors, dentists and lawyers.

"It's the same cross-section you'd find in any shul," she noted, "just on a smaller scale."

She added, "Barrie is the best-kept secret."

Kaufman's long-term goal is to help grow the congregation and spread the word about Am Shalom, possibly through joint ventures with other synagogues. "We have a vibrant, upbeat service. When you leave, you feel really good, really spiritual, warm and accepted," she said. "I want to do my part in imparting that type of feeling." ■

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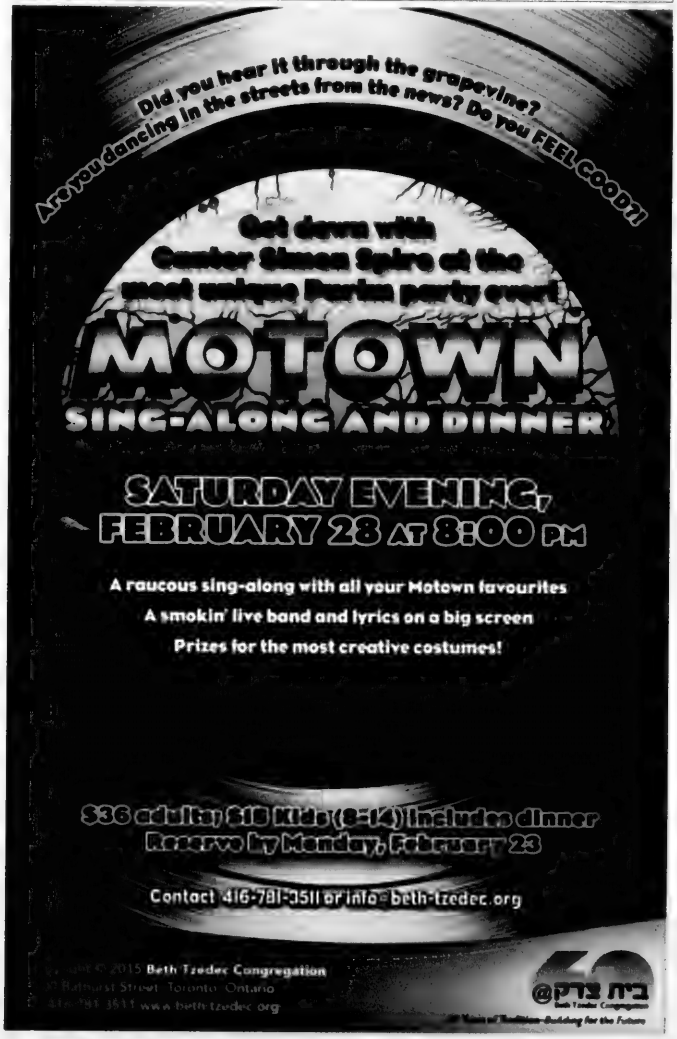
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Sephardi event remembers Hyper Cacher victims

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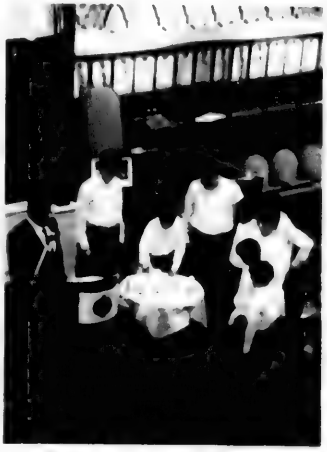


Students from Joe Dwek Ohr Haemet Sephardic School light memorial candles.

In a religious ceremony to mark the shloshim – the 30th day of mourning – in honour of the four Jewish victims of the Paris terror attack at the kosher supermarket, about 100 people gathered at Sephardic Kehila Centre in Thornhill on Feb. 10 to pay their respects.

On Jan. 9, four Jewish men, Johan Cohen, Yohav Hattab, Philippe Brahan and François-Michel Saada, were gunned down by an Islamic extremist as they shopped in the hours before Shabbat, said Guidy Mamman, chair of the event organized by the Communauté Juive Marocaine de Toronto (CJMT), in partnership with a number of Sephardi congregations.

"Tonight, we, the Sephardi Jewish community of Toronto, are marking this tragic milestone," Mamman said.

Following the lighting of memorial candles by Joe Dwek Ohr HaEmet Sephardic School students, as well as prayers and the *Mourner's Kaddish*, a number of community and political leaders addressed the gathering about the terrorist attacks in Paris last month and the threat that terrorists pose to those who adhere to western values.

York Centre MP Mark Adler began by saying he is "absolutely fed up" having to speak at events that commemorate innocent victims of terror, and that the world needs to fight back.

"You know, our Prime Minister Stephen Harper said a few weeks back that radical jihad had declared war on us… They said they are coming to the West to drink our blood… If there is one thing we can count on the terrorists to do, it's to keep their word. That is why we, not only Jews, but all people of good conscience, must stand united, must stand together to fight this scourge, to fight these barbarians and to take action," Adler said.

He added that Canada's government has committed its forces to fight Islamic State (ISIS) in northern Iraq, and introduced legislation in Parliament to fight terrorism, both homegrown and abroad.

Vaughan mayor Maurizio Bevilaqua said it is important to respond as a united front when tragedies like this occur.

"This world has been around for millions and millions of years. Billions of people have inhabited this earth for centuries upon centuries and isn't it truly miraculous that we have found each other here tonight… to be here for each other?"

When B'nai Brith Canada CEO Michael Mostyn took to the podium, he referred to an interview U.S. President Barack Obama gave earlier that day. In it, Obama characterized the attack as a random act of violence against "a bunch of folks in a deli in Paris."

"This morning, when Obama's press secretary was supposed to clarify the statement, he repeatedly denied that the deli was attacked because it was a kosher deli," Mostyn said.

"I am here to tell you tonight that we cannot and will not accept any denial of the indisputable fact that this violence was perpetrated by radical jihadists upon our brothers and sisters in France."

Gad Alon, Israel's consul in Toronto, said the challenge with jihadists is that they can't be dealt with in a traditional diplomatic setting.

"Our enemies are not interested in sitting down and discussing. But more importantly, our enemies do not play fair. They attack innocent civilians in a way that we cannot understand. They are willing to die as long as they kill as many free thinkers as possible. They are willing to die in order to kill us," Alon said.

"This evening, we remember the four victims at the kosher market in Paris, but we must also remember that evil always exists. We are commanded to remember, not for the sake of the past, but for the sake of the future."

Jean-Francois Casabonne Masonnave, the French consul general in Toronto; Len Rudner, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' community relations director; CJMT president Simon Keslassy; and Rabbi Messod Azoulay, Abir Yaacov Congregation's spiritual leader, also said a few words about the terror attack before the gathering observed a moment of silence to honour the victims. ■

Bronfman firm and Caisse to invest in Israel

Stephen Bronfman

CJN STAFF, MONTREAL

The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, the province's public pension plan manager, and Claridge Inc., the private investment firm headed by Stephen Bronfman, are joining forces to take advantage of business opportunities in Israel's thriving civil technology and innovation sectors.

They have launched Claridge CDPQ Israel, a new investment firm based in Tel Aviv, it was announced on Feb. 11.

It's part of the Caisse's strategy to establish a presence in high-growth countries with partners who have an in-depth knowledge of the market, said Andreas Beroutsos, the Caisse's executive vice-president of private equity and infrastructure.

"Our participation in Claridge CDPQ Israel gives the Caisse access to a globally recognized hub of innovation," he said. "Such an environment will offer higher returns, greatly benefiting our depositors."

As of June 2014, the Caisse's net assets totalled $214.7 billion, according to its public information, making it one of the largest institutional fund managers in North America.

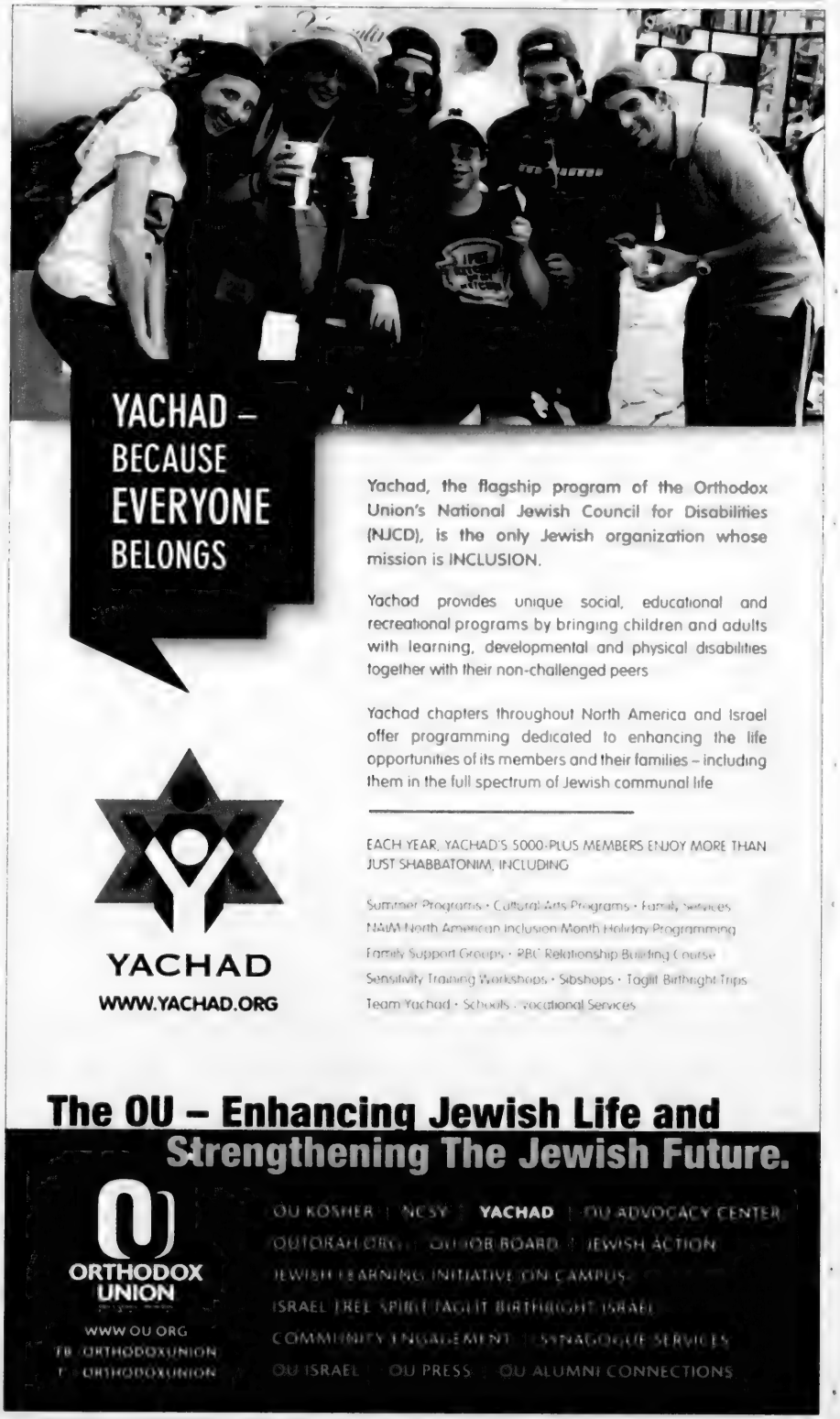
The new venture will also give Quebec companies greater access to Israel's technology industry, Beroutsos added.

Claridge president and CEO Pierre Boivin said: "We are putting in place the necessary infrastructure and capital to develop investment opportunities in technology companies with high growth potential that have succeeded in reaching the marketing stage. The partnership with the Caisse fits perfectly in our common strategic and patient investment philosophy."

Claridge CDPQ Israel will be headed by Oded Tal, an Israeli who previously held the position of chief investment officer at Claridge in Montreal from 2000 to 2008. Until recently, Tal served as managing director and head of mergers and acquisitions for Leumi Partners, the investment banking arm of the Leumi banking group.

"We are confident that the partnership between Claridge and the Caisse, combined with Mr. Tal's expertise, will add to the significant business experience and sustained community investment of the Bronfman family in Israel," said Stephen Bronfman, executive chairman of the company's board of directors.

Founded in 1987 by Charles Bronfman, Claridge manages a diverse portfolio that includes food, entertainment, real estate, energy and technology industries. ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Guelph shul's project helps fulfil the mitzvot of Purim

SHERI SHEFA
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Over the past six years, Techiya Fisher's initiative to bring the mitzvot associated with Purim to Guelph's Jewish community has continued to gain momentum.

In her role as the wife of Rabbi Avraham Fisher, the spiritual leader of Guelph's Beth Isaiah Congregation, and the program and events co-ordinator at the shul, Fisher organizes a mishloach manot fundraiser to fulfil the mitzvot of Purim and bring the Jewish community together.

Fisher explained that although the congregation has a membership of about 40 families, there are only about 20 men and women who come to shul regularly.

"But on Purim, this is the time for each one to remember their friends, and send them baskets, even though they may not see them on a regular basis," she said.

Participants in the mishloach manot fundraiser pay $36 for one basket or $30 for two or more, and send Fisher a list of their friends and family they'd like to send a basket to in Guelph, Fergus and Elora, Ont.

"The baskets are filled with chocolate, hamantashen, grape juice, candies, whatever I find," she said.

"Every recipient receives a single mishloach manot [package] with a card listing the members who sent the basket to that recipient. No matter how many well-wishers you have, you will get one basket. Since the number of the baskets remains the same, the more people who participate in this mitzvah, the more money will be left for Beth Isaiah Congregation," Fisher wrote in a letter to the congregation.

But Fisher explained that this initiative is about more than sending gift baskets to one another. It is an opportunity to fulfill the mitzvot of Purim, which many people don't know about.

"The main mitzvot of Purim are not really known to many people... They only know about hamantashen and masks," she said.

In addition to sending mishloach manot to friends and family, observers of the holiday are meant to give matanot l'evyonim, gifts for the poor.

"On Purim, we also give charity to at least two poor people, or friends. We reach out to each other, so that no one should miss the joy of the occasion. Concern for the needy is a year-round responsibility. But on Purim, it's a special mitzvah to remember the poor," Fisher said.

Mishloach manot packages, ready for delivery

Although this is a fundraiser for the synagogue, 10 per cent of the money raised will be donated to an Israeli organization called Paamonim.

Paamonim aims to provide needy families with long-term, comprehensive solutions to debt and poverty. The organization offers guidance and support to those who are unable to solve their financial problems on their own.

Fisher said that since she started this fundraiser in 2009, it has grown.

"Six years ago, we started with about 30 baskets because they didn't know what it is. People who have received them, even if they are not members, they contact me and ask me to send baskets to their friends. So last year, we made 87 baskets, which, for a small community like ours, is very nice," she said, adding that last year, she raised $2,000, but expects to raise "much more than that" this year.

"This helps bring the community together. It is a very important aspect of this project. It's not just about the money and the goodies and the mitzvah. It's about building the community." ■

For more information, contact Techiya Fisher at 519-265-1591 or fishertechiya@gmail.com.

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JDL pushes ahead with plans to expand into Montreal

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

The hard line Jewish Defence League Canada's (JDL) latest attempt to establish a Montreal chapter is being deplored by Rabbi Reuben Poupko, who heads the Jewish community's security co-ordinating committee.

He said law-enforcement agencies are doing a commendable job protecting the community and there is no need for the JDL or any other purported self-defence group to take on that role.

Toronto-based JDL Canada was to have held a meeting the evening of Feb. 16 at Ruby Foo's Hotel to explain why it is expanding into this city. It says Montreal had become "a focal point for radical Islamic ideology" and that it intends to join with other "anti-jihadist forces in Quebec" to "shut down" institutions that promote that ideology.

"The threat of violence towards Jews is increasing at an alarming rate, but the authorities seem to have limited ability to deal with these outrageous examples of civil disobedience," the widely circulated invitation to the meeting reads.

Members of JDL at a rally in Toronto last summer. CJN FILE PHOTO

"These events take place because Jew-bashing has become an accepted form of racism and the sad reality is that many Jews refuse to understand the principle that a bully needs to be confronted to be defeated."

It faults "leaders of major Jewish organizations" for not gathering the community to respond as one voice.

JDL Canada says its priority in Montreal is to set up a "quick response security team to ensure that people who promote this type of Jew-hatred will face serious consequences from within the local community."

However, the flyer also states that its self-defence activities are "according to the laws of the country" and that JDL Canada works with police and other security departments.

Rabbi Poupko, who is also a board member of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, said the Montreal police and RCMP have "rigorously investigated" major hate crimes against the Jewish community, which has led to convictions.

He said the community has confidence in the professionalism of the police and is grateful for the seriousness with which they treat any act or threat.

"There is no void here that needs to be filled," he said.

As for whether Montreal is a hub for extremism, Rabbi Poupko said, "Radical Islam is a worldwide phenomenon and, of course, in Montreal, as elsewhere in the West, it is a problem. But fear-mongering is not helpful.

"Anyone who knows the real situation on the ground feels confident about the Montreal Jewish community's security."

Last summer, during the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, JDL Canada director Meir Weinstein told the media he was about to open a Montreal chapter. A meeting was held in August at an unpublicized location, which was attended by about 50 people.

The JDL historically had its followers in Montreal, even into the 1990s. A memorial was held for JDL founder Meir Kahane at a synagogue here, which was attended by several prominent rabbis, after he was murdered in 1990.

In the United States, the FBI labelled the JDL a terrorist group in 2001. It has been inactive there for several years. ■

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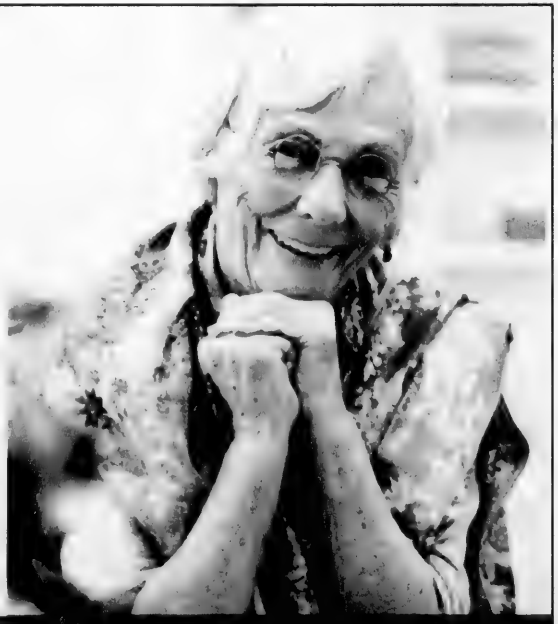

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Older workers seek to re-invent themselves

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

More and more people who would formerly have been thinking of retirement are seeking employment and upgrading their skills today as a result of cutbacks, changes in legislation and financial needs.

"In this age of contract work, the days of working for one company the whole of one's adult working life are becoming rare," says Charlotte Koven, who worked at Temple Sinai religious and Hebrew school in Toronto for 27 years, 15 years as the principal.

Koven, who is in her early 60s, told *The CJN* that when the number of students dropped, she found herself in the position of having to re-invent herself when she was nearly of retirement age.

She is not alone. "Older or mature workers are increasingly becoming a large part of the clientele of JVS," says Lorie Shekter-Wolfson, president and CEO of JVS Toronto. "Last year, more than a third of those served by JVS were over the age of 45."

Shekter-Wolfson notes that there is an increase in older job seekers for financial security reasons. In the past five years, Canada has done away with a mandatory retirement age. As well, many organizations are finding that employees are staying longer.

"Many businesses and organizations no longer give employees the opportunity to participate in defined benefit pension plans that would give the retiree a monthly income until the person dies.

"Overall, the issue of older workers is now starting to get some notice and is a phenomenon that is here to stay. It is an area we all know too well."

JVS is starting to focus on employment opportunities for this population, she says. She adds that there is also an increase in the number of older workers applying for upgrading, as new skill sets are required.

Koven is a case in point. "It took courage for me to start over again," she said.

She began doing research online, participated in discussion groups and researched activities through online platforms.

With the help of her family, she enrolled in online graduate studies. Six months ago, she received a master's degree in counselling psychology with advanced training in bereavement, trauma and various losses.

"Transitioning successfully throughout the stages of one's life is a skill we must all be prepared to embrace. My own experiences have taught me how to respect and support others who are learning to navigate through life's challenges," Koven said.

Charlotte Koven

She has established a private counseling practice and she facilitates support groups and leads workshops. As well, she volunteers for the Bereaved Families of Ontario and at Princess Margaret Hospital.

Sometimes experience doesn't seem to matter when cutbacks are made. Steven Cohen, who is in his early 60s, is married with one child. He was a software programmer for one of the largest car parts makers in the world for six years.

He was let go, and the company said it was because of lack of work, he said.

Cohen told *The CJN* he believes that "they wanted to get rid of people. Today, companies outsource their work and then they don't have to pay benefits and [they] cut costs."

Cohen went to job fairs and searched for any employment, but couldn't find anything in his field.

"We had to sell our condo and now we are renting."

After more than a year, with the assistance of JVS, Cohen was sent on an unpaid apprenticeship for a month.

"I got the job and I am getting paid just above minimum wage, one-third of what I was paid at my last job. I would like to find something that would pay me a reasonable salary, but so far I have not found anything.

"It is very demeaning, after 37 years of IT experience, to be doing an IT job and starting at the very bottom. It is emotionally devastating," he said. ■

Limmud presenter to speak of serving in IDF

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT, WINNIPEG

Benji Aziza

Limmud is returning to Winnipeg on the weekend of March 14-15 for a fifth year with another outstanding group of speakers.

One of the more compelling presenters will be Winnipegger Benji Aziza. As a member of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) from 2011 to 2013, Aziza spent three days working at an IDF field hospital on the Syrian border.

"We saw about 20 patients while I was there," he recalled. "Some came directly from the fighting in Syria. Others had been treated first at an Israeli hospital.

"It was a real tense time for me. It took a while for me to feel comfortable with the Syrians."

He recalled one teenage girl whose house was hit by a tank shell. She lost one leg and had experienced nine surgeries on the other at an Israeli hospital. She and her mother were going back to their village to see if any other family members survived.

He said there was constant mortar fire while he was at the hospital and remembers helping to carry wounded Syrians to bomb shelters. "We could watch the fighting from where we were," he recalls. "We were just 25 miles from Damascus."

He added: "Treating the Syrian wounded is a huge financial burden for Israel. Most people aren't aware of this ongoing humanitarian effort. But Israel has a long history of offering humanitarian help."

Aziza admitted he didn't pay much attention to the Syrian conflict before his brief posting at the field hospital. Since then, he's been reading everything he can about it. "It's genocide," he said. "The worst in the last decade. And most of the world just sits back and watches."

Aziza was born in Toronto and grew up in Winnipeg. In 2008, his family decided to move to Israel. The then-15-year-old wasn't very happy with the move at first. He'd been attending a public high school and felt no special attachment to Israel. But he adjusted quickly, and when his family moved back to Winnipeg in 2012, he stayed on. By that time, he was already in the IDF.

Before entering the army, Aziza spent eight months working with Magen David Adom. In the army, he took a commander's course and rose to the rank of staff sergeant. During the operation against Hamas in Gaza in 2012, one of Aziza's duties was to provide first-aid training to combat soldiers waiting for the signal to enter Gaza. (The war ended without a major Israeli ground incursion.)

He also was part of several IDF teams that went into Jenin from time to time in search of wanted individuals or suspicious people.

"It is one thing to be Jewish here and say you support Israel," he said. "But I was able to see both sides while living in Israel."

His best friend in Israel was an Israeli Arab fellow student. "We would go to Jaffa on Saturday afternoons, drink coffee and play backgammon. I was invited to his house for Ramadan," Aziza said.

"A strong majority of both Jews and Arabs in Israel just want to co-exist in peace," he said. "My father's friend was quite clear that he doesn't want to live under a Palestinian Authority government."

While Aziza will no doubt return to Israel one day, he spoke of the need to take a breather to digest what he experienced. He is currently taking classes at the University of Manitoba and is thinking about a career in law.

Among the other presenters at this year's Limmud are Rabbi Sid Schwartz from Maryland and Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield from Israel; brothers and former Winnipeggers Benjamin Shinewald, a former CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and Jeremy Shinewald, a former speechwriter for Israel's ambassador to the United States; Ira Robinson, chair of Canadian Jewish Studies in the department of religion and director of the Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies at Concordia University; and former Winnipeggers and current Vancouverites, author Barry Shell and Limmud Vancouver chair Avi Dolgin.

Limmud is a grassroots movement that started in London 30 years ago to foster Jewish learning. In the last 15 years, it has spread all over the world. Last year, some 250 people attended Limmud Winnipeg, and organizers hope to match or exceed that turnout this year. ■

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GUEST VOICE

Chabad has 'helped me find home'

Amy Grief

I had been living on campus at the University of Limerick in Ireland for just under a month a couple of years ago, and I got an email from Rabbi Moishy Goldman, who runs the Chabad centre in Waterloo, Ont. From 5,000 kilometres away, the rabbi urged me to "schlep" to Dublin to celebrate Purim. He helped me reach out to the rabbi there, and ensured I would have a raucous party to commemorate the holiday.

Later, backpacking through western Europe in the first half of 2013, I visited two more international Chabad houses, largely because of Moishy's encouragement. I joined an 800-person seder in Barcelona and had an intimate Shabbat dinner in Munich.

Moishy and his wife, Rivky, moved to Waterloo from Crown Heights, Brooklyn, the epicentre of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, in December 2008. Rabbi Goldman believes his was the first Chabad house to open after the horrific attack in Mumbai, which left six dead, including Chabad Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife, Rivka.

"I always saw ourselves as representing the response to terror in that you're never going to get us to close up shop and go away," Moishy says.

In their first year in Waterloo, Rivky remembers being thrilled when 28 students joined them for Shabbat dinner. "That was like, whoa, I'm not going to remember everyone's names," she says. Now, it's not unusual if 70 students show up to their home on Albert Street, adjacent to the Wilfrid Laurier University campus.

On Jan. 9, they held Shabbat 180, billed as Waterloo's biggest Shabbat dinner ever. The presidents of both Laurier and the University of Waterloo attended, along with a crowd of almost 200 students. "It's an incredible feeling of pride and unity and strength, and especially in these times, that's what we need," Rivky says.

Throughout my time in Waterloo, I watched the Goldmans' Shabbat dinners grow. But the sense of intimacy – and heaping plates of homemade food – never changed.

Though Moishy is happy with the increased attendance, those aren't the metrics that are most important to him. "I feel more fulfilled, and I feel like I'm doing something useful and meaningful and making a difference when I'm sitting in my office at Laurier talking to two students for an hour and a half," he says.

Moishy has also formed a unique bond with members of the Jewish fraternity AEPi, where they initiated him into the fraternity as Brother Challah. He supports the brothers and hosts kosher dinners for them once or twice each semester.

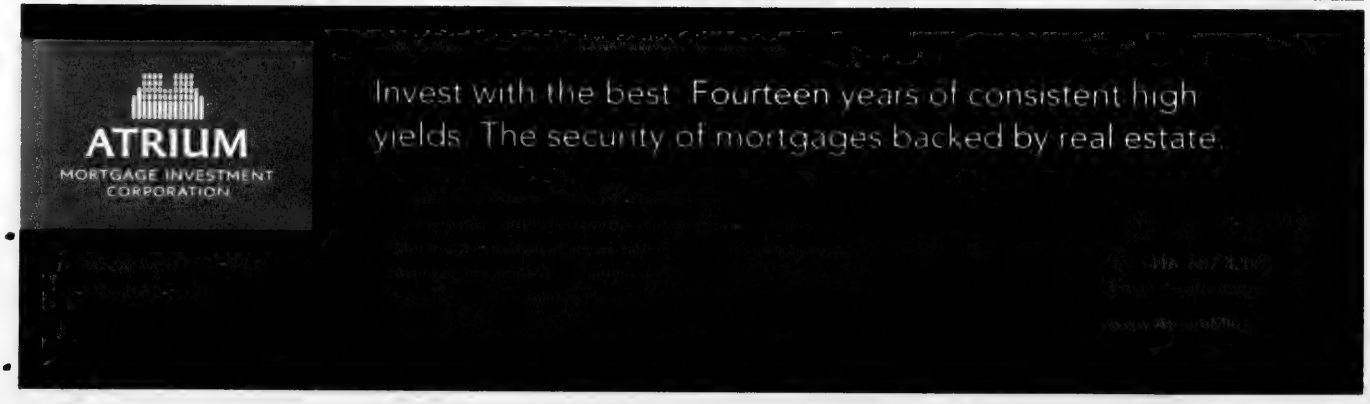
"It's really a great icebreaker when I can tell a first-year student who is all excited about frat life, and getting drunk with his friends and partying and all that, and say, 'You know, by the way, I'm a frat brother,'" he says. Moishy explains that this helps shatter the stereotype of rabbis being boring and stale.

Rivky usually holds classes for young women, but she took a hiatus last semester because she had a baby – her fourth – in October. Though she presents a traditional ideology regarding a woman's role in Jewish life, her classes have allowed me to reflect upon my own values and enable me to continue developing a unique Jewish identity for myself.

On Jan. 22, the Goldmans held a reunion for alumni living in Toronto. More than 40 people crowded into a condo party room in the north end of the city. As I wandered around schmoozing, I realized my memories of Chabad Waterloo were swathed in a glowing, yellow light. The Yiddish word "heimish" – cozy and familiar – came to mind.

Growing up in Thornhill, I was ensconced in the proverbial Jewish bubble. But when I moved to Waterloo to attend Laurier, and later when I travelled abroad, I had to determine how to express my own Jewish identity. The Goldmans always helped me find home. ■

Amy Grief is currently completing the master of journalism program at Ryerson University in Toronto.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Custom-designed kippahs a specialty at **The Israeli Source**

Imagine being able to custom-design kippahs for your wedding guests – having something that is your very own creation, different from any made for any wedding ever before.

Previously a dream only available to those willing to shell out untold amounts of cash, Thornhill's Judaica superstore, The Israeli Source, now offers exactly that option to any couple looking to make their special day that much more special.

The simchah experts at The Israeli Source are able to help clients choose from a breathtaking array of an absolutely staggering 400-million-plus kippah customization options, before even taking into account completely custom-designed hand-crocheted kippah patterns, so that each couple can have something that truly reflects their own sense of style.

"The idea is," explains Chuck Elnekave, who has for the last 14 years been helping customers by guiding them through the ordering process, "to give each wedding, each bar or bat mitzvah, the ability to be unique in its style, down to something as formerly run of the mill as the kippahs. There's no reason that kippahs can't be as much of a custom creation as the catering menu or the floral arrangements.

"Styles and fads change every season, and we strive to stay on top of those trends, giving our clients the ability to get what's hot. Last year's favoured choices of suede kippahs for weddings and satin kippahs for bar mitzvahs give way to this year's popularity of linen kippahs for weddings and sports mesh kippahs for bar mitzvahs. Next year's contemporary choice will be different still – and so we ensure to position ourselves to be ready for whatever comes."

But does that mean that they're ready to rest? In Elnekave's words – no. "In the last year, we've managed to increase the range of options to our customers twofold. And we're constantly in search of new possibilities that will maximize our clients' ability to have it their way. New developments are always underway, and it's always a great feeling for us to see the customers' reactions when they see how much fun they can have putting together their own unique creation."

But kippahs aren't all – Elnekave says that The Israeli Source is always adding new artists to its repertoire of gallery-quality ketubahs. Popular artists such as Danny Azoulay, Mickie Caspi, and Emanuel Bensolomon are counted amongst the many who The Israeli Source work with to ensure that every couple can have a beautiful ketubah to enhance their wedding, a cherished souvenir to constantly remind them of that special day.

Offering a variety of artists, explains Elnekave, ensures that clients will have many options not only in design but also in personalization options and price.

"Some artists," he says, "create limited-edition prints of their work. It's all pre-done, so while you're getting something that is guaranteed to be a limited quantity run and not something mass produced, you also might sacrifice the ability to personalize to the degree you might like. Other artists print separately for each order and employ digital calligraphy methods, so in those cases a couple can customize their ketubah a bit more. Each options has its pros and its cons – we try to work with our clients to find something that suits them."

If that wasn't enough, The Israeli Source also offers an impressive selection of benschers. After finding a benscher that suits their tastes, explains Elnekave, the couple can even add finishing touches such as a custom monogram embossed on the front cover. "We try to make it a one-stop simchah shopping experience," says Elnekave. And what an experience it is.

The Israeli Source is at 60 Doncaster Ave., Thornhill. Call 905-482-2025. ■

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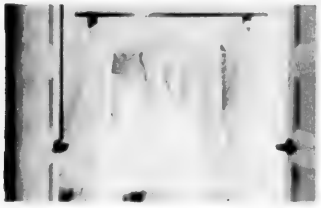

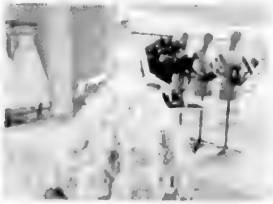

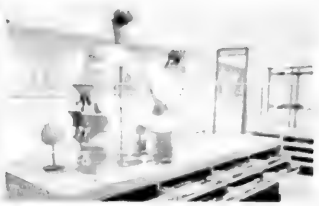

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SEARCHING OUR ASSORTMENT

While you put on your luxurious robe in one of our fitting rooms, your consultant will search the salon for all the gowns that match your description of the perfect dress – and maybe even ones that don't. Allow your consultant to make recommendations. You could end up falling in love with a dress you would have never considered.

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If you don't already have the shoes and lingerie you'll be wearing on your big day, we can provide those to you during your appointment. With the help of your consultant, you'll try on all the gowns that you believe will be strong contenders. And we can't forget about the Twirling Area. That's where you'll get the chance to see each gown in the spotlight and show it off to your family and friends.

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Childhood friendship blooms into romance

VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's not often that a couple can say that they grew up with their spouse, but Debra Vatenmakher and Jacob Posluns can.

They both attended Netivot HaTorah Day School throughout elementary school. In Grade 7, they became close friends and by Grade 9 they were dating and have been together ever since. This past summer they got engaged and are planning a June 2015 wedding.

Vatenmakher and Posluns, now both 20, can say they truly know their spouse better than anyone.

"We were in school together but weren't so close until Grade 7," said Vatenmakher. "He claims he had a crush on me in Grade 4, though."

After becoming best friends, they quickly realized they had feelings for one another and started dating. "I think something that's really special about our relationship is we've grown up together. We know each other better than anyone else in the world," said Vatenmakher.

They had been dating for six years when

Jacob Posluns and Debra Vatenmakher met at Netivot HaTorah Day School.

Posluns proposed. "We have been talking about getting married since we were 14, but no one would have taken us seriously at that age. Only over the past two years did we discuss publicly about wanting to get married," said Posluns.

"Once I got the okay from her parents, I began planning the proposal. With my cousin's help, we set up roses and candles along a dock by the lake.

"When approaching the dock and getting ready to propose, a few things went wrong. It happened to be pretty windy along the water so by the time we got there, almost all of the roses had fallen into the water and all of the candles had blown out. Luckily, Debra says she does not remember any of it and she could not have been happier with how everything went," he said.

Although they're not in school together anymore – Vatenmakher is at York University studying kinesiology while Posluns is studying business technology management at Ryerson University – they're still best friends who put each other first.

"I'm really excited for just the mundane things like being able to sit on the couch while he's sitting at the table doing his homework and finally being together every day," she said.

"I hang out with him all the time and I always have to go home at the end of the night. I find it's so hard. I'm definitely looking forward to going home with him, and I'm looking forward to eventually building a family together," she said.

The couple is planning a traditional Orthodox wedding in June and has advice for any other couples dealing with the stress of planning a wedding.

"I think it's really important not to let the wedding get to you and to always stay focused on the reason for the whole adventure of planning a wedding – which is to marry the person you love and start a life together, and I think that that's the best advice," said Vatenmakher.

"Always keep your eye on the prize, know why you're doing it and the rest doesn't matter." ■

Jacob planned a romantic proposal for Debra.

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Consultant helps make your special day perfect

How exciting! You are getting married.

After the kvelling and misty eyes, the planning starts, and this is where things can quickly go from dream to nightmare.

The first thing that has to be decided is the budget. This can be tricky because unless budget is no issue, money can be difficult to talk about.

The groom will have already spent a good chunk of change on the ring, which is, in his mind, justifiable, since the bride will have it forever.

A wedding is over in a day and the dress is worn but once...all true. However the wedding is the start of everything that an engagement ring represents and it will, in fact, also be with the couple forever.

The very word "wedding" means the act of blending or joining contrasting elements. A wedding is the celebration of the uniting of two families, through the bride and groom. While the wedding day is focused on the bride and groom, it is, by definition, a family event.

So how does one make everyone in both families happy?

How many times have you seen a bride-to-be and her mother, father or future in-laws all having meltdowns over something or other related to the pending nuptials? It always happens if you are doing things yourself. Invariably, someone feels that they are doing too much while someone else feels that they are not doing enough.

That's where a wedding planner steps in.

A wedding planner is an expert in his/her field. You wouldn't draft your own legal agreement or fill your own tooth, so why would you plan one of the most important days in your life on your own?

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Your bridal consultant has at her fingertips vendors, caterers, florists, make-up artists, musicians, ice sculptors, aerial performers, klezmer bands, cake artists, paper specialists, horse and carriage drivers and even white-gloved footmen – anyone and everything to make your day perfect.

A great bridal consultant is able to make even a modest budget look generous. Although you might consider the consulting fee something that you could have allocated elsewhere, your consultant will be able to secure much better deals than you would have on your own. This means you will probably save more with a planner on your team, than going solo, despite the consulting fee.

The most critical part of hiring a wedding planner, is hiring someone that you like and with whom you have an instant connection. You are going to be working very closely with your consultant so hire someone that your gut tells you is the right fit.

Once the last of the champagne has been sipped and you finally take a breath and look back on your wedding day you should sigh because it was perfect, not because you are relieved it's over.

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- Bride and Groom thrones provided by **Ultimate Wedding Project**, valued at $750
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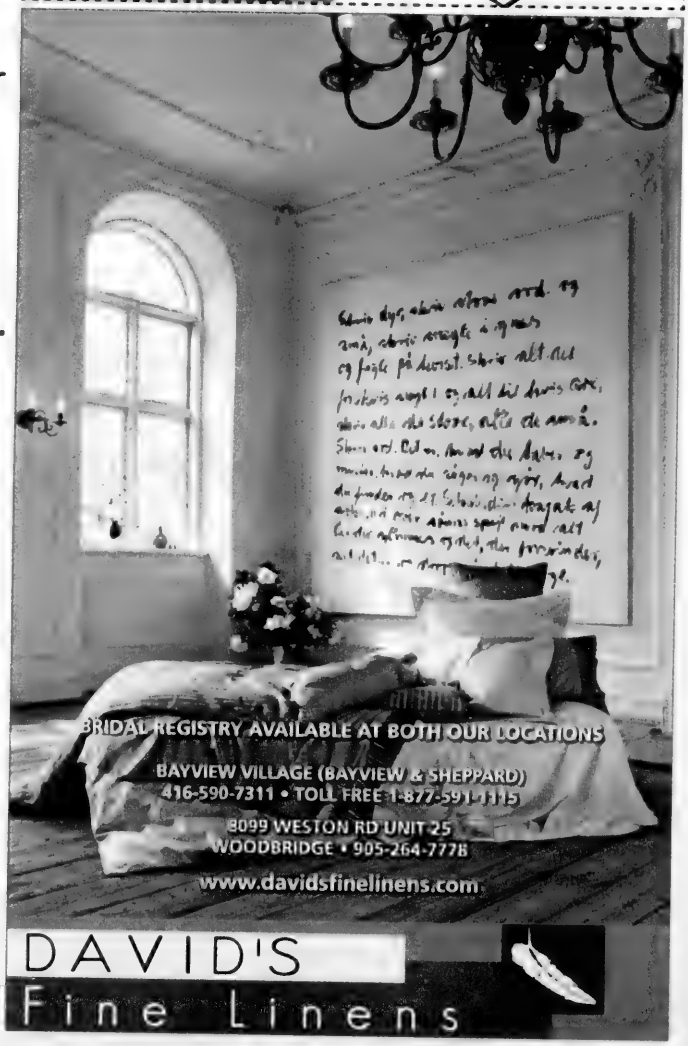

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DANIELLE KUBES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Looking for the Best Bachleorette/Bachelor places in Toronto? *The CJN* has compiled a partial list:

Body Blitz

If you can't afford a bachelorette party in Miami or Tel Aviv, head to this women's only spa to escape Toronto's harsh winters. Besides offering a full menu of massages, scrubs, facials and mud, its main attraction is a water circuit. Jump in and out of pools to get your blood flowing. They have a hot one with Epsom salt, a warm one with Dead Sea salt and a cold plunge, that may actually be refreshing. You and your girlfriends can lounge around all day and detox all the toxins you accumulated from a rager the night before. They accept group bookings. 416-364-0400

Drake Hotel

This decade-old mainstay in Toronto's west end can provide services for your entire bachelorette or bachelor antics, from dinner, to dancing, to crashing in a room upstairs to a gossipy brunch the morning after. Choose between bottle service or ordering off their extensive cocktail list. They offer a prix-fixe menu for large groups. 416-531-5042

Flirty Girl Fitness

Why hire a stripper for your bachelorette when you can learn the skills yourself? This King West studio has various sexy dance options, from belly dancing to lap dancing to a chair striptease. They provide all the props like feather boas, cowboy hats, mocktinis and a Coyote-Ugly style bar for you to show off your moves. They also have options for girly add-ons like manicures and pedicures. 416-920-1400

Rock'n' Horse Saloon

A mechanical bull – need we say more? See how long the bride or groom can last without getting thrown off. When that inevitably happens, and it will – probably in one minute or less, you will have the chance to show off the line-dancing skills you learned during your bar mitzvah years and get down to *Cotton 'Eye Joe*. For pre-party eats, they have a pub-style menu. Don't forget your plaids. 647-344-1234

Crew and Tangos

Watch some of Toronto's finest drag-queen talent at this bar in the Church-Wellesley Village. Sure to be a good time for guys and gals, an added bonus is the groom probably won't have to worry about another guy coming on to his girl. Full of energy and dance moves, these performers are sure to make it a night to remember. 647-349-7469

High Tea at the Windsor Arms Hotel

Rise above the drunken fray and have a bachelorette party your mother-in-law won't blush at attending. Sip from their collection of loose-leaf teas and munch on scones and crustless cucumber sandwiches. A gluten-free menu is available. Afternoon tea is served at this Yorkville hotel four times a day and starts at $38 a person. Kate Middleton who? 416-971-9666

Pravda

This Russian-themed vodka bar on Wellington caters to an older, more refined crowd. Over 70 vodkas are available and you can do shots from glasses made from ice. They're prepared for large bookings and can provide private space, vodka tastings to educate your guests and live instrumentalists. They also offer dinner, bottle service and caviar tastings. Spend a night being treated like a czar. 416-366-0303

Elmwood Spa

This 30-year-old spa at Yonge and Dundas has enough room to host a big bachelorette party and a has second boutique location in the Church-Wellesley Village for more intimate events. Spend all day lounging around in comfy robes and gossiping with your girlfriends. Sweat out any nerves about the big day in the steam room or sauna and pamper yourself with their extensive menu of spa services. Order lunch from their menu or from the attached Bangkok Garden restaurant. 416-977-6751 ■

The pre-wedding jitters

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I was moments away from one of the biggest events of my life.

And yet, I wasn't nervous. I wasn't excited. I wasn't really feeling much of anything.

It had been that way for practically the entire 24 hours before my wedding.

I had planned to play in my baseball game the night before my wife, Cassie, and I were to get married, which I figured would be a natural distraction to keep me from getting anxious about my wedding day. But the game got rained out, which seemed like it would give me way too much time to over-think and worry about things, which is what I usually do in those situations.

I didn't do either, though. I went through my normal routine as though the next day wasn't going to be the biggest day of my life, and that was how I felt.

That's all right, I figured. I would feel it in the morning for sure.

I woke up at 7:45 a.m. on my wedding day and my heart started racing briefly. Surely now I would be excited for the moment just hours away.

But I calmed down, slept for another hour or so, and when I woke up the next time, I was unruffled once again.

I did what I had planned to do that day, figuring that something would trigger it. Would it be when I prayed? When I got dressed? When we reached the hall?

Something had to be wrong.

I grabbed everything I needed to bring in from the car and went into the banquet hall, still a good 90 minutes before the tish and kabalat panim were set to start.

Some of Cassie's and my friends were keeping an eye on us to make sure that our paths didn't cross, as [we followed tradition] and we weren't seeing each other for a week before our wedding.

I went in and did pictures with my half of the family, occasionally popping out into the main foyer, which had a mechitzah (divider) down the middle to keep our sides separate.

At that point, Cassie's friend let me know that I was being too loud (which is something I've only heard about 20 times or so since getting married) and it was making Cassie miss me.

I got a small flare of adrenaline. Finally, a bit of something.

But it wouldn't last, and even when the tish and kabalat panim began, and family and friends began to stream in, it still didn't hit me that I would be married in about an hour. I still wasn't feeling it.

Finally, the rabbi called me over and asked if I was ready. I began to have some nerves and feel that rush. The music began and I was led over to the other side of the divider to see my kallah.

The magnitude of the moment hit me, and I just couldn't wait to see her. I'd missed her for a week and I was seconds away from getting to be around Cassie.

She was sitting there with a smile on her face. In that moment, she was the most beautiful person I had ever seen.

The rabbi spoke and explained the significance of a few things that were happening, but he had told me beforehand that while he was doing that, I was just to take the moment and gaze upon my kallah, and I was more than happy to oblige.

I hadn't felt the nerves for the upcoming wedding, or excitement, or anything really, before those moments.

It was because without the woman that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with, none of it seemed real.

Once I saw her, I knew it was real. It was right. ■

Cassie and Stephen on their wedding day

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Travel bug leads to nuptials

GILLIAN HESS
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I get restless when I sense complacency. I was 21 years old and it took a seven-week European trip to help me genuinely understand how much more there was to experience outside of the world I knew. I thought then, I had cured this itchy feeling to leave but found myself constantly searching for reasons to travel. Without this itch prior to graduating university, I wouldn't have met the man I married four months ago.

After a 15-hour flight I was dreading another four-hour bus ride from Incheon airport to Gwangju, a city 250 miles south of Seoul where I was heading back to teach. Just like last year I imagined the tedious bus ride to be full of Korean nationals and me, being the solo foreigner, which meant a bus ride of more playlists on repeat.

As I was dragging my luggage to the bus, I felt a light tap on my shoulder that prompted me to remove my headphones and see who required my attention. At the other end of the friendly tap was a tall, masculine, slim, young Brit, who kindly offered to place my suitcases in the bottom storage compartment of the bus. As we were the only two non-Koreans about to board, we decided to sit together and chat about what brought us to the South.

Four hours of conversation felt like four minutes of getting to know each other and we had only just touched on our university years in both England and Canada before the bus pulled up to the terminal.

We soon came to realize how much we actually had in common. We were both raised in non-traditional Jewish households, had bar/bat mitzvahs, admitted our love for forbidden, un-kosher foods and were passionate about travelling. We both seemed be in the same stage of our lives – single, holding university degrees with no real, tangible plan.

I had dated Jewish guys in the past but thought the last place on Earth I'd find a Jewish boyfriend would be South Korea. So did my parents who were probably a bit more worried about it than I was.

It was March 2, 2011 when I met my future husband, and together we enjoyed a year of travelling Korea, visiting Taiwan for New Year's and experiencing a new set of norms and culture as a couple.

After our year was up we decided to move to England so Adam could complete his teaching qualification while I found a job at an international IT company. As a Canadian, I was granted a two- year working visa, and we made the best out of the time we had on this small, overpopulated island.

In October 2013 we decided to travel to Iceland for one week. It was winter, I was missing the snow and Adam was craving an adventure. We rented a car in Reykjavik and drove up the east coast, passing massive waterfalls, frozen lagoons and spotting about five vehicles in five hours.

The breathtaking landscape, snow-capped volcanos and bubbling geysers made for a visual explosion of beauty and remoteness. Selfishly, it felt like we had the world to ourselves.

On our last day Adam planned a short sunset hike up a mountain just behind our hotel. We're both not big trekkers but thought the view would be too wonderful to pass up. After about 90 minutes, we arrived at the top of the foothill as the sky turned lovely shades of pastels. Just as I gently collapsed on the peak trying to absorb this breathtaking view, the sight in front of me became even more unbelievable. Adam was kneeling down, holding out a glistening diamond ring, shining as bright as the setting sun. Life, at that moment, was beautiful.

When you decide to move away, turning life into a journey filled with uncertainty then it's the unexpected which enables you to learn, adapt and grow. Lots of people have told me how brave I am – that they too would move abroad if they weren't so scared. Of course I was scared, but I now know that courage makes up only about 15 per cent of life-changing decisions. The other 85 per cent is simply about wanting it with all your heart. In my case it was my fear of complacency, the sure knowledge in my head that there was more to this world than my small circle that drove me forward. I'm so glad I followed both my heart and my head. ■

Honeymoon adventure in South America

GILLIAN HESS
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Growing up in Thornhill one might understand why moving to South Korea for two years might challenge almost everything I knew as familiar. But they say everything happens for a reason and if I hadn't decided to pack my bags after I graduated university, I wouldn't have met my husband, Adam.

It's still bizarre using the "H" word since our wedding was only four months ago, and it's even stranger using my new last name at the office but all of these things will soon become mundane, I'm sure. My life on the other hand, has been anything but.

Adam and I are avid travellers, which is one of the many commonalities we share. We met teaching English in South Korea, moved to England together (Adam's birthplace) for two years, became engaged in Iceland and got married in Toronto. Our wedding was Sept. 21, 2014, and shortly after we left on an epic three-month backpacking trip/extended honeymoon all around South America.

Our first stop was the beach in Montanita, Ecuador. We decided to stay in a "pricier" hotel to relax and finally enjoy each other's company after all the wedding dramas and entertaining of family and friends. Being escorted to our first bungalow by a friendly Ecuadorian man, I remember him describing our room's amenities and explaining how lucky we are since we got the last big suite with a balcony. "It even comes with hot water," he proclaimed.

My initial North American mind set was a bit confused thinking, 'Well obviously it comes with hot water – how else would we be able to shower?' My expectations of this trip suddenly dropped. Not necessarily in a bad way but in a way that would help me better appreciate this beautiful continent and all it had to offer... even if that didn't include hot water!

After Ecuador we made our way through Peru visiting smaller Inca ruins and villages, observing the locals in their traditional dress and touring around the Sacred Valley which eventually lead us to that legendary green mountain better known as, Machu Picchu. Adam and I aren't big hikers so we casually boarded the air conditioned train which took us as close to the mountain as possible before joining the 5:30 a.m. bus destined to the base of the peak. When we arrived at Machu Picchu, it was early and the fog hadn't yet evaporated. As the day went on and we climbed our way to the top, the clouds began to separate, revealing the most breathtaking, iconic image of vast, never ending green highlands, so grand and overwhelmingly captivating. It was magical.

We travelled mostly by buses down South America and really embraced each country, its food and culture. Bolivia though quite challenging was ultimately a fascinating country. Surrounded by the tranquil Lake Titicaca, this unique country exudes magnificence. The Salt Flats (Salar de Uyuni) were unlike anything I had ever seen – driving for days through flat desert salt grounds with an epic background of clear mirrored sky and endless white.

Chile was also a highlight for both Adam and I, touring around Valle Elquie- Pisco county, floating in a highly salted lagoon similar to the Dead Sea and exploring the colourful, artistic streets of Valpariso.

We took tango lessons in Argentina, tried zip lining and horseback riding in Ecuador, trekked to a canyon in Peru spotting 6-feet tall condors, sailed by humpback whales near the Galapagos, hitchhiked with strangers and even spent our last few days on a secluded beach in Uruguay with no electricity. From the snow-capped peaks of the Andes to the rippling Amazon, South America seemed to have it all. We ate shark, cow's heart and other foreign delicacies while also embracing our own background by joining a Shabbat dinner at the Chabad in La Paz.

Naturally, three months of travelling came with some highs and lows (literally, in La Paz we were elevated to as high as 4,100 meters above sea level). This honeymoon was really an adventure of a lifetime but it also tested us to the limit. We saw unimaginable poverty, we learned that toilet seats are not a necessity and both agree we will never take hot water for granted again. So thank you South America for showing us a chaotic and harsh reality but simultaneously throwing us into the heart of an amazing range of unexpected experiences, heavenly landscapes and a wealth of treasured history. ■

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Wedding speeches and toasts documented for posterity

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO ORDINATOR

Wedding photographs and bridal toasts date back centuries and the toasting tradition is practiced throughout the world.

Today, however, no one has to dig through wedding scrapbooks or albums to track down toasters' goodwill wishes.

Words and gestures are not only recorded and stored on video and websites but every move can be retrieved on tablets, laptops, smart phones, and personal computers.

Caroline Tiger author of *Wedding Speeches and Toasts and Other Words for Family and Friends*, notes the history of the term "toasts" stems from the early decanting process, whereby scorched toast was placed at the bottom of the wine bottle to absorb sediment.

Toasts usually begin after cocktails, once everybody has been seated for the meal. Wedding speeches and toasts may be interspersed so that a few are reserved for the end of the dinner.

The best man often acts as master of ceremonies and the maid of honour may co-host. If the latter is the case, co-hosts should compare notes in advance to avoid repetition as well as to confirm the order of speakers.

Groom toasts bride.

The father or mother of the bride usually welcomes guests and thanks them for coming. Other family members or close friends follow. The bride and groom conclude the toasts. Every toast should end with compliments to the couple as well as l'chaim and best wishes.

Everyone appreciates a dash of humour, provided jokes and anecdotes are in good taste and refrain from embarrassing or hurting celebrants' feelings. Avoid private jokes or stories that allude to something familiar to only a select few.

When writing a speech or toast, start with a rough draft. Spill out what comes to mind and don't worry about grammar until the editing stage. Jog your memory with the following queries: How long have you known the bride and groom? How did you meet them? Do you have an inspirational or humorous story related to them? How are they similar? How do they differ? What are your wishes for their future?

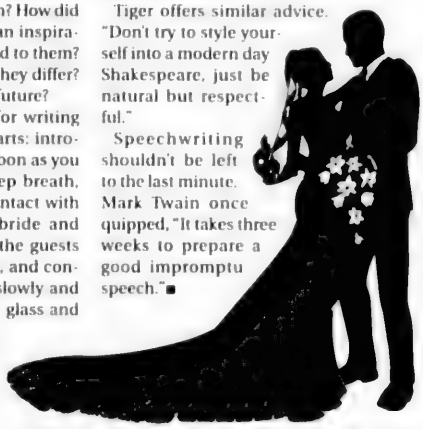
Tiger offers numerous tips for writing a toast. Divide it into three parts: introduction, tribute and toast. As soon as you mount the podium take a deep breath, look around you, make eye contact with the guests and address the bride and groom. Introduce yourself to the guests by announcing your full name, and connection to the couple. Speak slowly and distinctly. To conclude, raise a glass and propose a toast.

If planning to read the speech, make sure the print is a decent point size and the type is double spaced. If you're not reading it, jot major points on an index card and memorize the first and last lines.

Anyone hesitant to give speech writing a try, should heed the advice of Angela Lansbury, author of *Wedding Speeches and Toasts (Family Matters)*. "Don't worry too much about giving a [great] speech," she said. "This is a happy occasion and people aren't going to mind."

Tiger offers similar advice. "Don't try to style yourself into a modern day Shakespeare, just be natural but respectful."

Speechwriting shouldn't be left to the last minute. Mark Twain once quipped, "It takes three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech."■



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Leave the details to your wedding planner

The following wedding planners tell you how they can help make your simchah elegant and stress-free.

Heidi Gruenspan
A planner takes the worry away from the client. During the big day, a planner acts as the client's eyes and ears. We double-check floor plans, and ensure deliveries occur and end up where they're supposed to. In case of emergency, like illness or flood, we handle things.

Gayle Kertzman
We recommend suppliers tailored to your needs and budget, we ensure all the vendors are adhering to the timeline on the day of the event, and we deal with any issues that may arise from guests or suppliers. We allow you to be a guest at your own event.

Karen Garscadden
Where do I set up? When will the bar open? What should I do with gifts? How do I control the lights? Will my mother-in-law get her gluten-free dinner? What should I do, my kid lost his jacket button in the car!

Having an experienced event planner instills confidence and has an immediate calming effect. You seldom have to ask a question, as details have been well planned .

Judy Stein
Consultants are saviours on the night of the event in case anything at all should go wrong.

However, this is all in preparation that is done prior to the day. When planned well, there should be very few, if any, hitches that happen on that day. But if something should come up that is unexpected, consultants are there to handle the situation.

Tamara Temes
I help clients create a vision for their simchah. I look after every detail so that the client can enjoy their party. I recommend reputable vendors, organize a detailed event itinerary, attend meetings at the request of the client, and help with the overall budget for the event. I also act as an intermediary between all of the vendors on the day of the event.

The most important benefit of hiring a planner is that the client can sit back and enjoy a stress-free simchah.

Gloria Benaim
Consultants help in a multitude of ways, most especially on the actual day. Hosts need someone to keep the photography schedule moving along so it doesn't run late, someone to make sure the room looks exactly how the couple has imagined, and someone to liaise between the kitchen and the band so that food gets served hot. These are just a couple of things a consultant does on the day of your wedding – so many little details that need attending and little fires to be put out.

Patricia Wald
A good bridal consultant performs a crucial role. One can plan a wedding without a consultant, but when this happens, someone from the bridal party is left with the huge responsibility of making certain that the hairdresser, the makeup artist, the musicians, the florist, the caterer, etc. are all where they should be on the day of the wedding. In the event that something goes wrong, there is no one to call on. ■

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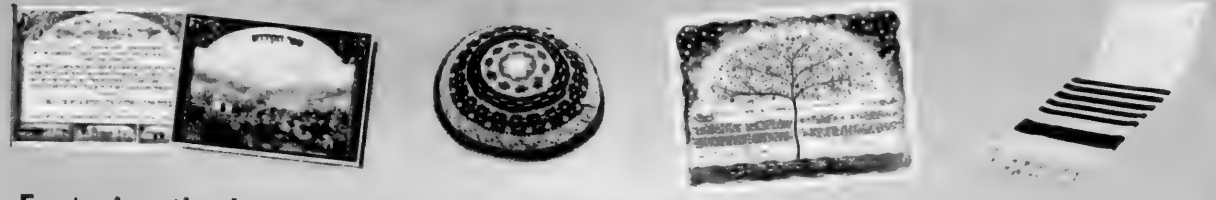

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Vienna's Lauder Business School looking for Canadians

PAUL LUNGEN
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Dovi Lipton figures if you're going to get a business school education, you might as well do it in the city voted the best place in the world in which to live, one that's close to other exotic locales, that offers a Jewish milieu, that possesses a vibrant civic life and that offers government-subsidized tuition costs to its students.

Hey, who wouldn't sign up for that?

Lipton, a 28-year-old Toronto native, had to go all the way to Vienna, Austria, for that sweet deal, and he's happy he did.

He's so happy, he's helping show Daniella Sheinfeld, the school's head of marketing, around Toronto to raise the school's profile among young people planning their post-secondary education.

The Lauder Business School (LBS) doesn't have much of a profile here in Toronto, Lipton acknowledged. In fact, he's only one of two Canadians enrolled out of 350 students from 43 countries. He probably would have been unaware of it himself if he didn't personally know a professor who took a job there 10 years ago.

The school was established by philanthropist and former American ambassador to Austria, Ronald Lauder.

The Lauder name is well known in Canada for cosmetics, but in Europe there are Jewish community buildings and organizations galore that are supported by the family foundation.

The Lauder Business School is one of these, and as Lipton and Sheinfeld make the rounds and deliver their pitch, they focus on the quality education students receive, the international flavour of the campus and its student body, its Jewish atmosphere, the proximity to other Euro travel destinations and the richness of studying in one of Europe's historic cultural capitals.

The campus itself is a reflection of that. Almost all the school's buildings were part of the summer palace of Empress Maria Theresa, and are in the baroque style (17th century), Sheinfeld said.

Lipton has spent the last year and a half at the school. "It's really different," he said. "You go over there, meet people, travel in Europe, learn other languages.

"People dream of doing the 'Eurotrip.' This is the Eurotrip on steroids."

Daniella Sheinfeld

Dovi Lipton

The school's language of instruction is English and the atmosphere is Jewish, with students living on campus enjoying three kosher meals a day, access to a synagogue, social gatherings, excursions, Jewishly oriented extracurricular activities and courses on Jewish topics.

The school's Jewish Learning Program provides subsidies toward room and board and is supported financially by the Jewish Heritage Fund, which is sponsored by private donors.

From an academic perspective, LBS offers graduate programs in international management and leadership, as well as banking, finance and compliance. Its bachelor's program offers a degree in international business administration.

Tuition fees are subsidized by the Austrian government and are modest by North American standards – 720 euros (about $850 US) per semester for international students, half that for Europeans.

Even with the flights back and forth, and out of pocket expenses, Lipton calculates that the cost is cheaper than getting a bachelor's degree while living away from home at an Ontario university.

LBS is the only Jewish university in the European zone," said Sheinfeld, who hails from Israel and studied there before taking the communications job.

"It combines a warm, supportive Jewish environment – it recognizes and celebrates Jewish holidays – and allows students to maintain and strengthen their Jewish identity," she said.

"I think it's an added value to come from the North American market to an international one. Business is global," she said, "and it's a one-time opportunity in life to gather experience and international culture." ■

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Parents hope to raise funds to keep high school open

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Tuition for the high school program for the coming year is about $14,000.

Andrea Freedman, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, said the challenge with the deficit is that it's ongoing.

"This is not a short-term infusion of cash that is required to save the school. It is an ongoing minimum deficit of $250,000 each and every year. So that means that for every incoming Grade 9 class, to see them through to graduation is $1 million. And there is no obvious source for these funds, despite peoples' good intentions," she said.

"It was a decision of the school board to close it, but it is a broader community decision to not provide additional deficit funding for the school."

Smith said the OJCS will begin to phase out the high school program next fall.

"We are committed to providing the existing Grade 10 and 11 classes with the ability to finish their high school studies and graduate from OJCS," he said.

The elementary school currently has a student body of about 200.

David Roytenberg, a father of one OJCS graduate and one current OJCS student, hopes he can galvanize Ottawa's Jewish community to raise the funds necessary to sustain the high school.

He started a Facebook group called "Supporters of the Ottawa Jewish Community High School," and has managed to raise more than $5,000 in just two days.

"We are trying to raise money to reverse the decision. But they've presented it as a fait accompli," Roytenberg said.

"Obviously we would have some work to do to increase the enrolment... There wasn't really a Grade 9 class this year, which was part of the problem. They had one kid come in this past fall, so that leaves a big hole in the school... But personally I just find it unthinkable that we would close the high school. It is like the cornerstone of the community," Roytenberg said.

He added that there are seven OJCS eighth graders who are signed up for Grade 9 next year, and their parents are now faced with a choice about where to send them.

Freedman said the decision to close the school is not one that anyone wanted to make. "The basic challenge is that not enough parents are making the decision to send their child to Jewish day school in general and the high school in particular," she said, adding that there are about 900 high-school aged Jews in Ottawa, and less than two dozen were planning to enrol in the OJCS next year.

"We have a responsibility to meet the needs not only of the 20 students who are projected to enrol in the school next year, but to the 880 other teens in our community."

Andrea Freedman

> *The basic challenge is that not enough parents are making the decision to send their child to Jewish day school in general and the high school in particular*

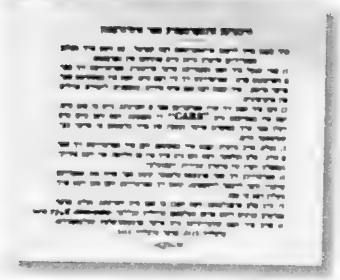
Reflecting on why there has been such a significant drop in enrolment from Grade 8 to Grade 9, Freedman said, "I think finances comes into play, but I think it is a priorities question in part, and I think it is a question of socialization. Parents are understandably concerned about sending their child to such a small school."

Freedman added that although "extraordinarily painful," it was a decision that had to be made. "We avoided it for as long as possible. But ultimately for the greater good of the community, it is a difficult decision that had to be made."

Roytenberg said that he's joined a task force that was set up at an emotional Feb. 12 community meeting at Ottawa's JCC about the school's closing.

He added that he'll keep trying to raise money for an OJCS "rescue fund." "I'm hopeful that we can raise some significant money and maybe that will help to change their minds," he said. "Ottawa has about 14,000 Jews. We ought to be able to sustain a high school. We ought to be able to raise the money to keep it going." ■

Tailor Project brought displaced persons to Canada



Immigrant information card given to new arrivals detailing how to register for housing and employment, 1947. Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre.

Samuel Herbst, Max E. Enkin and Samuel Posluns interviewing three potential tailors, near Hanover, 1947. Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre.

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In late 1947 and early 1948, representatives of the Canadian garment industry organized what became known as the Tailor Project, a plan to select more than 2,200 skilled tailors from the displaced person camps of Europe and give them jobs and housing in Canada.

The Tailor Project had been based on similar schemes that had alleviated labour shortages in the logging and mining industries. Canadian Jewish Congress, eager to rescue Holocaust survivors from the terrible limbo of displaced person camps, knew the government would approve a plan to bring in skilled workers to fill a similar shortage in the garment trades.

Congress officials, recognizing that the plan had to come from the industry itself, provided guidance from behind the scenes. "Congress was not an employer of labour and could not act as a spokesman," the late Max Enkin, a key player in the Tailor Project, explained in a 1986 recorded interview.

Hundreds of tailoring firms in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver were canvassed and many agreed to hire DP workers on 12-month contracts. In Toronto, W. Krangle and Co. Ltd. of King Street sought five persons "experienced in the sewing of men's trousers"; Brill Shirt & Neckwear Ltd. of Richmond Street wanted 30 "operators on men's fine shirts"; Coppley Noyes & Randall of Hamilton sought 10 workers; Superior Converters Ltd. of Fraser Avenue requested 25; Master-Bilt Clothes Ltd. of Spadina Avenue sought five; Nash Tailors Ltd. of College Street wanted eight; Ontario Boys Wear Ltd. of Richmond Street W. wanted seven; and so on.

Provided they had the requisite tailoring skills, both single and married displaced persons were eligible to come to Canada, but couples with more than two children and one-parent families were excluded by government fiat.

In their book *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*, Irving Abella and Harold Troper tell the story of a widow from Romania with a young son who, despite her "tearful pleading," had to be rejected. However, the selection team found a single Romanian man and arranged a quick marriage; the two, sleeping in separate berths aboard ship, came to Canada with the child in February 1948 and were later divorced.

The Canadian Overseas Garment Commission, the industry's co-ordinating body, had to ensure proper housing for the thousands of expected workers. Enkin, who went to Europe as part of the selection team, telephoned from Vienna to emphasize the importance of providing accommodation.

"If there are insuperable difficulties and insoluble problems it is obvious that Mr. [Arthur] MacNamara [deputy minister of labour] would want to terminate the project," he explained, adding that "the situation of these people in the camps is appalling – they must be rescued." Many people and organizations offered accommodation, including the Hebrew National Association (Folks Farein) on Cecil Street, which provided placements for 18.

Unfortunately, the government applied a quota to the project at the 11th hour, insisting that no more than 50 per cent of the chosen tailors could be Jewish. Although Enkin and his colleagues felt they had no choice but to comply, the quota was apparently eased when the tailors began to arrive in stages.

In the four Canadian cities in which it operated, the Tailor Project unfolded with the precision of a military operation. In Toronto, each newly-arrived group was met at Union Station and transported in Red Cross station wagons to the Labour Lyceum on Spadina Avenue where the new arrivals were welcomed, given breakfast, registered, then driven by car to the homes and apartments allocated to them.

"When a [displaced person] commences work in your establishment, he has no means of sustenance," employees were advised. "Each manufacturer is, therefore, requested to advance to each [displaced person] the sum of $25 for married men and $15 for single men. We would suggest that the advances be deducted weekly in the smallest possible amounts, to enable the tailor to retain his maximum pay until such time as he may become well-established."

The Tailor Project became the template for the Furrier Project that followed and the model for bringing the Vietnamese "boat people" to Canada around 1980, Enkin said. The project also spurred the formation in 1947 of the Jewish Vocational Service of Toronto, the original purpose of which was to help survivors of World War II find employment; Enkin was its founding chairperson. ■

This is the second in a series of articles to be published periodically about Toronto's Jewish institutions, funded by the J. B. & Dora Salsberg Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. This series is in partnership with the Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre and draws on their collections: www.ontariojewisharchives.org.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Amended health reform bill eases community concerns

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

The Jewish community is satisfied that the character of the institutions it has built will not be threatened by Quebec's sweeping reform of the health and social services system, and that its control of them is not too seriously diminished.

Lawyer Eric Maldoff, the lead negotiator with the government over three months on behalf of the anglophone umbrella organization, the Quebec Community Groups Network, is confident the amendments made to Bill 10 meet most of the specific concerns of the Jewish community and the six institutions to which it has historic ties.

A major victory contained in the heavily revised bill is that individual institutions will retain their owner corporations, the separate legal entities that own the institution's immoveable property. Originally, the proposed law abolished them.

The institutions' foundations also remain untouched, as do the users' committees.

Protection of the cultural and linguistic nature of the institutions has actually been strengthened, Maldoff believes.

Maldoff, who is also Quebec chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), has a long history of involvement in healthcare institutions, including chairing the Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation.

"In introducing these amendments, Health Minister Gaétan Barrette has shown a willingness to demonstrate a sensitivity to our concerns and to taking significant steps to introduce positive measures to respond to them," Maldoff said.

The bill, which was introduced by Barrette in September, was passed in the wee hours of Feb. 7, after the majority Liberal government invoked closure. It contains about 180 amendments to the first version.

The Jewish institutions will, like most others in the province, lose their individual boards and be "regrouped" under 34 new regional bodies known by the acronym CISSS, whose boards of directors will be appointed by the minister. Today, the province has 182 health and social service agency boards.

Maldoff underlined that institutions that have a corporation and are recognized as bilingual (which is the case for all six Jewish institutions) are not being "amalgamated" into a CISSS, as originally envisioned, and will retain their distinct legal status.

Montreal's Jewish General Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital, Maimonides Geriatric Centre, Jewish Eldercare Centre, and Miriam Home and Services will fall under the Centre integré de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Ouest Montréal, along with three other institutions in that territory, while the Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital will be under a CISSS in Laval.

In a joint brief in November to the parliamentary committee studying the bill, CIJA, Federation CJA and the six institutions expressed fears that the proposed legislation threatened the institutions' religious and cultural identity. Community members' sense of belonging to them would be weakened thereby making fund raising and volunteer engagement more difficult, they said.

Maldoff said the corporations will continue to have the power to veto the sale of an institution's real estate or any change in its use with a two-thirds vote of its membership.

Eric Maldoff

In addition, corporation members will now have the power to veto – by the same majority vote – decisions by the CISSS that relate to access to services of a linguistic or cultural nature at that institution.

A two-thirds approval by the corporation members will also be required to revoke the bilingual status of an institution, which Maldoff said affords greater protection of English than existed before.

Another new feature in the bill is that each institution will have a "consultative committee" to advise the CISSS regarding the preservation of "the cultural, historic, linguistic or local character" of that institution, and to maintain a relationship with its foundation and any research activities.

That's important, said Maldoff, because it will allow the foundation to deal directly with the corporation about the raising and allocation of funds, and not have to go through the CISSS.

As for representation on CISSS boards, Maldoff thinks the Jewish community will have a strong voice in the CISSS Centre-Ouest Montréal, with the majority of the associated institutions being Jewish.

Ten of the 19 board members are to be "independent," selected from a list submitted by a seven-member "expert committee," which includes three past presidents of the institutions under the CISSS.

As for the JRH, Maldoff said, "it has more recognition of its status than it had before."

Maldoff added that the separate boards the institutions now have are not as firmly controlled by the Jewish community as perceived. Each seat is designated for different stakeholders, including various staff categories, users and the public.

"They are not exactly created by the community… the community could not just put who they want on them," he said.

Maldoff said he did not know how many administrative jobs will be eliminated at the institutions. "The bill says that all senior management jobs will end on April 1, but they are being asked to reapply for positions."

One of the main aims of Bill 10 is to reduce costs by cutting bureaucracy, and the law abolishes the intermediary Agences de la santé et des services sociaux throughout the province.

In a Feb. 9 statement, CIJA Quebec vice-president Luciano Del Negro said: "Ideally, we would have preferred a different solution to the problems facing our health care system, but, at first glance, the Jewish community is satisfied that the amendments introduced to the bill will ensure that the network of health and social service institutions will continue to remain responsive to the needs of our community and the wider Quebec society." ■

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Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) deeply mourns the passing of Honourary National President

Neri Bloomfield z"l

Neri was a passionate Zionist, leader and philanthropist. Highly respected among CHW's leadership, members and staff, during her Presidency, Neri ensured that CHW continued to meet the objectives of our mission, providing care and support for women, children and families in both Israel and Canada.

The Neri Bloomfield Memorial Fund has been established through CHW.

May her memory be for a blessing.

Claudia Goldman, National President
CHW National Directors
Alina Ianson, National Executive Director

In Memory Of
LEAH ZUKER, Z"L

The Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, extends our heartfelt condolences to the Kaplansky, Zuker and Silverberg families on the passing of Leah (Kaplansky) Zuker, a supporter of Holocaust education and friend of the Neuberger.

May her memory be a blessing.

Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre

Azrieli Foundation donates $5 million to Birthright

CJN STAFF

Enabling more young Jewish adults with developmental or physical disabilities to participate in Birthright Israel is one of the goals of the Azrieli Foundation, which last week announced a $5-million donation over five years to the program.

Foundation chief operating officer Dena Libman said the gift is intended to ensure that no eligible person with special needs is prevented from taking part in the free 10-day educational trip to Israel because of financial considerations.

Birthright Israel does organize trips designed for those with disabilities, and does a good job of it, she said. However, there are extra costs. Participants may need a shadow to accompany them, for example, or those using wheelchairs require special adapted buses.

Birthright trips include a mifgash program in which the Diaspora Jews dialogue with their Israeli peers. On trips for those with special needs, participants meet Israelis with disabilities, Libman said.

The Toronto-based Azrieli Foundation hopes that with this new funding, Birthright will publicize and actively recruit eligible people with special needs, she said. Canadian agencies such as the Reena Foundation in Toronto and Miriam Foundation in Montreal, which work with disabled adults, can play a role in that effort, she added.

Supporting Birthright fits the Azrieli Foundation's mandate of promoting education and connection with Israel, she said. Since 2012, the Toronto-based foundation has been providing funds to Maccabi Canada's Israel experience program for young people.

The Azrieli Foundation is also committed to enhancing the quality of life and continuing education for adults with developmental disabilities. In addition, it supports research into neurodevelopmental disorders and particularly Fragile X syndrome, one of the most common inherited forms of developmental impairment.

Last week's donation, which includes a matching gift, or challenge grant, component, was made to the Birthright Israel Foundation of Canada. It will also be used to increase the opportunity for able Canadians to take part. Currently, Birthright receives more applications from Canadians than it can accommodate, Libman said.

Also last week, American billionaire casino mogul Sheldon Adelson's family foundation has announced that it will be donating another $40 million to the Birthright Israel Foundation, with a $20-million challenge grant, to add to the $140 million it has already given.

The Azrieli Foundation will also be contributing its resources to the Holocaust educational component of Birthright trips. The foundation has for the past decade been collecting and publishing the memoirs of survivors living in Canada.

More than 50 books have been published and, in the past couple of years, about 20 videos based on interviews with the memoirs' authors have been produced.

These short films will be made available for screening at the preparatory program held the evening before Birthright groups visit Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, as all groups do, Libman said. The books will be offered free of charge to participants before or after their trip.

The Azrieli Foundation is challenging other philanthropists to contribute to the Birthright Israel Foundation of Canada through a matching gift program, with no cap set.

Since 2000, approximately 350,000 young adults from more than 60 countries have gone on Birthright trips. ■

Canadians on a Birthright trip attend a rally in Israel in 2010 FILE PHOTO

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
L'UNIVERSITE HEBRAIQUE DE JERUSALEM

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
and
Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University

deeply mourn the passing of a committed friend and supporter

Neri Bloomfield ז"ל

Honourary CFHU National Board Member, Honourary Doctorate recipient,
Honourary Governor and Benefactor of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Her leadership, involvement and dedication to the Hebrew
University of Jerusalem will always be remembered

We extend our heartfelt condolences to her children Harry and Nancy,
Evelyn and Raphael and grandchildren and the entire family

May her memory serve as an everlasting blessing to those who were fortunate to have known her

Menahem Ben-Sasson	Murray Palay	Ari Brojde	Rami Kleinmann
President, Hebrew University of Jerusalem	*National Chair*	*Chapter President*	*President & CEO*

The Board of Directors and staff of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
extend their deepest sympathies to the family of the late

Neri Bloomfield, z"l

Her exceptional commitment to Israel and the Jewish people leaves a remarkable legacy for the next generation of Jewish leaders.

May Evelyn and Raphael Schachter, Harry and Nancy Bloomfield, and the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

David J. Cape, Chair
Eric Maldoff, Quebec LP Chair

CENTRE FOR ISRAEL & JEWISH AFFAIRS

Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO
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KERZNER, JOSEPH ז"ל

The Yeshiva University family, the Board of Overseers of the Sy Syms School of Business and the affiliated Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University are profoundly bereaved by the passing of our partner and dynamic leader, Joseph Kerzner. As a YU Benefactor and as Vice Chair of the Sy Syms School of Business Board of Overseers, he established the Joseph Kerzner Chair in Accounting and was also a major contributor to the new MBA Program at the Sy Syms School. A devoted son, he established the Samuel Kerzner Memorial Scholarship and the Sarah Rivka Kerzner Memorial Scholarship in our undergraduate schools for men and women, respectively. He was a Yeshiva University partner in helping Yeshiva University establish Dinners and Convocations in Toronto. In 1986 he received an honorary Doctorate from Yeshiva University in recognition of his selfless devotion to our institution and generous scholarship support for deserving and needy Canadian students at YU. He was honored again with the Pioneer Award at our most recent Convocation. Heartfelt condolences are extended to his loving companion Lisa Koeper and his beloved children: Jeff Kerzner and Cheryl and Ron Pancer. Dear brother and brother-in-law of Gertie and the late Walter Gangel, z'l, Anne Zaretsky, Lou and Helen Kerzner, Max and Dolly Kerzner, Albert and Anita Kerzner, Miriam and the late Morris Kerzner, z'l; a doting grandfather and an especially cherished uncle of Michael Kerzner who was extremely devoted to him, along with many other family members. May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Too soon to mourn demise of the deli

JODIE SHUPAC
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Some are calling it the end of an era. A string of Toronto's deli-style Jewish establishments along the Bathurst Street corridor have recently closed – from Marky's Deli & Restaurant in 2012 to Moe Pancer's Deli last month.

And Daiter's Fresh Market will officially shutter this spring.

The closures seem to suggest that Jewish fare of the traditional eastern European variety is in decline.

And certainly, a shift in North American Jewish food culture has been in the works for several decades, as both the kosher and "kosher-style" commercial centres in cities like Toronto have moved on somewhat from Ashkenazi staples – foods including smoked meat and brisket – to Mediterranean, Israeli-influenced cuisine.

The old-world Jewish delicatessens and shops established from roughly the 1930s to 1950s by eastern European Jewish immigrants, have, in many ways, been supplanted by falafel, hummus and Israeli salad eateries, both kosher and not – think King David Pizza, Tov-Li, Dr. Laffa and Aroma Espresso Bar (the chain has announced it will open its first kosher location this spring).

Toronto food writer David Sax's 2009 book *Save the Deli* explores the Jewish deli's waning popularity from the 1970s to 1990s, when Jewish immigration from eastern Europe (with the exception of Soviet Jewry) dropped off, and deli fare become less central to subsequent generations of North American Jews.

"For younger generations, their grandparents may have eaten knishes on a daily basis, their parents on a weekly basis... They only have it on holidays," Sax said.

Further, from the 1980s to the early 2000s, Sax said, Israel became the cultural centrepiece for many Canadian Jews.

"All of a sudden, there was hummus and falafel everywhere. And that's only grown in recent years, as more [Canadians] travel to Israel because of trips like Birthright, and as Israeli food becomes more respected globally."

He cited the bestselling 2011 cookbook *Jerusalem: A Cookbook*, written by Jewish and Arab chefs Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi.

"Go to any house in [upscale Toronto neighbourhoods] Rosedale or High Park, and *Jerusalem* is there next to Julia Child – that food is now part of the greater culinary zeitgeist."

Still, the popularity of Middle Eastern cuisine and the disappearance of some deli mainstays haven't, it turns out, spelled the deli's demise in Canada.

In Montreal, the Jewish-style deli remains a cultural linchpin for locals and tourists of varying backgrounds, albeit not for the kosher set.

Katherine Romanow, 30, and her friend Sydney Warshaw run The Wandering Chew in Montreal, which offers pop-up dinners in various places, focusing on lesser-known Jewish ethnic cuisines.

"On the kosher food scene," Romanow said, "as far as I know, nothing new has opened recently. Outside that, there are the mainstays like Schwartz's deli... There's no decline in interest there."

In Toronto, the last five or so years have seen several new Jewish food trends, including the emergence of nouveau Jewish delis and chefs putting contemporary spins on standard Ashkenazi fare.

The "nouveau Jewish delicatessen," as Sax dubbed it, began to spring up around 2007 with places like downtown Toronto's popular, Jewish-style deli Caplansky's. And native Montrealer Noah Bernamoff's Mile End Deli in New York City opened 2010.

These spots and their success heralded a return to the homespun Jewish deli.

Wolfshead smoked salmon bagel SCHMALTZ APPETIZING PHOTO

"From the 1950s onward," Sax said, "Jewish delis were increasingly industrialized. Instead of making meat or bread in-house, they would buy it, because it was cheaper and easier. It would then be made with more preservatives and chemicals. What these new delis started doing is going back to basics – making their own bread, curing and smoking meat from scratch."

Though the trend has lagged a bit on the kosher scene, in 2013, Ben Venasio and Izzy Bernath opened what Sax called "the first nouveau kosher delicatessen anywhere in North America."

Ben & Izzy's, at Bathurst Street and Wilson Avenue, serves meats hand-cured and smoked daily by Venasio.

"In my opinion, Venasio said, "there's an oversaturation of Middle Eastern kosher restaurants in the city. And I thought it was really sad that there were all these Jewish-style delis opening, but no honest-to-God, kosher deli where people could get properly cured meats and not stuff from a factory."

Close on the heels of the new deli trend has been a recent outcrop of trendy, non-kosher, Mediterranean-eastern European fusion restaurants.

In 2014, chef Anthony Rose opened Fat Pasha, an eastern European-Middle Eastern fusion restaurant on Dupont Street. It features Israeli salads and falafel alongside schmaltz fried rice, brisket and gravlax.

Behind it is his smoked fish shop, Schmaltz Appetizing, which also opened last year.

There's also Essen, a Dundas Street West establishment opened in September by Leor Zimerman, which features a hybrid of Mediterranean and eastern European – though not, Zimerman stressed, deli-style food – and what he called a "yiddishe vibe."

"My branding leans towards that kind of esthetic," he explained.

Essen's menu contains cabbage rolls, brisket and chopped liver, but also falafel, za'atar and shakshuka.

In Montreal, innovation is also stirring, though more gradually.

About a year ago, chef Jeffrey Finkelstein opened Hof Kelstein, a trendy spot on St.-Laurent Boulevard that serves borscht, matzah ball soup and challah, plus shakshuka and schnitzel.

"It's in line with this new Jewish food trend of taking staples and modernizing them, making them appeal to people in their 20s and 30s," Romanow commented.

Her venture, The Wandering Chew, is another such attempt.

By hosting feasts informed by diverse Jewish communities, from Iraqi-Jewish to Scandinavian-Jewish, their goal, she said, "is to show people Jewish food can be delicious, but also introduce the variety of cuisine that makes up Jewish food."

Sax attributes the rise of hybridized Jewish fare to the fact that Jews' sense of self in Canada "isn't strictly Ashkenazi, Mizrachi or Sephardic. It's this blended identity... We're just – Jewish. If you go to a kosher supermarket on Bathurst, it's the same. Everybody wants all of it."

While there's undoubtedly a changing of the guard at play, Jewish chefs are increasingly finding their way back to Jewish food culture's eastern European roots, be it through innovating the staples or resurrecting the Jewish deli. ■

INTERNATIONAL

Child abuse allegations shock the Australian Jewish community

AARON KALMAN
SYDNEY

Cases of alleged child abuse at Chabad educational institutions in Sydney and Melbourne have shaken not only the Australian Jewish community but the entire nation, after a court heard testimonies last week as part of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Early last week the commission heard from victims who suffered under the hands of three former employees of Jewish day school institutions: Daniel Hayman, former director of Yeshiva Bondi, Melbourne youth leader David Kramer and Melbourne security guard David Cyprys. All three have been convicted for their actions.

Manny Waks, an international crusader against child abuse, is the only victim from Melbourne who has broken the community's code of silence and spoken publicly.

"I know that there are many within the Chabad/yeshiva community and some within the broader Jewish community who wish that I would be quiet about what happened to me and also in relation to my advocacy and support of others. However, I feel that as a community we need to learn from the past in order to address the future. I believe that this is something that is owed both to victims/survivors and to the broader community," Waks told the commission.

Waks was abused by two different Jewish educators as a child, and according to Zephaniah, his father, two of his younger brothers were abused by a third individual.

The Waks family said it has been ostracized by its former Chabad community.

"We felt suddenly reduced to nothing and had lost all our friends," Zephaniah told the commission.

"Going public with my story over two years ago, assisting many other victims of child sexual abuse and in some cases their families, and working to protect other children within our community, has been a great part of my healing process... The decades of living in silence with the shame, guilt and anger have been shattered. Importantly, it has provided me the opportunity to turn a tragedy into a positive – something that has benefitted me and, I hope, many others," said Manny Waks.

One witness who gave testimony, known as AVB, said Melbourne's yeshiva had a "culture of enablers" in sexual abuse cases. AVB was abused as a 10-year-old, some 20 years ago, at Yeshiva Bondi, and by a faculty member from Yeshiva Melbourne.

"There is a fundamental cultural dynamic that hasn't been addressed. Nothing is going to change," he stated.

Australia's Royal Commission, set up in 2013 by the federal government, is investigating the institutional environment at places known for child abuse. The list includes a church, a yoga ashram and other educational and recreational bodies. Two Jewish institutions, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne, are also on the list.

The testimony given by AVB indicated the institutionalized abuse against him didn't end when he became an adult, but rather resurfaced when he approached the police some three years ago.

After vociferous public outcry, prominent yeshiva figure Rabbi Yosef Feldman resigned on Feb. 10 from his position as a director on the Board of Management of The Yeshiva Centre, according to *J-Wire*.

His testimony at the commission appeared to lend credence to AVB's allegations of continued institutional coverups in his request to the Royal Commission for more leniency for convicted pedophiles.

"I would be asking for more leniency on people who have shown that they haven't offended in the last 20 years or decades ago, and have psychological analyses that this is the case," Rabbi Feldman said. "Once someone is not a pedophile any more or is showing [he] is not acting wrongly any more, that should be considered in a very strong way."

Rabbi Feldman's statements were met with fierce resistance within the Australian Jewish establishment, with NSW Jewish Board of Deputies president Jeremy Spinak saying via a written statement that Feldman should be barred from a position of authority.

"The evidence which has emerged in the last two weeks has been absolutely disgraceful. It reflects appalling failures in dealing with incidents of child abuse and protecting children in care," Spinak said.

"While these awful events occurred in a small section of our community it is now up to all of us to ensure that the abhorrent practices, attitudes and failures that have come to light never again happen. It is our view that after his appalling comments to the Royal Commission Rabbi Yosef Feldman is unfit to hold any position of authority or leadership in the Jewish community."

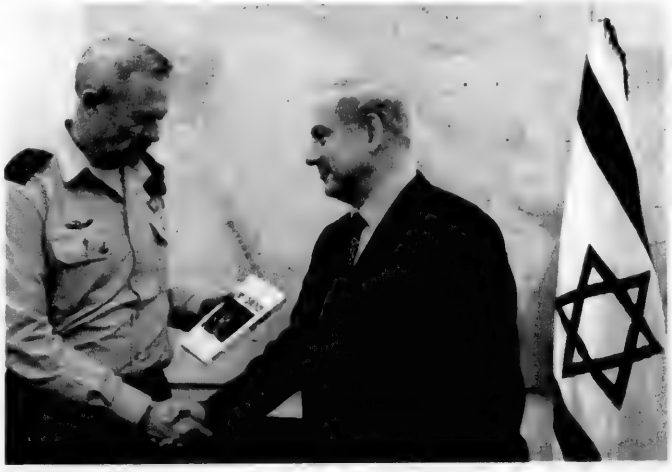
Rabbi James Kennard, principal of the Mount Scopus Memorial College, one of the largest Jewish schools in Australia, called on Feldman to resign from his current positions.

"While anyone who held a position of leadership in the yeshiva community in the period when these terrible mistakes were made remains in such a position today, the community is not able to say that it has learnt and it has changed," Rabbi Kennard said.

"The resignations that are required need not be an acceptance of personal responsibility, but an acknowledgment that if abuse, or a failure to deal properly with abusers, took place on an individual's watch, then it is honourable and right for such an individual to step down," Rabbi Kennard said. ■

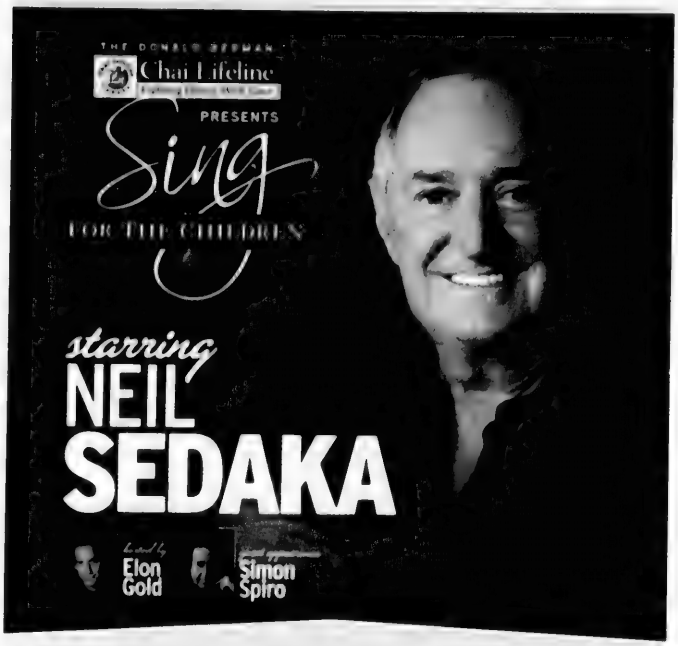
Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

SeeJN | IDF commander says farewell



HAIM ZACH/GPO

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with outgoing Chief of Staff Beni Gantz at his Tel Aviv office last week. Gantz completed a four-year term of service as the IDF's top commander on Sunday, having shepherded the army through the Arab uprisings, the rise and fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the cyclonic civil war in Syria, and the ever deteriorating security situation along Israel's border lands.



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Jerusalem's Tower of David Museum goes digital

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

How many times have you toured a museum with a bored child who won't get off his iPad? Now, the Tower of David in Jerusalem's Old City is offering a way to use iPads, tablets and other technology to keep kids (and adults) interested in the exhibits.

"The idea is to make the Tower of David accessible for the new generation by using the best of digital technology to reveal the ancient stones," Rose Ginosaur, the director of development for the museum told *The Media Line*.

Visitors will rent iPads or Samsung tablets that are preloaded with the technology. For example, there is the Augmenti Guide to help explain the 360 degree view of Jerusalem from one of the museum's towers.

"It's like the old audio guides, but it's an audio-visual guide," Alon Fishman, who developed the mobile geospatial technology based on his experience in the army, said. "It augments the real life that you see through the camera."

The map offers "pins" that you can click on for an audio and video explanation of many of the buildings you are seeing. As you move, the map moves with you, offering different "pins" each time.

"This is the first time this technology is being used for civilian use," Fishman said, adding that the patent is pending.

Inside the museum, for $6(US) visitors can rent an iPad that is preloaded with a game called "Swipe the Citadel." An archeologist tells the user that his daughter is lost somewhere in the museum and asks for help to find her. The game is made for children between the ages of seven and 12, and takes the kids on a 90-minute tour throughout the museum, asking them to answer questions to get the next clue.

Prof. Tzvika Kuflik of the University of Haifa had his students develop some of the technology content as part of their final projects for his course. He says this kind of interactive technology will soon be used around the world.

"We are living in an era where the environment interacts with us," he said. "My research is in using real technologies to enhance the museum experience.

Those who don't want to rent a tablet can use QR codes on their smartphones. There are two sets of QR codes. The QR codes meant for children send them on a scavenger-like route through the museum. Those meant for adults give more information including photos of what parts of the museum looked like in the past.

The museum, which boasts an ancient citadel with foundations that date back more than 2,000 years, has long attracted visitors with both indoor and outdoor exhibits, along with stunning views of Jerusalem. About 300,000 visitors come to the museum each year – about half are from abroad, and half are Israeli.

"We want Israelis who live here to come back again and again," Ginosaur said. "Once they come and play Swipe the Citadel. Another time they use the Augmenti Guide. Another time they just wander around and use the QR codes."

There is also a newly discovered moat surrounding remains of King Herod's palace. Part of the new technology is a special large television screen that shows a 3D film even during daylight. The film shows what Herod's palace may have looked like at its height about 2,000 years ago. ■

The Media Line
themedialine.org

The Tower of David in Jerusalem might be ancient, but the museum inside is going high-tech.
FILE PHOTO

Jerusalem to provide services for neighbourhoods beyond the fence

ELHANAN MILLER
JERUSALEM

Struggling to provide municipal services to Arab neighbourhoods beyond the security barrier, Jerusalem city officials have turned to the Israel Defence Forces for advice on hiring contractors to accommodate thousands of residents isolated from both Israel and the Palestinian territories, Mayor Nir Barkat said last week.

The move to ask the Civil Administration in the West Bank, the IDF body tasked with civil matters in the Israeli-controlled parts of the West Bank, comes a month after the city was rapped by the High Court for failing to provide basic services, such as mail and water supply, in Arab neighbourhoods of the city beyond the fence.

"It's tougher to serve the Arab neighbourhoods on the other side of the fence," Barkat admitted in a conversation with journalists at his office.

"It's tougher because [municipal service providers] need more police escort. However, when you want to create change, you start with the easy places and then, in the next phases, its easier to go to other places."

The court asked city hall to justify the extreme gaps in services between Jewish West Jerusalem and Arab neighbourhoods lying beyond the municipal concrete barrier in the East.

While most of Jerusalem, including the eastern side of the city captured in 1967, sits west of the barrier, several Arab neighbourhoods, namely Shuafat Refugee Camp, Ras Khamis and Ras Shehadah, were left on the east side of the wall but still inside the city, creating what some officials have described as a no-go zone inside the capital.

The number of Palestinian residents excluded by the barrier was recently estimated by the Israeli water company Mekorot at 80,000.

Barkat, who has been serving as Jerusalem's mayor since 2008 and is considered close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, raised the ire of politicians on the right when in 2011 he was quoted as saying that he believed the city should redraw it borders based on the position of the barrier.

"We should forgo municipal areas outside of it and annex territories trapped on the Israeli side, which are not under the city's municipal jurisdiction," he told graduates of the National Security Academy, according to news website *NRG*.

But on Feb. 12, Barkat sounded confident that Jerusalem should practise its sovereignty on both sides of the security barrier, through an equal level of services across the city.

"Clearly, we intend to have everything also on the other side of the fence," he said. "But as an entrepreneur, you start with areas where you can show a proof of concept and create a positive experience in the Arab neighbourhoods [within the barrier], and then you scale."

Barkat said he has asked Netanyahu for additional assistance to serve neighbourhoods beyond the barrier.

"I'm talking about budgets and [army] escorting," he said. "We could probably outsource services we need to provide. We asked the Civil Administration to help us do outsourcing on the other side, at our expense. I'm committed to serve residents on the other side of the fence as well, even if it's tougher."

Addressing the wave of violence which plagued the city following the apparently nationalistic kidnapping and murder of Palestinian teenager Mohammed Abu Khdeir last July, Barkat opined that rioting in Arab East Jerusalem reflected more an educational crisis than a political one.

"The violence came from teenagers, mostly under the age of 18," he said. "The Facebook generation across the world doesn't listen to its parents, or anyone else."

The Jerusalem Municipality has devised a carrot and stick approach to tackle disturbances to public order, he said.

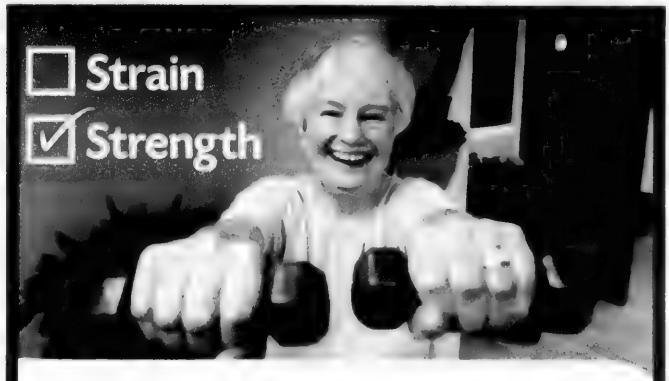
The plan includes a longer school day, ending at 6 p.m., filled with sports and other extracurricular activities to keep East Jerusalem teenagers off the streets. On the other hand, Barkat vowed to deploy more policemen in Arab neighbourhoods and maintain "a very tough and aggressive" stance against "those who take the law into their own hands."

Education is also an acute problem in Arab East Jerusalem, Barkat acknowledged, with a shortage of some 1,000 classrooms and a high dropout rate. He insisted, however, the problem is similar in scope to that of the city's ultra-Orthodox neighbourhoods.

In the Arab neighbourhoods, the municipality is trying to tackle the crisis by building an additional 100 classrooms a year (which he hopes will double to 200); convincing women to postpone marriage until after graduation; and by using the Israeli *bagrut* matriculation exam to supplant the Palestinian *tawjihi* in Arab schools.

"The majority of Arab residents realize there's already positive change," he said. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com



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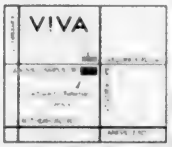

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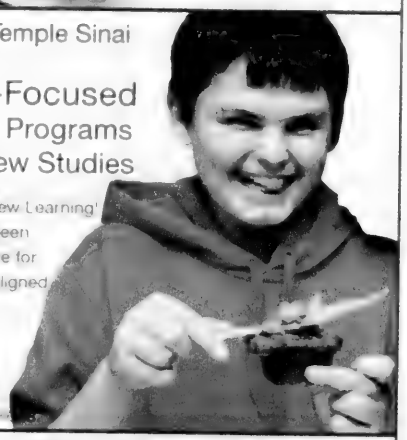

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Wiesel urges Obama to attend Bibi's speech

JTA
WASHINGTON

Elie Wiesel urged American President Barack Obama and Congress to put aside their differences over Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to the body next month, saying the Israeli prime minister's message on Iran was too important.

"I plead with you to put aside the politics that have obscured the critical decisions to be made," the Holocaust memoirist and Nobel Peace laureate said in an ad promoted last week by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, a one-time Republican candidate for Congress who has sharply criticized the push-back against the planned speech.

"Surely it is within your power to find a solution that will permit Israel's prime minister to deliver his urgent message," Wiesel says in the full page newspaper ad. Washington has been roiled by the invitation to Netanyahu to address Congress on March 3, issued by John Boehner, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives without consulting congressional Democrats and Obama.

Obama and other top administration officials will not meet with Netanyahu during the visit, citing its proximity to Israeli elections March 17, and some Democratic lawmakers say they will not attend the speech as the invitation violates protocol.

Boehner invited Netanyahu in part so the Israeli leader could rebut Obama's support for nuclear talks with Iran, which Obama says is constructive and Netanyahu and Republicans believe will leave Iran on the threshold of becoming a nuclear weapon state.

Wiesel likened the modern Iranian leaders to the biblical Haman, noting the speech will take place on the eve of Purim.

"As Queen Esther said when addressing her king: 'How can I behold the destruction of my people?'" he says in the ad.

Separately, three top Jewish Democrats in Congress asked Boehner to address allegations by Israeli officials that he failed to inform them that he had not properly cleared the speech.

The letter from Nita Lowey, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, Steve Israel, who ran the last two House elections for Democrats, and Ted Deutch, the top Democrat on the House Middle East subcommittee, quoted Ron Dermer, the Israeli ambassador to Washington, and Tzachi Hanegbi, the deputy foreign minister.

Dermer and Boehner began organizing the invitation on Jan. 8, and Dermer has said that Boehner told him that informing others of the invitation was the speaker's prerogative, an account Boehner has confirmed. Hanegbi has said that Boehner implied that it was a bipartisan invitation and that Israeli officials were not aware Democrats were kept in the dark.

"Why didn't you notify and co-ordinate ahead of time with the administration?" ask the lawmakers, who say they will nonetheless attend the speech. They also ask if Hanegbi "was right in saying you engaged in a one-sided move instead of a move approved by both sides?"

Boehner has said that his office informed the White House of the planned invitation the morning of Jan. 21, before making the invitation public. It is not clear how much notice Boehner gave the White House, and his office did not respond to a query, but Boehner posted the invitation on Twitter that morning at 9:35 a.m. ■

BASAL AWIDAT/FLASH90 PHOTO

Snow Day

A woman walks through snow in Majdal Shams, in the Golan Heights in northern Israel on Feb. 12.

Jewish Life

Dance show a milestone in Israeli choreography

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Two Room Apartment, a show in which two Israeli artists, a dancer and an actor by training, reflect on their relationship as life partners and as creators, has its Canadian premiere during Toronto's Spotlight on Israeli Culture showcase. Declared the best performance of the year for 2013 by the Israeli Dance Critics Circle, the show is a combination of dance, performance art and physical theatre.

Two Room Apartment is a reworking of a show of the same name that was originally created for a male and female couple and is considered a milestone in independent Israeli choreography.

Dancer Niv Sheinfeld and actor Oren Laor recreated the piece for two men. Sheinfeld, 42, and Laor, 43, who are based in Tel Aviv, have been life partners for almost 13 years ago and they've been working together for about 10 years.

"We always spoke about doing a duet and we did work together, but the two of us had never been on stage together," Sheinfeld said via Skype from Nahariya in northern Israel.

Sheinfeld spent five years as part of a dance company run by Nir Ben-Gal and Liat Dror, the two choreographers who developed the original version of *Two Room Apartment*. Initially, Sheinfeld and Laor set out to perform the 1987 performance of *Two Room Apartment*, "exactly as it was then," Sheinfeld said. "But it was not really reflecting us as a couple or as artists."

> *We took the freedom to change stuff that did not reflect our relationship and was dated*

Laor added, "We took the freedom to change stuff that did not reflect our relationship and was dated."

They toned down the eroticism of the original piece, eliminating a sexually charged scene, and focused on the emotional side of their relationship instead.

"For us, it could not be sexual after so many years together," Laor said. They personalized the piece further by adding a favourite song, *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* by Elton John, and a cover version of the song by the Swedish rock band Vains of Jenna to the show's original score by Ori Vikislavski. "Elton John is not afraid to be emotional," Laor said. "It's a comic-tragic song and something grabbed us there."

Laor and Sheinfeld aim for a sense of immediacy in their performances of *Two Room Apartment*. Laor pointed out that theatre audiences may know a show is happening in the moment, but they don't always feel it, an obstacle he and his partner try to overcome.

Sheinfeld said they try to convey the sense of "being here and now" and that they are sharing time with their audiences. They've been performing *Two Room Apartment* internationally, to glowing reviews, since the show debuted in Tel Aviv in 2012.

Inside Israel, dance is thriving. "The combination of range and quality of Israel's dance scene is one of its most extraordinary aspects," according to the Israel Ministry of Tourism website.

Almost every day you can find two or three different dance performances in Tel Aviv, Sheinfeld said.

Laor added that funding from the government has helped the dance scene there to flourish. Sheinfeld said that Israeli modern dance is characterized by its physicality. "The sense of power in movement is strong," he said.

But he sees changes ahead, with an intellectual aspect merging with the "very raw" physicality.

Two Room Apartment will be performed on Feb. 26 and 28 at 8 p.m. and March 1 at 3 p.m. at the Dancemakers Centre for Creation, 9 Trinity St., Studio #313 (3rd floor), Toronto. Tickets are $25 (general) and $20 for students and seniors. A master class for dancers takes place on Feb. 27, 1 to 4 p.m. For tickets and information, visit dancemakers.org or phone 416-367-1800. ■

For information about the Spotlight on Israeli Culture showcase, visit spotlightonisraeliculture.ca

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Five-minute pitch leads to feature-length film

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It all began with a five-minute pitch. Aspiring Toronto-based filmmaker Daniel Perlmutter stood in a room of industry experts, including director Ivan Reitman, for the Pitch This competition at the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival.

Perlmutter was trying to sell an idea about a newspaper reporter who makes up stories based on the plots of old movies to boost the dying paper's circulation.

"I had a really rough draft of a very silly film," Perlmutter tells *The CJN*. "The idea was to pitch to get some development money to go write a script. Actually, working on the pitch helped me figure out what the movie should be."

The pitch only took five minutes. However, as soon as Perlmutter won the competition and prize money, it was a five-year wait until the film with that quirky synopsis would see its first audience.

That comedy, *Big News From Grand Rock*, is currently screening in small towns across the country as part of TIFF's Film Circuit. It will also open in Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton on Feb. 27.

Budgeted at $1.2 million, *Big News From Grand Rock* was a big leap for Perlmutter. Prior to filming, his biggest big-screen credit was writing and producing the micro-budget comedy *Peepers*, which he made as a member of Automatic Vaudeville Studios (AVS).

AVS, which Perlmutter co-founded, uses the same company of actors and crew members to make a variety of low-budget genre movies and experimental shorts. Perlmutter says it was like an alternative to film school, and gave the aspiring director the freedom to hone his craft.

As a young man in his 20s in Montreal, Perlmutter was also lucky to get a job running a writers' room – an English-language one, too – for a YTV series called *Seriously Weird*. It was that small-screen work, often done on deadline, that Perlmutter says taught him about discipline and the importance of re-writing.

"[It was about] figuring out how not to be precious, and how to be able to break down everything you've worked on and see what's really not working and let go of things," he says.

Those lessons proved to be valuable when he was writing (and re-writing) *Big News From Grand Rock*. He says the story began as something more silly and absurd and slowly moved into a more grounded tale.

In the current film, the main crisis is that the small-town paper where protagonist Leonard works struggles to stay afloat. This brought a timeliness to the story that situates it within the modern fragmented media landscape, where many small papers are shutting down.

"So many of these towns are just holding onto their newspaper or they've lost them," Perlmutter says. "Midland lost their newspaper in June and we started filming there in September. Those communities really feel it."

Despite the serious topic, *Big News From Grand Rock* has a light tone and screwball flavour. Perlmutter tells *The CJN* that he did not want to rely much on vulgar, R-rated jokes, since family comedies are so rare in contemporary cinema.

While refining the script, Perlmutter applied to the Telefilm Canada Features Comedy Lab, a development program of the Canadian Film Centre (CFC). There, he got input and direction from various heralded people in the industry, including producer Daniel Goldberg (*The Hangover*), writer Kirsten Smith (*Legally Blonde*) and *The Devil Wears Prada* director David Frankel.

"It's something that's kind of rare in Canada," he says of the Comedy Lab. "It focuses on how to make films successful, not just how to get them made."

Daniel Perlmutter spent five years working on *Big News From Grand Rock*.

Another big help came from one of Perlmutter's comedy heroes. Eugene Levy chose to mentor Perlmutter as part of a program co-sponsored by the CFC, and gave advice on a few drafts of his screenplay.

"He was very honest and very upfront, in a great way," Perlmutter says of the *SCTV* and *American Pie* star. Due to Levy's schedule, though, he could not star in the final film.

After several years of getting *Big News From Grand Rock* together, the shoot in Midland, Ont., only lasted 18 days. Since no feature film had ever been made in the town, locals helped out in various ways, from bringing wardrobe options to the set to starring in bit parts.

The film is stocked with talented Canadian comics, including *The Listener's* Ennis Esmer as Leonard and Gordon Pinsent as the owner of the struggling paper.

"[Pinsent] came in and all of a sudden, there was a new atmosphere on set," Perlmutter says. "You can feel that everybody was bringing up their game."

Perlmutter is now getting another film into development, a horror comedy set in the woods that is limited to a few locations and characters. He says he hopes to shoot it next winter.

"I'm hoping the next one doesn't take five years," he says. "But we'll see." ■

TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL
CHAI TEA & A MOVIE SERIES

GETT: THE TRIAL OF VIVIANE AMSALEM

France / Germany / Israel
2014, 116 min
Hebrew and French with English subtitles

Directors: Ronit Elkabetz & Shlomi Elkabetz

Cast: Ronit Elkabetz, Menashe Noy, Simon Abkarian, Sasson Gabai

Event Date: Sunday, February 22

Two Screening Times: 1:00pm & 4:00pm

Location: Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk, 5095 Yonge St. (North York Centre subway station)

Tickets: $15 Available in advance
(Cash only at door, subject to availability)

Coffee and tea will be available in-theatre immediately prior to screening.

Winner of Best Film at the 2014 Jerusalem Film Festival and Israel's submission for the 2015 Academy Awards.

Viviane Amsalem (Ronit Elkabetz, *The Band's Visit*) desperately craves a divorce from her controlling husband, but since there is no civil divorce in Israel, she is at the mercy of her unpredictable husband and the rabbinical courts. The airtight script balances the indignities that Viviane is forced to endure with moments of Kafkaesque humour that underscore the absurdity of a 21st century woman whose freedom is curtailed by archaic biblical laws. A powerful critique of faith and gender politics in Israel.

Presented as part of Spotlight on Israeli Culture.

TJFF.COM

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

NORMAN DOIDGE EXAMINES OUR HIDDEN CEREBRAL POWERS IN 'THE BRAIN'S WAY OF HEALING'

I've been a fan of Toronto author and psychiatrist **Norman Doidge** for many years, ever since – if memory serves – he won a high-profile Canadian essay contest for a piece on the power of evil entities to beguile Western leaders, specifically referring to **Yasser Arafat's** terrorist organization. His essay on *Evil's Advantage Over Conscience*, written well over a decade ago, is still in currency on the Internet, containing blazing insights such as:

"... Arafat is always playing upon the conscience of the West, especially by his endless recourse to 'international law' and invocation of 'human rights,' an utterly brazen ploy coming from a terrorist."

Doidge has also written extensively about his specialty, the human brain. His 2008 book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, became an international bestseller, and his new book – *The Brain's Way of Healing: Remarkable Discoveries and Recoveries from the Frontiers of Neuroplasticity* – seems equally fascinating and readable, and thus equally likely to follow that same neural pathway to success.

A common perception persists that the human brain, for all of its sophistication, cannot easily regenerate mental abilities lost through damage or disease. Doidge turns this old belief on its head. Utilizing a robust and eclectic assortment of anecdotes and stories of medical discoveries and advances, he demonstrates how the brain has enormous hidden transformative powers.

Famed neurologist-author **Oliver Sacks** described Doidge's first book as "a remarkable and hopeful portrait of the endless adaptability of the human brain," a description that could easily apply to the new book as well. The publisher is Viking.

• • •

Israeli Jazz: Israeli jazz artists **Anat Cohen, Kobi Hass** and **Guy Mintus** and their respective bands perform at a downtown venue next month in a rare showcase of modern Israeli jazz. Hass, an upright-bass player who moved to Toronto five years ago, leads a quartet of local musicians; **Mintus,** a promising and acclaimed young talent, heads a jazz trio; and acclaimed clarinetist Cohen leads a quartet.

Courtesy of the Spotlight on Israeli Culture, this triple bill appears at the Rex Jazz and Blues Bar, 194 Queen St. W., Wednesday March 18, 6:30 p.m. Cover $20. www. torontojazz.com or www. spotlightonisraeliculture.ca

Anat Cohen

Also at the Rex, the **Ehud Ettun Trio** performs with Ettun on double bass, **Daniel Schwarzwald** on piano and **Nathan Blankett** on drums. Tuesday March 10, 9:30 p.m. Cover $9 at the door.

• • •

Appreciation of Molly Picon: Friends of Yiddish presents *Molly Picon, The Life and Music of the Darling of American Yiddish Musical Theatre*, featuring **Deborah Staiman**. The Purim Freylekhs event features refreshments and door prizes; members free, guests $10. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave., Sunday March 8, 2 p.m. Please RSVP by March 4 to 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Musician **Jordan Klapman** presents *All That (Jewish) Jazz*, featuring fascinating stories about the history of jazz, great historic recordings, lively piano and an interactive sing-along. Who could ask for anything more? Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday Feb. 19 and 26, 1:30 to 3 p.m. Drop-in $4 per lecture.

• Opera educator **Iain Scott** presents "Opera and Shakespeare", an appreciation of Shakespeare's genius through an examination of the bard's most beloved scenes, interpreted through the equally powerful genius of Verdi and other major opera composers. This four-part series includes *Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Otello* and *Falstaff*. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays March 2, 9, 23 and 30, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m Series $60, drop-in $18. Register at 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• • •

Out of Town

"Richard Avedon: Family Affairs" offers an assortment of **Avedon's** photographs highlighting American cultural and political life during the late 1960s and 1970s. The exhibit originated at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, which owns the photographs; it opens at the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadephia on April 1. ■

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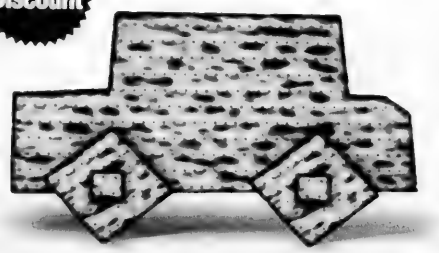

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Ten-year-old Toronto twins perform on The Ellen Show

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

January was a hectic month for Abby and Sarah Ginsburg.

On Jan. 28, the 10-year-old Toronto twins performed a medley of Sam Smith songs for Ellen DeGeneres on The Ellen Show.

"It all happened very suddenly," said the twins' mother, Liane Ginsburg.

At the suggestion of their guitar teacher, Elliot Bernstein, Abby and Sarah recorded a video and uploaded it to YouTube. Singing and playing guitar, the girls performed their own arrangement of *I'm Yours* by Jason Mraz.

"The video was posted in fun and was sent to 30 friends," said Ginsburg.

Unbeknownst to the family, a close friend of Liane's sent the video to The Ellen Show.

"Within a week of posting the video, and a day or two of its being submitted, I got a call from a representative of The Ellen Show, telling us, 'The girls might want to send a little video for Ellen.' So the girls performed a combination of two Sam Smith songs with a message to Ellen, 'We hear you like Sam Smith so we hope you like the song,' and posted the new video on EllenTube," said Ginsburg.

Less than two weeks later, the family got the phone call saying Ellen wanted them on the show.

"We were in Los Angeles five days later!" said Ginsburg.

Sarah, left, and Abby Ginsburg with the autographed guitars they received on *The Ellen Show*.

Ellen welcomed the girls and, as they are identical twins, she made a little joke offering them name-tags to tell them apart.

After their performance, Ellen gifted the girls with new guitars and invited them back the next day to meet Smith who would be performing.

"We didn't know they were going to be invited back," their mother says. "That was a complete surprise to us. Sam gave the girls at least two hugs and signed their new guitars. They were over the moon and so was I," said Ginsburg.

The twins were "discovered" at a summer camp music program by vocal coach Michelle Newman when they were just four years old. They then began singing lessons.

Abby and Sarah's confidence grew with each passing year as they performed in musical theatre and school and camp productions. They began piano and guitar lessons.

"I would work with them separately until two years ago. We have now started doing harmonies, and that's when it became magical. I think they were born with it – an old soul when they sing. A tone comes out of their voice. I don't think it can even be taught. They were born with something special," Newman says.

Not only do the girls look the same, but they share the same personality traits, are best friends, and are always singing.

"We had a once-in-a-lifetime experience that we will never forget," Abby said.

Their message for other young talent? "Just do what you love. Do it for yourself and it doesn't matter what other people think – only what you think. Do it while you can – while you love it," Sarah said. ■

CORRECTION

The story "Jazz singer identifies with her Jewish family," (Jan. 29) incorrectly says that Sophia Perlman's father was raised in an interfaith family. In fact both his grandmother and grandfather were Jewish. *The CJN* apologizes for the error.

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AUTHORS & POETS
The CJN is pleased to announce its
Annual Passover Literary Supplement

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS CJN

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original short stories or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 2, 2015. Not all submissions can be published, and not all those selected will appear in both Toronto and Montreal editions. We look for originality. Please don't send more than three entries. We cannot correspond with submitters.

Deadline for submissions is Feb. 27, 2015 at 3 p.m.

E-mail submissions to:
cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com
We can only accept email submissions. We prefer Word documents.

Life-altering illness leads author to write fiction

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Mireille Silcoff

Back in 2004, Mireille Silcoff was a sought-after journalist living a peripatetic life as founding editor of *Guilt & Pleasure Quarterly*, a magazine of new Jewish writing and ideas; an author of three books about drug and youth culture; a lead columnist with the *National Post*; and a frequent contributor to the *New York Times Magazine*.

Silcoff spoke to the *The CJN* from her home in Montreal about her book, a collection of eight stories, *Chez l'arabe*, launched last August by House of Anansi Press.

"I was living in Toronto doing most of my work in New York, and my fiancé, to who I am now married, was living in Montreal – a crazy existence. I was on an airplane all the time," recalled Silcoff.

Silcoff was forced to give up her career when she was diagnosed with a rare genetic chronic condition: spontaneous cerebrospinal fluid leak.

"I went through this harrowing process. I had to abandon everything as I became more and more ill. I stopped writing. I became a very sick woman at the age of 31," Silcoff, now 42, said.

Her spinal fluid leaked, and it couldn't function as a natural cushion for her brain. Her brain sunk into her skull leaving her in agony.

Confined to a bed, it took her a slow span of over half a decade to get better.

Silcoff couldn't hear, speak, or move for many weeks. "I was completely like a husk," she said.

It was during that period that she began writing. She started off with poetry, moved on to writing letters, then shifted to fiction. She wrote the title story in 10-15 minute bursts everyday.

"*Chez L'arabe* is a story about two people from opposing sides who find themselves together in a foxhole, forging a friendship in the weirdest way one can be forged," Silcoff said.

Surprisingly, Silcoff realized fiction was something she could do.

"I never entertained the notion of being a fiction writer before. I was very happy in the world of non-fiction. I continued writing the other stories, but it was a much more laborious process. I knew that first story would lead to a book and eventually – six years later – I did have a book," said Silcoff,.

Silcoff grew up in Jewish Montreal and lives there today; a place that provides a rich setting, drawing moments of familiarity to its readers.

"There could be a nostalgic love quality to my writing," she said.

The theme which holds the stories together is threads of other people's lives that have been upended – through strained relations, marital dissatisfaction, professional limbo, and illness. Silcoff's stories are detailed and infused with humour and touching emotional insights into the human condition.

Half of *Chez L'arabe* was written lying in bed writing in notebooks. Silcoff then graduated to using a laptop on a specially designed easel that she could use while in bed.

"When I was able to sit up, I would write a bit everyday at a desk. It was a very incremental process," she said.

"I am still going through it. I will always have this syndrome, it's just a lot better than it was but it's something I will live with for the rest of my life.

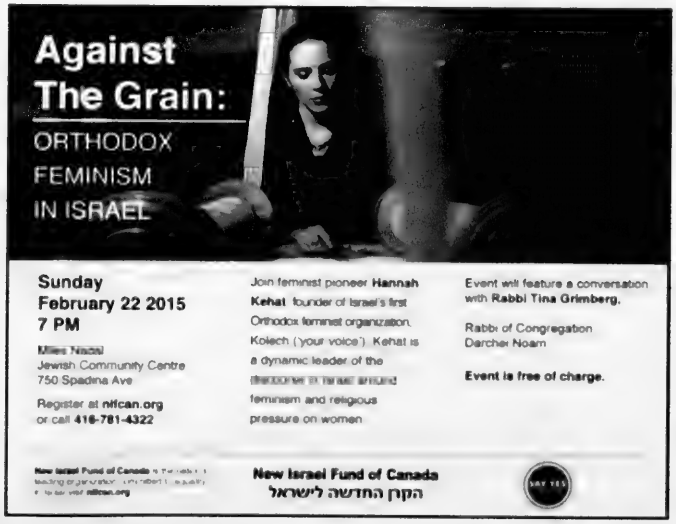
"I think in a funny way the book is a record of my healing. When one reads the book, it can be seen that there is a trajectory of a certain character in four linked stories, and, as these stories progress, in each story she is getting better. That was really happening to me as well," she explained.

Where does autobiography end and fiction begin?

"Everybody takes from their lives. I do have an Israeli mother who, in certain ways, is similar to the mother in the book," Silcoff says.

"My mom [Yaffa Meir Handel] was quite a well-known Israeli folk dancer in Tel Aviv before she immigrated to Canada in the 1960s. The mother character in the story has many of my mom's qualities but not many of her better qualities.

"You pick and choose what you think will make for good fiction, good tension, good stories. Many of the details in the book are called from my own life – but nothing in the book truly happened to me," she emphasized. ■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Plan Ahead
It's never too early to plan your Passover menu.
Find great recipes and ideas in our food pages
CJN
March 12
March 19
March 26

Modern interpretations of peshat or 'plain' meaning of biblical passages

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jews have been composing commentaries on the Torah for over 2,000 years. Surprisingly, we still have not run out of valuable new insights, even about the "plain" meaning or peshat.

Broadly speaking, Jewish Bible commentaries are divided into two categories: peshat and midrash. Peshat is usually translated as the plain, simple or contextual meaning of the biblical text. Midrashic commentaries, on the other hand, sometimes play fast and loose with the rules of grammar or syntax, or ignore the immediate context of a particular biblical verse, in order to read an uplifting or edifying meaning into the verse.

At least for the last few centuries, few Jews have been willing to label their commentaries "midrash," and the distinction can be fuzzy. A common joke says: "Peshat is what I say, and midrash is what everyone else says."

Nevertheless, the distinction can be useful. For example, in last week's Torah portion, verse 24:7 of the book of Exodus reads: "Then he [Moses] took the book of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken, *na'aseh v'nishma*.'" These last two Hebrew words literally mean "We will do and we will hear" or "We will do and we will understand."

This catchphrase, "We will do and we will understand," underpins the writings of many Jewish thinkers over the last 1,500 years. Basing their thinking on the Babylonian Talmud's explanation in Shabbat 88a, they argue that the Torah is teaching us that the Jewish way is to perform various mitzvot (religious obligations) even if we do not (yet) understand the reason for these obligations. First you do, later you understand. This interpretation of *na'aseh v'nishma* is a good example of midrash, an educational message that is neatly, but perhaps artificially, attached to the words of the Bible.

Already in the Middle Ages, a few Jewish Bible interpreters suggested that the talmudic explanation was not the original meaning of the biblical phrase *na'aseh v'nishma*. The mitzvot of the Torah are generally divided into two categories: positive commandments (i.e. actions we are required to do, such as honouring parents or studying Torah) and negative commandments (i.e. actions we are supposed to refrain from doing, such as not murdering or not committing adultery). When the Jewish People at Mount Sinai said, "*na'aseh v'nishma*," "we will do and we will hear or listen," they were saying that they would do the positive things that require doing, and listen to, or obey, the negative restrictions that were placed on them. This latter interpretation falls into the category of peshat. Another example is the translation of the Jewish Publication Society, "All that the LORD has spoken we will faithfully do," where the two Hebrew verbs work together, in typical biblical style, to express one thought.

Since midrashim read messages that are meaningful to their own contemporaries into the biblical text, new generations often evolve their own midrashim. You might think, though, that the peshat, the plain, simple and contextual understanding of the Bible would quickly become a closed book. Brilliant Jews have tried over the centuries to find the peshat of the biblical text. Is there really more to say about it now?

Already in the 12th century, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam), the peshat Bible interpreter par excellence, realized that peshat, just like midrash, can and does change over time. In his commentary to Genesis 37:2, he quoted his famous grandfather, Rashi, as having spoken of *ha-peshatot ha-mitchadeshim bechol yom*, the peshat interpretations of the Bible that are newly thought of every day.

Peshat Isn't So Simple: Essays on Developing a Religious Methodology to Bible Study
Rabbi Hayyim Angel
Kodesh Press

In his aptly titled book, *Peshat Isn't So Simple*, Rabbi Hayyim Angel convincingly demonstrates that the pursuit of peshat is alive and well today. The book conveniently gathers into one volume 22 of his previously published short essays. Some of them analyze the peshat masters of yesteryear, but in most of them, he writes about more contemporary readings of the Bible.

Rabbi Angel, a young and prolific scholar, teaches Bible at Yeshiva University. His book exemplifies the high quality of new Bible commentaries coming out of modern Orthodox circles. For example, in the chapter, "The Tower of Babel: A Case Study in Combining Traditional and Academic Bible Methodologies," Rabbi Angel describes how Jews in previous generations related to the curious story of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). He suggests how modern critical scholarship can help our understanding of this text, writing, "Over the past two centuries, scholarship has progressed significantly with the discovery of many artifacts and written documents from the Ancient Near East."

He then shows how various modern Orthodox scholars have benefited from these discoveries, and have developed new models for understanding the peshat of this perplexing ancient text. For example, a number of modern scholars believe that the Tower of Babel story is today best understood as a polemic against the ancient polytheistic society of the Babylonians. Archeologists tell us that Babylonian cities were often centred around temples whose high towers were seen as the work of the gods.

Anyone who is interested in the history of peshat interpretation, or who is drawn to this kind of modern interpretation, would benefit from Rabbi Angel's clear explanations. Rabbi Angel's ability to sift through the works of modern critical scholarship to find "kosher" nuggets will particularly appeal to traditional Jews who wish to discover newly invented peshat interpretations appropriate for our generation. ■

From soup to nuts for Purim

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Nuts, seeds and beans are customarily eaten on Purim. The Talmud and many biblical commentators explain that Queen Esther ate only these foods in the palace of King Achashverosh, because she had no access to kosher food. It is said that Esther made a friend of Hegai, the guardian of the king's harem, and received kindness from him, special gifts and delicacies. Since Esther was raised in the kosher home of Mordechai, she wanted to maintain her traditions, her health and her beauty by eating the kosher food she was accustomed to.

As well, Esther did not want to alert the king to her true religion, so she altered her diet. She asked Hegai to bring her a vegetarian diet consisting of vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds.

Three-cornered baked pastries are a great appetizer, and make a perfect midday snack or lunch item. After you have prepared them once, and see how easy they are to make, experiment with different fillings. Add your favourite vegetables, beans, nuts and spices to the fillings. The pockets are a healthy holiday option. Instead of being fried in oil, they are baked in the oven! This helps to save on calories while boosting our health.

Vegetarian Bean Soup

- ❑ 4 90-ml boxes vegetable stock
- ❑ 4 cups assorted dried beans
- ❑ 1 cup pearl barley
- ❑ 1 medium onion, peeled
- ❑ 1 carrot, diced
- ❑ 3 ribs of celery, diced
- ❑ 2 medium zucchini, diced
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste

Bring stock to a boil. Rinse beans in a strainer and drain. Add beans, barley and onion to pot. Cook over medium-low heat for two hours, stirring occasionally. Then add in remaining ingredients and continue to cook for one more hour. Freezes well.

Cashew Dip With Lemon And Parsley

This delicious dip is excellent to serve with three-cornered pockets or with raw vegetable crudités. Parsley and lemon are rich in antioxidants and vitamins, while the unsalted cashews are creamy and nutritious.

- ❑ 1 cup unsalted cashews
- ❑ 1 red pepper, seeded
- ❑ 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- ❑ 1 cup fresh parsley leaves
- ❑ 1 garlic clove
- ❑ 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ❑ 4 tbsp. water
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. pepper

Blend all the ingredients together. Refrigerate until needed.

Three-Cornered Piquant Purim Pockets

Dough

- ❑ 2 1/2 cups flour
- ❑ 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ❑ 1 cup warm water
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ additional olive oil for brushing onto pastries

The dough can be prepared in advance, and is easy to make by hand. In a large bowl, mix the 2 tbsp. of olive oil into the flour until you can no longer see or feel the oil. In another bowl, mix the salt into the warm water, and pour the water gradually into the dough, kneading with your hands. Once the dough is kneaded well, set aside in a plastic bag or plastic wrap for 20 minutes, then knead again. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let it rest on a cool counter for 30 minutes.

Prepare filling (two suggestions are below, but you can create your own, using wild rice or eggplant with vegetables, for example).

Assembling the pastries: Roll the dough on parchment paper or on a rolling board dusted with flour. Cut rolled dough into 4-to 5-in. squares. Line your baking pan with parchment paper and lightly flour it. Preheat oven to 350. Fold each pastry into a triangle by touching opposite corners. Open it up and fill the middle of one side of the pastry triangle placing about 1 tablespoon of the *cold filling in the centre of one side. Fold pastry into a triangle. Using a bit of *glue, seal by painting glue along the edges and to enclose the stuffing, pinch the edges. Brush top lightly with olive oil. Once the pastries are assembled, bake at 350 for 12-15 minutes on one side, then flip over. Bake for 12-15 minutes on the other side. Pastries are done when they are golden in colour.

*Make sure the filling is cold. Using a hot filling will make the bottom layer of the pastry become soggy. Be careful to avoid adding too much liquid from the filling – try to make it as "dry" as possible.

*Glue: mix 2 tablespoons flour with 3 to 4 tablespoons warm water.

Bean Filling

- ❑ 4 tsp. ginger, finely chopped
- ❑ 2 cups chick peas, drained
- ❑ 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- ❑ 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- ❑ 1 tbsp. ground coriander
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. pepper
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 tbsp. lime juice

Nut Filling

- ❑ 1/2 cup unsalted cashews, chopped
- ❑ 1/2 cup raisins
- ❑ 1/2 cup almonds, chopped
- ❑ 1/2 cup pepitas/pumpkin seeds, shelled
- ❑ 1 tsp. ground rosemary
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste

Mix ingredients together and spoon into pastry. ■

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What's New

FEB. 19 - FEB. 26

by Lila Sarick

Creating Futures: Threads of Hope for African Grandmothers

Helping Hope to Rise by Lynne McCulloch is part of an exhibit by Ontario textile artists in celebration of the African grandmothers who care for children orphaned by AIDS. The display, hosted by the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, is at the Miles Nadal JCC Feb. 25-March 9.

Thursday, Feb. 19

MIKVAH CLASS
Rebbetzin Goldie Plotkin discusses the mitzvah of mikvah, 10:30 a.m., Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Markham.

FINDING OUR WAY IN PRAYER
The clergy at Beth David Synagogue present the last in a series of lectures on prayer, "Prayer in practice," 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 20

JEWISH ACTIVISM IN AFRICA
Adam Hummel, founder of Youth Ambassadors for Peace, is the guest speaker at Chabad of Markham. RSVP for dinner, 905-886-0420.

Saturday, Feb. 21

B'NAI SHALOM
B'nai Shalom, a Conservative egalitarian congregation, meets today in Peel Region. Email info@bnaishalom.ca or call 905-901-9889.

Sunday, Feb. 22

HEBREW READING
Beth Emeth Synagogue offers a free 6-session Hebrew reading class for those who can read Hebrew slowly. Classes start today, 9:15 a.m. Call 416-633-3838.

ORTHODOX FEMINISM IN ISRAEL
Hannah Kehat, founder of Kolech, Israel's first Orthodox feminist organization, speaks, 7 p.m. at the Miles Nadal JCC. Sponsored by New Israel Fund of Canada.

SHARK TANK NETWORKING EVENT
NCSY hosts a "Shark Tank" and business networking event, 6:30 p.m., Vaughan City Hall. $25/$50. For tickets, call **Jane Farkas,** 416-995-0130 or jane@ncsy.ca

COLUMBUS CONCERT BAND
Club Chaverut presents a 40-piece band playing selections from the classics and Broadway, 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. RSVP **Annette Ross** 416-635-8910. $7/$10.

ART AND JAZZ
Enjoy an evening with artist **Micheol Muchnik,** 7:30 p.m., Chabad Markham. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

ISRAELI ELECTIONS
Prof. Reuven Hazan, discusses "Making sense of the election in Israel," by Skype, 10 a.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $5. RSVP 416-221-3433.

PJ LIBRARY GOES TO CAMP
PJ Library gives families a taste of summer camp, 1-3 p.m., Schwartz/Reisman Centre, 9600 Bathurst St. RSVP: pjlibrarytoronto.ca/camp

PALESTINE... THE JEWISH HOMELAND
The Jewish Heritage Project presents "Palestine... The Jewish homeland" and screens the film *The Awakening of Judea and Samaria,* 7:30 p.m., Toronto Zionist Centre, 788 Marlee Ave.

DECIPHERING DATING DILEMMAS
Five family therapists discuss building relationships, moderated by **Rabbi Rafi Lipner,** Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8 p.m. Sponsored by Sasson v'Simcha, 416-256-4497.

JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO CANADA
Steven Brock discusses "Jewish immigration to Canada: The ships that brought our ancestors," Temple Sinai, 10:30 a.m. Sponsored by Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto. www.jgstoronto.ca

Monday, Feb. 23

MAGIC IN JEWISH LITERATURE
Mekorot presents a 3-week course with **Barry Levy** on "Jewish magic: in the Talmud, in the non-talmudic magic literature and in halachic literature," Feb. 23-March 9, 8 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. www.mekorot.ca.

TORAH AND SUSHI
Rabbi Micah Streiffer discusses Jewish ethics, noon, at Sano Sushi, 8143 Yonge St. RSVP rabbistreiffer@kolami.ca

MEDICAL ETHICS
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Assisted death, what would Jewish ethics say?" 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Email info@torontotorah.com

Tuesday, Feb. 24

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Boardwalk,* with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz,** 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

OPEN HOUSE
Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, 750 Spadina Ave., holds an open house, 10 a.m. RSVP **Sheri Rapp** 416-928-3537, ext. 136, or sheri@djds.ca

Wednesday, Feb. 25

MORASHA
Barrie Wilson presents "The lost gospel, a Jewish perspective," Feb. 25-April 1, 11:15 a.m. at Beth Emeth Synagogue. **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner** teaches a class on "Sociology and the Synagogue," Feb. 25-March 28, 10 a.m. Call **Loretta,** 416-789-7400.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of March 5 is Feb. 23. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Thursday, Feb. 26

GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) Tamid chapter presents an evening of improv comedy, silent auction and desserts, 7 p.m., St. Michael's College School Centre for the Arts, 1515 Bathurst St. Tickets $50/$118. For tickets, 416-630-8373 (on weekends call 416-219-3098).

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Reena is looking for a male volunteer to participate in social activities with a young adult male. Call **Mille Chadwick,** 905-889-2690, ext. 2112, or mchadwick@reena.org.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH

Deborah Staiman presents the "Life and music of Molly Picon," March 8, at 2 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP **Sandy,** 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

PASSOVER COOKING DEMO

Canadian Hadassah- WIZO (CHW) Atzmaut chapter presents a kosher cooking demonstration and wine tasting with chef **Gadi Braudi,** Kehillat Shaarei Torah, March 15, 2 p.m. $36. RSVP before March 2, 416-630-8373.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Na'amat Canada, along with the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims and Women's Intercultural Network, celebrate women March 8, 1:30 p.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-636-5425.

PURIM SHPIEL

Beth Emeth Synagogue presents a Purim play, *Les Miz Gilla, according to Judge Judy,* March 4, following megillah reading at 6:30 p.m. and March 8, 1:30 p.m. For tickets, 416-633-3838.

JF&CS

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800 and ask for intake.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays and Sundays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Musician **Jordan Klapman** discusses "All that Jewish jazz," Feb. 19, 26, 1:30 p.m.; Purim Party and Shpiel with the WEL Group Players, March 5, 1 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, March 18; Balance and co-ordination classes, Tuesday, 10 a.m.; Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. Feb. 23, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Great Jewish painters of the 20th century," Mondays until March 16, 1 p.m.; Feb. 24, **Osnat Lippa** discusses "Facing modern Vienna's art scene – Part I," 10 a.m.; Feb. 26, **Becky Curran** discusses "Depression and older adults," 1:30 p.m.
- **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. March 11, **Dr. Mortimer Mamelak** discusses "How to get a good night's sleep," 1:30 p.m.; March 25, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.; Wednesdays until Feb. 25, **Osnat Lippa** discusses "The Great Artists," 1 p.m.; Thursdays to Feb. 26, **David Chandross** discusses "Nature, philosophy and adventure," 2 p.m.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com.
- Engage with your grandchildren during PJ Plus, a structured Jewish program for children 18 months to 3 years. Contact adina@srcentre.ca.
- Teens aged 13-17 are invited to join the JCC Maccabi ArtsFest delegation. Specialties include acting/culinary, dance, musical theatre, rock band and more. Contact Jennifer@srcentre.ca.
- **Galya Sarna** shares recipes as she prepares an Israeli-style meal with a French twist, March 19, 6:30 p.m.
- JCC book club discusses *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats,* by **Jan-Philip Sendker,** March 30, 1 p.m.
- Create a story of your life with **Ariella Damelin,** March 2-April 20, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

- Accessible yoga: a fully inclusive yoga class open to people of all abilities. Feb. 22, 1 p.m. athletics@mnjcc.org.
- KatKa Team, a program for youths in grades 2-6 co-presented by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, Feb. 22, 1 p.m. Email: Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com.
- Fitness: Winter Wellness Workshops: Stronger hips for better balance, Feb. 22, 2:30 p.m.; Holistic approach to hormones, Feb. 23, 1 p.m.; How healthy are you? Feb. 25, 6:30 p.m.; Meditation 101, Feb. 26, 4:30 p.m.; MELT Full body method, Feb. 24-March 24 at 7 p.m.; Feb.25-March 25, 11 a.m. Email fitnessguru@mnjcc.org.
- Hockey night in Shushan, ball hockey tournament for the whole family, Feb. 28, 7 p.m. Registration closes Feb. 25.
- Purim Carnival, March 1, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Food, music, games and more.
- *Creating Futures: threads of hope for African grandmothers* is in the gallery Feb. 25-March 9.
- The gallery is looking for submissions on the theme of "Shmita/Seven Generations." Submissions are welcome from artists of all backgrounds. Email deannad@mnjcc.org or call ext. 250.
- **Iain Scott** teaches a course on "Opera and Shakespeare," Mondays, starting March 2, 1:30 p.m.
- **Annie Matan** explores Purim with improv games and storytelling, ages 18+, March 5, 11 a.m.
- Shabbat family party (ages 0-4 with an adult), Fridays at 11:15 a.m. Shabbat club (ages 3-5) meets Fridays 12:30 p.m. Call ext. 388.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in community-building and entrepreneurship. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- Teens aged 13-17 are invited to join the JCC Maccabi ArtsFest delegation. Specialties include acting/culinary, dance, musical theatre and more. Jennifer@srcentre.ca.
- **Rachelle Shubert** presents "Here's to Music! Here's to Life," March 5, 2 p.m. at Four Elms Retirement Residence.
- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs presents "Israel, conflict and the media: how to talk to our children about issues facing Israel and the Jews," March 24, 1 p.m.
- Single and over 50? Enjoy an evening of live entertainment March 14, 7:30 p.m. Pre-registration required.
- **Marcela Rosemberg** teaches a glass fusion workshop on making your own seder plate, March 10, 7 p.m. ■

MARRIED WITH KIDS

Call the doctor. My ear hurts.

Lauren Kramer

I joke that my twin 12-year-olds had better marry doctors, but like most jokes, there's a serious undertone to this one. Marriage to someone in the business is the only way they'll get the medical attention they think they need.

My girls have a long litany of health complaints, a tiny percentage of which are legitimate. One, a gymnast, recently injured a finger during a back handspring. Tears of pain and full-on histrionics ensued over the next 48 hours, almost convincing us we needed a doctors' visit and possible X-rays to make sure there were no broken bones.

But luckily, my husband and I have had 12 years of practice in the arts of bullshit detection and attempted manipulation by children. Most of the time, we've learned to trust our gut and not rush to the emergency room every time there's a perceived crisis.

Maybe it's a twin thing, or perhaps it's just a preteen phenomenon, but it appears our kids need a lot of attention. When they think enough of it isn't coming their way, well, sometimes a health crisis leaps out at us, challenging us to our limits. Does she need a cup of tea, a cuddle and a little sympathy, or are we really required to wait this one out at the walk-in clinic? It's a question we often ask ourselves and each other.

I wish it weren't true, but the three doctors whose offices we frequent know us well. Inevitably the crisis strikes at 3 p.m. on Fridays, or worse, late Saturday afternoons. The girls have come to understand that there's one complaint that gets attention every time. When they come to me with ear pain, an ache a doctor once told me is "so painful you have absolutely no idea until you've experienced it," I think ear infection! Antibiotics! And we drop whatever we're doing and head straight to whichever of the three medical clinics happens to be open. Usually I'm spot on. A dosage is prescribed, my kid glugs back some pink liquid three times a day for a week or so, and the pain usually resolves quickly.

Recently, though, Twin B caught me off guard. The call came on my cellphone one Friday afternoon as I was driving her sibling home from school. "Come home quick, mom," she sobbed into the phone. "My ear is killing me!" Mentally, I dropped everything on my mind and started thinking fast. Which doctor was likely to be in the office? Where would the wait be the longest? And how was this phone call going to change our weekend plans?

I called my husband. "Quick! Find a doctor! Take her to the office! It's ear pain!" Obedient in times of crises, particularly when his wife is so certain there is an ear infection on hand, he swooped from work to home, grabbed Twin B and hauled her to the three clinics, stopping at the last one after the first two had no space. An hour later, they were still in the waiting room, our child tootling happily away at games on dad's iPhone. When finally they were seen, the doc took a 10-second look inside her ear, saw no infection and sent them home.

Twin B stormed into her room, mad as a hatter. "That doctor doesn't know what she's doing!" she yelled through her tears. "I'm in pain! Something's wrong! And everyone thinks I'm faking!" It was true. Though she'd been incredibly convincing, the doctor had offered medical proof that her ear was just fine. We'd been taken for a ride this time. My husband and I rallied together as our kid sobbed in her bedroom. "What is up with her?" we wondered.

It turned out she just needed some TLC. In time, I coaxed her from her bedroom to mine, where we snuggled under the covers and discussed the merits of the glossy pictures in a new coffee table book I'd just bought. I offered a small dose of ibuprofen (gratefully accepted), her dad brought her a steaming cup of mint tea to "help reduce the ear ache," and by the time bedtime rolled around, Twin B was singing softly to herself as she brushed her teeth. Ear ache? What ear ache!

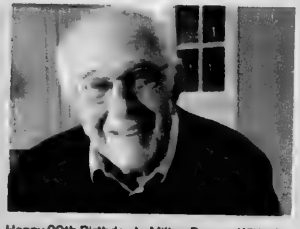
They say parenting is the hardest job in the world, and it's so true. Most of the time, it's a guessing game, one in which you constantly second-guess your decisions. At times, you stand your ground, call a spade a spade and move forward with a semblance of confidence. But every so often, kids pull the wool over your eyes and remind you precisely how little you really know. ■

Family Moments

Happy 99th birthday to our special Balka Klajman – Bubbie, Mom, auntie and cousin! Mazel tov and continued good health.

Mazal tov to Bella & Sidney Itzkowitz on the celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary! With love from your children and grandchildren.

Mazal tov to Sally & Norman Raicek who will celebrate their 63rd wedding anniversary on Feb. 17! With love from your children and grandchildren.

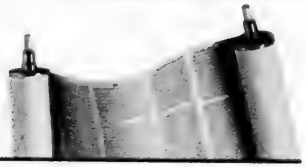


Happy 90th Birthday to Milton Berger. With all our love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Mazel tov and continued good health!

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Terumah | Exodus 25:1 - 27:19



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier explains why the Ark was crafted out of wood, not metal
Rabbi Denise Handlarski highlights the importance of creating sacred communal spaces
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen says the success of the Jewish People depends on connection to God

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

When renovating or remodelling a home, where does one begin? Different contractors might offer different suggestions, but the Torah is clear about what should first be done when building the Tabernacle.

In Exodus 25, the Torah instructs that the first item to be fashioned is the Ark, which will hold the *edut* – the tablets or the whole Torah, which is a physical representation of God's teachings. Building this Ark first expresses the core value of the entire building project.

The construction of the Ark is notably different than that of the other holy furniture. The Torah states (Exodus 25:10): "They shall make an Ark of acacia wood." For the other accessories it says "And you shall." The command is in the singular. The Or Hachayyim (18th-century Morocco) explains that the Ark had to be made by everyone, since "the Torah can only be fulfilled by Israel as a whole. No single individual can perform all the precepts of the Torah."

As the most important piece of the Tabernacle, we might expect it to be made of the most precious materials. While it is true that gold covered the Ark, like a beautiful tapestry covers a Torah scroll, the ark itself was to be made of wood. Wood symbolizes life and growth, as opposed to an inert metal such as gold (beautiful as it may be). Only a material of growth and life was suitable to contain God's Torah.

We refer to the Torah as an *etz chaim* – a tree of life. The Torah is neither a museum piece to be admired from afar, nor is it an adornment whose primary function is to provide esthetic beauty. Our Tree of Life promotes growth and is a constant source of renewal for all who hold on to it. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

This parshah includes the precise details by which the people are to build a sanctuary/tabernacle for prayer. The context in Exodus is that the people have begun to receive the law but have not yet received the entire Torah. The building of the sanctuary is meant to physically resemble the ways in which the people are becoming a people.

The act of wandering signifies a search or a dislocation. But the precision with which the sacred structures must be built suggests something of permanence. As the people begin to centre their lives around ritual practice, they will shed that sense of dislocation. A physical centre becomes a spiritual way of centring oneself and one's community.

Space is a key issue for many of our congregations. Some of us continue to be "wandering Jews" in search of a location that works. Others have buildings that no longer serve our needs. Certainly any community is defined by more than its physical premises, but the type of space in which we meet influences our experience of our community. Our challenge is to find spaces that work for us while remembering that building community is an equally important project as building the spaces that house us.

This week's Torah portion also reminds us of the Jewish project of constructing artful spaces, complete with symbols such as the menorah, the bimah, the Ark, and decorative objects such as art and sculpture.

At the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, I love the wide array of Judaica and the reconstructed synagogues from around the world. We are a truly creative people that has designed and built beautiful things. It is our ongoing challenge to determine what kinds of spaces and objects feed us – as individuals and communities and, like those in the Torah, work together to build them. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

As we enter the month of Adar, my kids are excitedly choosing Purim costumes. My daughter is dressing up as a strawberry and my son as the high priest.

In the Book of Esther, Mordechai urges Queen Esther to beg the king to save the Jews from Haman's decree.

Esther agreed to go to the king, but only after the Jews, including herself, had fasted for three days and nights. This is surprising. The lives of all the Jews were at stake, and only she could save them. Approaching the king was punishable by death. Also, her pale face, as a result of fasting, would weaken her chance to find favour in the king's eyes.

Why was she not afraid to lose her charm by fasting and risk her possible success? The answer is that the success of the Jewish People depends on their connection to God to get God's blessing.

The Jews had it pretty good with Mordechai, their leader, being an adviser to the king. He also saved the king's life. Esther, a Jew, was the queen and the king loved her.

Yet an evil decree was issued against the Jews. Esther understood that this was not by chance, but was caused by the Jews attending the feast of Achashverosh.

We must do whatever we can and not rely on miracles, as Esther did. But her priority was to remove the cause of the decree. She knew that if the Jews repented, they would merit God's blessing and be successful.

In Canada, we have it pretty good, with a prime minister who has been good to us, and for this, we must be grateful. Let us remember that our success comes from being connected to Torah and mitzvot.

The theme of Purim is unity. We send foods and drink to our friends to promote unity. Through unity, may we merit to see Mordechai and Esther, once again, with Mashiach, in our days. ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is rabbi of Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto.

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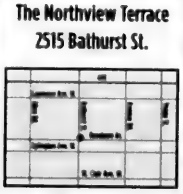

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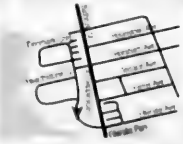

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A chronicle of anecdotes from an oleh

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Akiva Teddy MacLeod

For many, making aliyah can be an emotional, spiritual, momentous experience.

Akiva Teddy MacLeod may have had similar feelings about his move to Israel with his family from Toronto in 2013, but you might not know it reading about his experiences in his self-published book, *Welcome Home: My first six months living in Israel.*

"This is not a religious book, and it's not really a book about how to make aliyah or how to move to Israel, it's just about our experience as a family," said MacLeod, a 51-year-old, Ottawa-born former Catholic, who agreed to make his wife's dream come true by moving to Israel.

Speaking to *The CJN* about the circumstances that brought him to Israel and his decision to release a book about it, MacLeod explained that he met his wife, Tzivia (an occasional *CJN* correspondent), when he moved from Ottawa to Toronto for a work opportunity.

"I converted [to Judaism] before we got married about 11 years ago," he said, adding that they have four children.

"It's been my wife's dream to move here for like, forever. We both feel that it is a great environment for our family."

Shortly after settling in a town called Kiryat Shmuel near Haifa, MacLeod began updating his family and friends about how things were progressing via Facebook posts.

"I was putting up posts for my family in Ottawa and in Toronto and my friends. I was just trying to write positive things about Israel because Israel can be a scary place and my family thinks it is very dangerous here, so I was trying to... ease their concerns and try to show Israel as more of a mundane, normal place," he said.

In one example, MacLeod writes about trying to get some cash out of an ATM.

"I'm sitting outside a bank, high up on the mountainous city of Haifa, while Tzivia is inside trying to extract some money with her old Canadian debit card. Sure, she's probably not having the happiest time in the world, but I think I've got it worse," MacLeod writes.

"Twenty feet away from me is one of those buskers playing away on his cheesy, '60s sounding electric organ. While I don't mind the kitschy sound itself (in fact, I really enjoy it), the guy keeps playing the same tune, *Spanish Flea*, over and over and over again. I think it is the only song he knows how to play.

"That, in itself, would be fine and there would be no cause for madness, except for a few odd elements to his playing. So far, he has run through the same song about five times already and I keep waiting to hear the chorus to the song, which I am now convinced that he has no clue how it goes.

> *I was just trying to write positive things about Israel because Israel can be a scary place and my family thinks it is very dangerous here, so I was trying to... ease their concerns*

Whenever it is time to play the actual chorus, he bridges off into some Russian song, or sometimes I suspect he just makes up a few bars of something that could almost be *The Girl From Ipanema*, but not quite. Sheer madness."

MacLeod said that when he started to read back some of his Facebook posts some time later, he had an idea.

"A lot of the posts were funny, so I started highlighting some of the funny things that were going on and it became a really enjoyable read after a while. I was laughing at my own jokes and everything. That's where the idea for the book came from," he said.

In another excerpt, MacLeod details an encounter he has with a man on public transit.

"On one of our bus rides today, there was this older man ranting and raving at the top of his lungs at anyone near him. He looked right at me and yelled, for about 10 seconds, something Hebrew right in my face. I turned to Tzivia and asked what he was complaining about, figuring it might be about how crowded the new buses were."

"'He's insane,'" was her simple answer. Coincidentally, I learned a new Hebrew term just the day before that I've been wanting to use. It was the term "*die*," which translates as "enough," so I was itching to yell at the ranting guy "*die, die, DIIIIEEEE!*" (enough, enough, ENOUGH!!!), but I thought that might be a little harsh and maybe misunderstood by any English speakers nearby."

He said the book, released late last year and available on Amazon is more like an anecdotal diary.

"But I tried to make it broad enough that everyone can enjoy it."

Although his account of adjusting to a new life in Israel is light and humorous, MacLeod thinks his experiences could be helpful to someone who is thinking about making aliyah.

"I think it might ease their minds about making aliyah because it is a big step and if they read these stories, they may be able to relate."■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 19, 2015

Jonathan Kay: *Walrus* editor discusses the media and Judaism

MICHAEL FRAIMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In January, Jonathan Kay officially took over as editor-in-chief of the *Walrus*, a national Canadian general-interest magazine. He comes to the position after 16 years as the *National Post* comment-pages editor, where he wrote on everything from North Korea to e-bikes and, regularly, Judaism and Middle-Eastern politics. *The CJN* sat down with Kay to better understand his stance on modern Canadian Judaism, and how he will carry that into his new position.

To start: do you consider yourself a Jewish journalist?

I consider myself a journalist who's strongly influenced by my Jewish background. When I look at the way a lot of Jewish writers write, there usually is some aspect of their background that comes out, and the dominant elements for me are cultural self-awareness and humour – that's important, because people who feel at least a slight bit as an outsider within their societies, usually, are better observers of those societies

You write a lot about Americans and religious extremists, sometimes together. Do you think being a Canadian Jew gives you a good vantage point to look at that subject?

I spent five years in the United States, which was enough to learn about the United States, but not enough to feel like I was an American. When I wrote my book about 9/11 conspiracy theories and political extremism in the States [*Among the Truthers: A Journey Through America's Growing Conspiracist Underground*], a lot of the stuff I was writing was stuff people just kind of take for granted. "Oh yeah, down the road there's a bunch of gun nuts who think Obama is trying to impose a UN dictatorship." And that claim has become sort of the right-wing political fabric of some parts of the United States, to the extent that a lot of Americans just ignore it; one of my advantages for this book, because I'm from Canada, was like, "Wait, this is weird. This is interesting. I want to interview these people."

I wrote an article about Jews in relation to some of these extremist movements, and one of the very interesting things is that, up until the late 20th century, Jews were often the target for political extremists. One thing that changed after 9/11 was that Muslims replaced Jews in a lot of conspiracy theories. And because Jews have a history of opposing Muslim extremism in the Middle East, Jews, for the first time in the history of the United States, were welcomed to the very heart of the political foreign policy in mainstream media.

"I consider myself a journalist who's strongly influenced by my Jewish background."

And you see this a little bit in Canada, too; sometimes I'll give a speech in a synagogue, and you'll get some middle-aged guy get up and start saying stuff about Muslims that really resembles the stuff people used to say about Jews, like, "These guys can't be assimilated in our fifth column." Jews used to worry about this kind of political rhetoric in their society, rightly, because they were often the target of it. And to a certain extent they're still the target of it. But I don't like to go to synagogues and see that kind of thing, or to see it in the comment section of a newspaper. I don't like to see it as part of the casual conversation. But now, unfortunately, you see it in the synagogues and you see it online, sometimes you see it out of the mouths of op-ed page writers and even on *Sun News*, where Jewish people, who should know better, have become the extremists.

You're talking about Ezra Levant.

I'm talking about Ezra Levant, but I'm also talking about the thousands of people [who] email me on behalf of Ezra Levant. And I hate to say it, but a lot of them happen to have Jewish names.

Do you think there's a global narrative about Israel that news outlets feel a need to conform to, with Palestinians as victims and Israelis as oppressors?

I think some of the vestiges of Marxism still exist in the way people think. People often divide the world between who's the good guy and who's the bad guy, and sometimes we make very arbitrary decisions. That's kind of the way we see foreign policy. There are a lot of things about Israeli society that conform to that narrative – Israel is rich, most of the people speak English, most of the people are white. So because those people look like our own society, we kind of assume they're colonialists.

Do you think it's possible for Jewish journalists to be impartial about Israel?

It's harder to be objective about Israel. Like, in my case, my parents took me to Israel when I was seven. And we went on the usual two-week tour, and I have very powerful memories. They took me to the border with Jordan, which, at the time, was a dangerous place. And they said, "This is where terrorists infiltrate." However, that said, intellectually self-aware people, regardless of their background, are capable of being objective. But as a Jew reporting on Israel, you have to try harder.

There is something we don't talk enough about in Jewish society: one of the things people love about Israel is it's high-tech, it's a wealthy society, it's well organized. The problem is, we now have a substantial proportion of ultra-Orthodox Jews who do not answer any of that description. When I see these communities, the way they treat women – to my mind, those people are no different from superstitious, misogynist Muslims or ultra-religious Christians. I don't think a lot of Jewish communities in the West have come to terms with what a threat this is to, on a superficial level, the Israeli brand, but on an existential level, the Jewish people. Montreal has a bit of that. I lived in Outremont, very close to where they were – they were really cut off from the outside world, and it disturbed me.

Western society was lethally aggressive in going after Catholic priests and the cover-ups within the Catholic Church, and I'd like to see some of that light shone on these ultra-Orthodox communities. The mainstream Jewish community should do a better job of bringing those to light.

But it's not really the mainstream Jewish community's job to start investigating these communities.

Well, right now, whenever I write articles about this subject, Jewish friends would send me emails, "Oh, write about the Muslims, don't write about this stuff!" And I say, "Doesn't this bug you?" And they say, "Yeah, it bugs us, but you shouldn't write about it." That, to me, is what I'd like to see change. I would like them to say, "You should especially write about this." This is our community we're talking about. Ultimately, my primary identity is as a Canadian. I was born Jewish, I acknowledge that I'm a Jew, but I'm primarily Canadian. I don't like practices that go against Canadian values. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Addressing the problem of farming in a shmittah year

Backstory

RABBI YIRMIYA MILEVSKY

If you are lucky enough to be in Israel this year, you will notice a few new signs displayed by fruit and vegetable vendors. Some notify consumers that the produce was grown by non-Jews. Others include Hebrew phrases like *heter mechira* or *otzar beit din*. The reason for these proclamations is that this year, according to the Hebrew calendar, is the sabbatical year – shmittah.

The concept of a year of rest for the land appears in Leviticus, where God says, "I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years" (Leviticus 25:21). These extraordinary words of divine providence inspired generations of Jews in exile, who dreamed of one day returning to Israel. And by the end of the 19th century, the theoretical became practical: after a 2,000-year hiatus, Jewish farmers were once again growing crops in Israel.

The first shmittah of the modern era occurred in 1889, and Jewish farmers quickly turned to rabbinic authorities to learn how to deal with the issue. Many wondered how they could cease working the land for a whole year? They expressed in writing to the rabbis that if they did so, the few buyers of their goods would turn to others, and their loss will devastate the fragile new economy of the land.

Among the many rabbis who addressed the problem was the great sage Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor of Kovno. The solution he suggested was to sell the land to a non-Jew, with the intention of buying it back after the shmittah year concluded. Technically, then, the Jewish farmers would not own the land for the year, and work and production could continue. But not all rabbis were comfortable with what came to be known as the *heter mechir* (literally "sale permit").

In 1909, as another shmittah approached, a new significant rabbi got involved in the issue. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, who would later become the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel, approved the *heter mechira* and even encouraged farmers to sign the documents that would officially transfer the land out of Jewish hands.

But the zealots of the Old Yishuv (the Jewish community of Israel that predated the Zionist aliyah) passionately rejected Rabbi Kook's position. The most vigorous attack came from Rabbi Yaakov Dovid Wilovsky, recognized throughout the world as a great scholar after he published his annotations on the Jerusalem Talmud. Rabbi Wilovsky's scholarship, coupled with his fiery personality, helped convince the Union of Orthodox Rabbis to elect him chief rabbi of the Russian-American congregations in Chicago in 1909.

But Rabbi Wilovsky did not last long in the Windy City. He tried very hard to fight the dishonesty and corruption in the kosher meat industry, but did not succeed. Within a year he found a new home in the land of Israel. And when he heard of Rabbi Kook's promotion of *heter mechira*, Rabbi Wilovsky immediately went on the attack, noting that, historically, most rabbinic authorities never approved of the concept.

Predictably, the farmers who were attempting to work the land and produce during the shmittah year by implementing *heter mechira*, were upset at Rabbi Wilovsky and the Old Yishuv. They claimed that their lack of appreciation for people who were actually working for a living guided them to their position. They alleged that the only thing the Old Yishuv was interested in was fundraising opportunities. The farmers even tried to turn the tables, arguing that since members of the Old Yishuv were purchasing produce from Arab farmers they were, in the words of the Jewish farmers, "supporting the ones who are afflicting us in our ancestral land."

The debate between rabbis Wilovsky and Kook was fierce and bitter, and the residual effects of that tension can still be felt over a century later. As you enjoy the fruit of the Promised Land, it's worth being mindful of the challenges of the past that have shaped our present. ■

Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky is the rabbi of Congregation B'nai Torah in Toronto.

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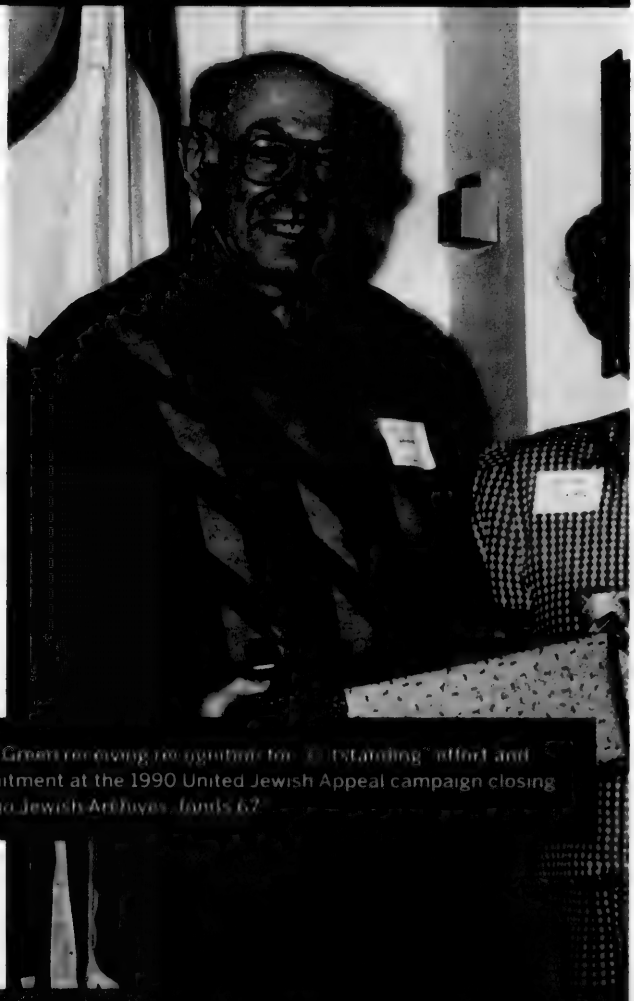

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Closing Ottawa's Jewish high school is a mistake

Adolescence is prime time to forge identity, U of O prof argues. **PAGE 24**

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Schools offer an array of options for T.O. Jews

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Calgary	5:55 p.m.	7:05 p.m.
Vancouver	5:34 p.m.	6:42 p.m.

Jewish. Black. Canadian.

"Too Jewish to be black, too black to be Jewish." **PAGE 8**

The state of black-Jewish dialogue in Canada. **PAGE 12**

Remembering Emerson Swift Mahon, Canada's first black Jew. **PAGE 47**

Australian abuse scandal leaves scars

Jewish community has work to do in wake of coverup, lawyer says. **PAGE 7**

Seniors want their pool back

Wagman Centre facility closed in December and won't re-open until April. **PAGE 19**

A brief history of humans

Hebrew University academic has a refreshing take on our species. **PAGE 34**

6 27843 39403 7

Rabbi says France needs Jews, as Paris shows its unfriendly side

Chief rabbi rejects PM's call

France's chief rabbi, Haim Korsia, rejected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent call for European Jews to move to Israel. Speaking Feb. 19 in New York after a speech at a Manhattan shul, the rabbi said there has been a Jewish presence in France for 2,000 years and, echoing recent remarks by French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, that "France will no longer be France" if Jews left en masse. Rabbi Korsia also praised the French government's efforts on behalf of the Jewish community, noting that 10,500 soldiers are now guarding Jewish schools and synagogues. "We felt very alone for a long time," he said. "Now we feel together."

Walking while Jewish

An Israeli journalist who walked around Paris for hours wearing a kippah to test attitudes to Jews documented multiple threats and insults hurled at him and posted the video online. Zvika Klein, a reporter for the news site *nrg.co.il* and the *Makor Rishon* daily, released the footage Feb. 15 from an excursion earlier this month. Many incidents occurred in the heavily Muslim suburb of Sarcelles, Klein said. In one scene, a person in a black knit cap says "Jew" and walks beside Klein, who was being filmed secretly by a colleague. In another part of Paris, passers-by call out "Vive Palestine" at him. In several cases, locals hurl profanities at him, calling him a homosexual. The video, titled *10 Hours of Walking in Paris as a Jew*, was inspired by a video last year showing a woman being harassed while walking in New York. Anti-Semitic incidents in France more than doubled in 2014 over the previous year, to a five-year-record of 851 reported instances.

Zvika Klein, left, and a harasser
YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

Lesley Gore sang *It's My Party*

Singer-songwriter Lesley Gore, whose hit *It's My Party* topped the charts in 1963 when she was 17, died Feb. 16 of cancer in New York. She was 68. *It's My Party* was nominated for a Grammy Award and sold more than one million copies. Gore, born Lesley Sue Goldstein in Brooklyn, N.Y., and raised in Tenafly, N.J., was discovered by producer Quincy Jones as a teen and signed with Mercury Records. She came out as a lesbian in 2005. ■

Gematria

52

The number of counts of voyeurism Washington, D.C., Rabbi Barry Freundel pleaded guilty to last week. Prosecutors have told alleged victims he secretly video recorded as many as 150 women at his shul's mikvah.

3,000

The number of Jewish teens meeting last week in Atlanta for the BBYO and NFTY conventions.

Quotable

"

The major problem Israel is facing today is the Palestinian question

— Novelist A.B. Yehoshua on the upcoming Israeli election. Full interview on p. 46.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz on making perfect mishloach manot.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Schabas' defence appalling

As a litigator with more than 38 years of experience, I am appalled at William Schabas' defence on the issue of bias ("William Schabas: No evidence of bias against Israel," Feb. 12).

A judge or the head of a tribunal must recuse from sitting if there is the slightest hint of possible bias or conflict of interest. In this case, Schabas had not only authored a paper on behalf of the PLO, a partner of Hamas, but he had also made outright previous statements indicating his views vis-a-vis one of the parties, the State of Israel. This is not bias?

Additionally, Schabas has an outright befuddled thought process. He accuses Irwin Cotler, Alan Dershowitz and Joseph Wieler of not being able to judge him because of their imputed bias as supporters of Israel. If this is the situation, how does Schabas not fare any better. His logic is totally illogical.

Arnold Recht
Toronto

Affordable day schools

Given that we understand that the sustainability of Jewish life is very much dependent on Jewish education, and that this education is very much endangered by high costs, why have we given up the struggle to secure funding for Jewish day schools from the Ontario provincial government?

We seem to have given up, following John Tory's ignominious defeat for championing private religious school funding. But the reasonable arguments for public funding are every bit as strong as those against funding. In fact, Quebec is an example of a government that successfully funds some private ethnic day schools, including Jewish day schools. And that funding did not happen without significant efforts by the community. Key leaders of Montreal's Jewish community were pilloried for this effort by the media but were not deterred. Perhaps it's time that we return to that struggle and demonstrate how important Jewish day schools are to sustaining our community.

Joe Kislowicz
Toronto

Iran seeks to destroy Israel

I am amazed at the twisted "facts" in the letter, "Iran is not the threat," (Feb. 12).

The main argument is that Iran has a geopolitical problem with the United States and Israel and simply "wants to be recognized as a major regional power." I agree that it does want to be recognized as such. However, its clear intention is to do it at the expense of destroying Israel and any U.S.-leaning country in the region. And while it is true that former president Mahmoud Ahmedinajad never said Iran seeks to "wipe Israel off the face of the map," he repeated that statement in order to fire up the crowd to not forget those words of the Ayatollah Khomeini and to continue on the path of the destruction of Israel.

As for the statement that "Iran, in contrast to Israel and the United States, has not invaded any country since the 1700s," I would like to hear why Iran regularly stages military parades where it likes to show off its shiny new Shahab 3 missiles (range 2,000 km) with the launchers marked "Death to Israel." What about the placards with a clear and unambiguous message in English saying "Destroy Israel and America!"? What about the Iranian missiles seized by Israel in 2014 while in transit to Hezbollah in Lebanon? What about the numerous weapons smuggled underground to Hamas? Let us not forget the various bodies of Iran Revolutionary Guards found among casualties in the various skirmishes with Hamas and Hezbollah? The proof of Iran's destructive intentions is limitless.

Robert Khalifa
Montreal

Iran is no paradise for Jews

The letter ("Iran is not the threat," Feb. 12) paints the most wonderful picture of Iran, especially for Jews.

I believe the letter writer lives in an alternative universe. The world I live in knows the dangers of Iran and its endless pursuit in the destruction of Israel.

It has been supplying Hezbollah and Hamas with arms, money and know-how in their war against Israel. I don't call that nationalism. I call that active aggression.

As for the Iranian Jewish community, they may be able to practise Judaism (within limits) in decaying synagogues (that they're not allowed to rebuild) and always in fear. This portrait of Iran is painted with a greatly distorted brush. ■

Judy Schwartz
Burlington, Ont.

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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Standing up for Israel and the Diaspora

How do we connect with our homeland as a source of spiritual sustenance, rootedness and cultural pride while continuing to build vibrant Jewish communities around the world?

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Rabbi Korobkin: I write this from my hotel room in Jerusalem, on our shul's annual Israel mission. We visited the Theodor Herzl museum and were reminded of the events that spurred Herzl, who was a completely secular Jew, to become the father of modern Zionism.

As a journalist in Vienna, Herzl was sent to France in 1894 to cover the Dreyfus affair, where a French officer of Jewish descent was accused and eventually convicted of treason. What Herzl discovered were demonstrations in the streets of Paris calling for "Death to the Jews!" This was Herzl's moment of epiphany, when he realized that in order for the Jewish People to be safe, they needed a homeland.

I couldn't help noting the irony of the events of the last few weeks, where demonstrations were once again being held in France with similar epithets against Jews, this time by France's large Islamic population. The accusation that Israel is somehow to blame for Islamic violence rang hollow.

Rabbi Grushcow: The lessons of the Dreyfus affair are sobering indeed. For the vast majority of our history, though, there have been significant Jewish diasporas. There have been incredibly dark moments, and hopeful ones as well, and in our experience in North America in particular, we have flourished.

Do we need a Jewish homeland to be safe in the world? Maybe so, but God willing, we will not always be in need of refuge. To me, the questions are as follows: how can we who live outside Israel help support it as the modern-day miracle that it is, recognizing both its realities and its ideals? How can we connect with it as a source of spiritual sustenance, historical rootedness and cultural pride? And how can we continue to build vibrant Jewish communities in the Diaspora, connecting with others and contributing to the societies in which we live?

Rabbi Korobkin: The Kabbalists tell us that in every Diaspora locale throughout history, the Jewish people glean "holy sparks" that are indigenous to those places and make them a part of our people. But the lesson of the Dreyfus Affair is that anti-Semitism needs no reason to rear its ugly head.

Those who suggest that "if only Israel would do this or that, they would hate us less," are deluding themselves. While we glean our holy sparks and share the light of Judaism with the rest of the world, we have every reason to stand tall and be proud of our homeland, Israel, and ignore the voices of hate that will continue no matter what we do or don't do.

Rabbi Grushcow: As we write this exchange, there has been more anti-Semitic violence: the shooting at a synagogue in Copenhagen and the desecration of hundreds of graves in France. You're right. People who are anti-Semitic will find any reason to justify unjustifiable acts. There have always been, and will always be, people who hate others in this world.

It seems to me that what is more important to talk about is how people can come together against all kinds of hatred. Of course these events affect us as Jews, but we are not the only ones. There are many old hatreds in this world, and each one of them affects everyone, not just the targeted group. Perhaps even more important, each one can only be effectively opposed by people coming together.

In that spirit, let me share the words of Father John Walsh, a colleague and friend here in Montreal. Sending an email to Jewish friends after these most recent attacks, he wrote: "The recent desecration of 300 graves in France and a gun attack on a synagogue in Denmark warrants a united voice that will in a strong and forthright manner condemn such acts as anti-Semitic and are not to be tolerated. The Jewish community does not stand alone in condemning such acts and your sisters and brothers of the Catholic faith feel the pain that is an inevitable consequence of terror. You are assured of our thoughts and prayers that these shameless acts cease now and into the future. May God bless and protect your communities throughout the world."

Amen to that. ■

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From the Archives | Boardwalk empire

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

David Dunkelman with four other men on an unidentified boardwalk. From left, an unidentified man with Louis Gelber, Percy Hermant, David Dunkelman and another unidentified man. Born in 1883, Dunkelman was the founder of Tip Top Tailors. He was a leader of the Zionist Organization of Canada for more than 50 years, while his wife, Rose, was publisher and first managing editor of the *Jewish Standard*, a Toronto-based Zionist magazine.

SeeJN | Presidential snowfall

HAIM ZACH/GPO PHOTO

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin frolicked with his granddaughters Karni and Ziv in the snow that covered his Jerusalem residence's garden late last week.

From Yoni's Desk

As the JDL expands, questions linger

Back in July, the Jewish Defence League (JDL) announced plans to open new chapters in Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary and Vancouver (JDL's Canadian operations are based in Toronto).

In response, *The CJN* ran a cover story by contributor Ron Csillag that examined the extent to which the JDL is supported in this country, and asked: "Is the JDL filling a vacuum in Jewish advocacy, which has traditionally shunned street-level agitation? Does the group's resurgence reflect a hardening of attitudes in the Jewish community?"

As Csillag documented, response to the JDL's planned Canadian expansion has been decidedly mixed. During the summer, as the IDF fought in Gaza, Hamas rockets rained on Israel, anti-Semitism erupted in Europe and some worried that the same could happen here, there appeared to be more openness than previously to the JDL's aggressive persona. Meanwhile, others, including powerful community organizations, argued the JDL was taking advantage of headlines to scare Jews.

Last week, JDL leaders were in Montreal for the second time in half a year to recruit local members. As reporter Janice Arnold writes in this week's *CJN*, about 100 people attended an information session at a Montreal hotel, where JDL director Meir Weinstein received a standing ovation. Later, the group's co-ordinator in Ontario, Julius Suraski, announced the JDL has "a good core of supporters" in Montreal, and a local chapter will soon be established.

But if some Montrealers appear to be welcoming the JDL, the city's Jewish community institutions remain far less receptive. In a statement released just hours before the JDL meeting in Montreal, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) claimed, "The JDL is a small, marginal group that does not receive any substantial support within our community," and, "The Jewish community of Quebec categorically rejects the sensationalist tactics of the JDL and rejects its claim of ensuring the safety of Quebec Jews and their institutions."

Those statements are bolstered by Rabbi Boruch Perton in this week's *CJN*. In an op-ed, the rabbi of Beth Zion Congregation in the Montreal neighbourhood of Cote-St.-Luc, reveals he was once a member of the JDL. In the 1970s, Rabbi Perton writes, "I felt like I was part of something great and that I was protecting the Jewish Nation."

Over time, though, a more sinister side of the JDL began to emerge. As Rabbi Perton tells it, "It was not uncommon to hear the same words the greatest anti-Semites throughout the ages used toward us, but directed toward Arabs. 'Expulsion,' and even worse expressions, were a part of the JDL's vocabulary."

He concludes by encouraging Montreal's Jewish community "to send a very strong message to anyone who wishes to support and bring the JDL to Montreal… 'Don't set up shop here. Move along.'"

These are scary times for Jews, and the last thing any of us should be doing is burying our heads in the sand. We need to protect ourselves from our enemies – and if some worry that community institutions are not sufficiently prepared or up to the task, their questions should be taken seriously and their fear allayed. When that happens, perhaps there won't be any more need for clenched fists. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

Scandal leaves huge task ahead for Australian community

Josh Bornstein

In the last several weeks, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse in Australia has examined the response of the ultra-Orthodox Yeshiva Center in Melbourne and its counterpart in Sydney to cases of child sexual abuse. The commission has specifically attempted to investigate how the extensive offending by convicted pedophiles David Kramer, Daniel Hayman and David Cyprys in the 1980s and 1990s were dealt with by the rabbis and leaders of the yeshiva.

The commission has heard testimony from a number of victims of child sexual abuse within the organization. With one exception, all victims have chosen to remain anonymous.

The proceedings underline why Manny Waks, the founder of Tzedek, an Australian-based support and advocacy group for Jewish victims of child sexual abuse, was the first and only victim of child sexual abuse in the Australian Jewish community to go public. Waks displayed enormous courage then and continues to do so now. He and his family have paid a terrible price for seeking to ensure there is accountability for perpetrators and those who have tried to shield them.

The persecution and abuse directed at Waks and his family by some within the yeshiva community continued during the royal commission hearings.

A number of witnesses from the Yeshiva Center were compelled to give evidence. It made grim viewing. Rabbi Yosef Feldman said he did not think it was appropriate for victims to go to police if the offences took place decades prior and if the offender had since stopped offending. Rabbi Feldman also said he "did not know" it was a crime for an adult to touch a child's genitals. His father, also a rabbi, explained that he permitted a pedophile to flee the authorities by leaving Australia.

There was a smorgasbord of other evidence containing failing memories, obfuscation, abysmal governance procedures and dangerous beliefs about what constitutes child sexual abuse and what appropriate responses should be.

There were also expressions of regret and apologies – some more genuine than others. Rabbi Meir Shlomo Kluwgant, for example, stepped down as president of the Organization of Rabbis of Australasia. The commission heard that Rabbi Kluwgant sent a text message a week prior to resigning calling Zephaniah Waks, the father of Manny, a "lunatic" who had neglected his own children.

The royal commission has delivered at least two vital benefits to the Australian Jewish community. It has given victims of child sexual abuse a measure of justice by allowing them to give evidence, either publicly or privately. Secondly, the hearings have provided the only measure of accountability to date for those who have shielded criminals and persecuted their victims.

> *Cultural change takes time and sustained effort*

And there has been another breakthrough: the broader Jewish community is starting to speak up. In a statement, Vic Alhadeff of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) condemned Rabbi Feldman's evidence in the strongest terms: "Yossi Feldman's statements are repugnant to Jewish values and to Judaism, which is centred on the sanctity and dignity of individual life, especially the life of a child," the ECAJ said.

The next step for the commission is to formulate its findings and any policy recommendations. In the meantime, there is an enormous task ahead for the Jewish community in Australia: cultural change.

Although the commission has focused its time and resources on examining the yeshiva, child abuse is not confined to it or to the ultra-Orthodox community. Tzedek has had contact with victims who have come from a range of backgrounds within the Jewish community.

Child sexual abuse occurs throughout society where abusers – almost entirely men – have access to innocent children. The current momentum to hold powerful organizational representatives in all Jewish organizations and schools to account to ensure this issue isn't swept under more carpets and that abusers are not shielded, must be maintained.

There is a need to address the archaic and, arguably, obsolete notion of *mesira* – a belief in some Jewish circles that going outside the Jewish community to address issues of concern, including crime, is a sin greater than the issue itself. It cannot and should not be used as an excuse to shield criminality from the authorities.

Are our rabbis and teachers sufficiently trained about child sexual abuse? The evidence suggests not. Crucially, there must be acknowledgment of what the data on child sexual abuse tells us: that the most unsafe place for some children is the family home. Clearly, more work needs to be done.

All Jewish organizations in Australia – and the world – are on notice. They all must genuinely commit to adopting accountable and transparent policies and procedures to ensure all children are safe and that all allegations of child sexual abuse are immediately reported to the police.

Still, cultural change takes time and sustained effort. We know that addressing child sexual abuse requires multiple strategies and the engagement of the different parts of the Jewish community. Tzedek is working to transform our culture so that those responsible for the safety and welfare of children respond swiftly and determinedly in accordance with the quality practices and guidelines.

The royal commission has made graphically clear that there are no excuses for shirking our responsibilities to protect vulnerable children. ■

Josh Bornstein is the president of Tzedek and a principal at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, based in Melbourne, Australia.

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'I smile because one day there won't need to be a Black History Month'

MOSHE MODEIRA
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Moshe Modeira

> *I had to be given a dual education in the richness of my Jewish heritage alongside reminders of the responsibility that comes with being a black man*

I'm the definition of the word "mutt," that lovable euphemism for a person who doesn't quite fit into any single ethnic category.

My mother is of North and East African descent. My father is of East African and Goan descent. They both have varying degrees of Arab lineage in them. There is a bit of Dutch on my mother's side, a bit of Portuguese on my father's side. True children of the world, between my mother and my late father (he passed away in 2012 of heart complications), they managed to learn to communicate in 20 languages collectively. My family could easily appear in some corny multiculturalism public service announcement. However, one attribute held my parents together more than their shared diversity – a proud and fervent adherence to the religion they both grew up in as children: Judaism.

Settling in North America later in their lives exposed them to a new and inescapable truth: the amount of melanin in their skin made them black. And in light of the murky post-colonial legacy still alive and well in today's America, that label came with some social realities that needed to be deliberately explored if we were to effectively navigate this new life in the West.

I was once asked as a teenager to write an essay describing my experience of being a "Jew of colour," and I likened it to being on a lonely island. "Too Jewish to be Black, too Black to be Jewish" I titled the paper cheekily, its rawness causing my English teacher to pull me aside and ask questions of burning curiosity before she quietly give me an A+ and treated me with kid gloves for the rest of the term. Perhaps she felt sorry for me. To this day I still get people asking "Oy, what's a day in your life like?"

The truth is, my life is great. I wouldn't trade it for anything else in the world. I simply had to be given a dual education in the richness of my Jewish heritage alongside reminders of the responsibility that comes with being a black man. I was exposed to the legacy of the American slave trade, while learning about Maimonides and Rabbi Gamaliel. I learned about Frederick Douglass one day, and the next day I would be versed in the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch. I learned about the tragedy of Emmett Till, a black teenager who was murdered in 1955, and then we would light the candles for Chanukah and I would learn about Judah Maccabee. We learned about Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey while learning about David Ben-Gurion, Vladimir Jabotinsky and Theodor Herzl.

Like many Jewish families, we would get a solemn yearly crash course about the horrors of the Holocaust, and my mother would make the hairs on our necks stand up recanting her emotional visits to Auschwitz and Birkenau as a young woman living in Europe.

In the next breath, my father would recall his experiences as a curiosity in scholastic circles as his Jewish faith was questioned daily by colleagues eager to get him to take a stance and focus on one or the other. Black civil rights, or Jewish struggles with anti-Semitism. A plea for a better tomorrow for all minorities is always in vogue, but what about when those perspectives overlap? Should one struggle take a back seat to another? A black, Jewish, non-American perspective? This was uncomfortable for some. It didn't neatly fit certain narratives.

As an adult today, sure, I get double the heartache. My blood boils witnessing the plight of Jews just trying to live their lives while being callously murdered in the streets of Paris. I am outraged when I see black youths gunned down in the streets of Missouri or New York or Florida. I am in a constant state of incredulity when I see rockets falling on Sderot or Ashkelon, and yet the world continues to ignore the fact that Israel was forced to build an almost magical technology – the Iron Dome – simply to protect its citizens, as any country has a right to do. I am aghast that 2,000 Nigerians were slaughtered last month in what amounted to a footnote for most of the world media.

So what does a black Jew do to commemorate Black History Month?

I smile.

I smile because I know that we are another year closer to that amazing future when our children will laugh at us for the misguided divisiveness we all lived in once upon a time. I smile because the wheels are already in motion where we leave these chapters in the book of history far behind.

I smile, because I know one day, there won't need to be a Black History Month. ■

Moshe Modeira is a fashion marketing and digital media executive.

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When it comes to war preparedness, we're not ready

Avrum Rosensweig

Every Jewish community should do an internal audit of how it responded to the needs of its members last summer during the war on Gaza, a.k.a. Operation Protective Edge. This is crucial, so that we in the Diaspora, like Israel, understand our strengths and weaknesses, and ensure greater preparedness.

The following is my own review of the Jewish community of Toronto's readiness. Each area is marked out of 10.

1) **Public solidarity**: A public expression of strength and unity is crucial during any war. Once again, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto organized an indoor event. The place was not filled. There was, indeed, an outdoor rally at Queen's Park that was well-attended and impressively organized by a grassroots group. The Jewish Defence League was, as always, present at many counter-demonstrations. As long as our mainstream organizations continue to hide from our adversaries, we will lag behind dozens of other Jewish communities who are bravely getting out there and showing our courage. **Score: 4.**

2) **Hasbarah**: The Jewish community was outnumbered greatly on Facebook, Twitter and other social media. While our enemies' numbers are much higher than ours, we are a bright community, and yet our hasbarah presence was underwhelming. The big question is where were the shul members, social action committees and Israel committees? Where were participants from Israel and Holocaust programming such as Birthright? Where were the youth? Where were the federation and Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs? It was difficult to find them when their leadership in this area was really required. Furthermore, it was frequently difficult to find solid representation from our community on television and radio when a decent sound bite was required. **Score: 2.**

3) **Security**: One of the issues that truly reflected our community's preparedness during the Gaza war was how safe did community members feel on a day-to-day basis. As our enemies become more strident and bold, cases of anti- Semitism are spreading on the streets of Toronto and on campus (and, really, across the nation). From my discussions and understanding, there was nothing available for community members who wanted to be accompanied to shul, or for students who felt uncomfortable on campus. Furthermore, not once was I, the CEO of a Jewish non-profit organization, contacted about our plan for our organizational security. We developed a plan for ourselves. **Score: 2.**

4) **Reaching out to friends**: I believe we fell terribly short in reaching out to other communities, and the public in general, for their help. Partnering with the non-Jewish community is crucial when Israel is at war. Many non-Jews were supportive of the Jewish community. Some even donned kippot during the war to show their friendship. Where were we? **Score: 2**

Every Jewish community must be introspective about its performance during a most challenging and stressful war. My sense was that many Jewish community members across the city felt terribly scared. They were looking for leadership, but little was offered.

Overall, I would give the Toronto Jewish community a 3 in its response to the war in Gaza. I care deeply about our community, but I can't muster a more generous score. I know there are pieces I have missed and perhaps was too strict in my marking, but to exaggerate our response adds to the problem.

I call upon the major organizations, together with synagogues and smaller non-profits, both Jewish and non-Jewish, to organize a comprehensive plan having to do with the issues stated above, should there be another war, God forbid. Not to do so reflects a weakness in leadership. It leaves our community, and others across Canada, hung out to dry. I call for an internal audit to fix this very big problem.

Am Yisrael Chai! The Nation of Israel Lives! ■

Life on the streets at -30 C is rough

Bernie Farber

His name is Gregory.

He's of indeterminate age – maybe in his 60s, maybe younger. It's very cold in downtown Toronto, so Gregory wears a ragged overcoat on top of two heavily patched sweaters, torn jeans, mismatched thin socks and mittens most people wouldn't wear on a cool spring day.

Skinny to a fault, with long unkempt grey hair and a scraggly beard, he's a common site at the northwest corner of Yonge and King streets, below the building where I work. He makes his bed over a subway grate for the bit of warmth it may produce. Gregory is one of the estimated 5,000 homeless people living outside this winter in the city.

His story isn't unusual. Gregory has mental health problems, which have made it nearly impossible for him to work and to understand the social welfare net, and, sadly, like so many others, he just gave up on it. Living on the streets became his only option.

Tragically, the situation is getting worse. During last month's cold spell, which dropped evening temperatures to -30 C with the wind chill, four homeless people were found frozen to death. As chair of the wonderful organization Ve'ahavta, the Jewish response to homelessness and poverty, I've become more acutely aware of our homeless tragedy in Toronto. We operate the "Mobile Jewish Response for the Homeless," where night after night, volunteers and staff drive the frozen streets providing food and drink, essential clothing, hygiene supplies and various referrals to self-improvement and counselling facilities to literally thousands of clients.

On a very cold February evening recently, with temperatures dipping to -20 C, I volunteered to ride in the Ve'ahavta mobile outreach van. It was a lesson in love and humanity that I won't soon forget.

That night was a roller-coaster of emotions. I saw despair, hope, strength, courage, love, loss, fear and life. Amit, the indomitable van driver, demonstrated what real love and compassion means. Travelling the streets where our "clients" live, Amit knew every spot they could be found. Our work was more than just handing out warm clothes and food, we spent hours simply talking to each of those we served. "People have a tendency to see the homeless as one large group of people with no name. It 'invisibilizes' them," Amit said.

Indeed, Amit helped me understand that each person had a story, a life, and that despite their present circumstances, each was due love, dignity and respect.

James was one of the younger men on the streets. He made his sleeping area in a large crevice under a bridge. During the day, he goes to the library to use the computer or to read. He's hoping to enter the Ve'ahavta learning program as a way off the streets.

Sebastian was brought up in Rosedale, but that night, he made his home in the hollow of a building entrance. He needed a warm pair of socks.

William set up his sleeping bag at Queen and John streets. An epileptic, he depends on his wife for care. They fought last week while at a rundown flop-house, and he was forbidden from returning there. We saw his wife Christine soon afterward. She has forgiven him and is worried he won't take his medication.

Before ending our shift, our distinctive van pulled into the St. Felix warming centre, a non-profit community house that helps look after people on the street. Nancy, one of the occupants who knows the van by sight, let the others know we have arrived. "The Jews are here! The Jews are here!" she shouted with love, not hate.

I couldn't get over how cold I was. I fear for those I met this night.

It's been more than a week since I last saw Gregory. When this happened before, he told me he had bad lungs. I'm worried about him. I keep hoping to see him tomorrow. ■

Israeli women wage peace

Rabbi Dow Marmur

In August 1976, a woman was walking with her three young children on a street in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Something that looked like an accident but was probably a terrorist attack killed the children and later led their mother to suicide. The spontaneous response was the women's peace movement, which may have laid the ground for what years later resulted in the Good Friday Accord that brought peace to the realm.

Last summer, three Israeli teenagers were murdered by Palestinian terrorists. The movement "Women Wage Peace" came into being even before their bodies were found.

The leading figures in Northern Ireland were the aunt of the victims, Mairead Corrigan and her friend Betty Williams. The outstanding personality in "Women Wage Peace" has been one of the mothers of the murdered teenagers, Rachel Frenkel. She even sought to bring comfort to the family of the Arab boy who was murdered by Jewish terrorists in apparent retaliation.

Avirama Golan, writing in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* last year, suggested that "the movement's name implies that a society that defines itself mostly through war has no choice but to fight just as ruthlessly for peace." She wrote that "only women, speaking by virtue of their status as mothers, could penetrate the barrier of anxiety and militaristic-nationalistic mobilization that washed over most of the Jewish public."

Members of "Women Wage Peace" stand at street corners urging passers-by to sign petitions and to support their efforts. My daughter-in-law, Sarah Bernstein, the mother of my Israeli grandchildren – two already army veterans, the third serving now – is among them. Some who stop to talk to her in the street respond favourably. Others are indifferent, skeptical and even hostile but, thank God, not violent.

It was worse in Northern Ireland. In addition to being subject to disbelief, the women were accused of serving the cause of the British occupiers, and on at least one occasion, stones were thrown at them when they marched. Yet they didn't give up, and their leaders were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The argument against their Israeli counterparts is, as it was in Northern Ireland, that only powerful politicians and seasoned diplomats can make peace. Street demonstrations are at best therapy for the organizers and sometimes, alas, also opportunities for troublemakers with agendas of their own.

It's also argued that women aren't necessarily better at making peace than men. Though two of the most recognized proponents of peace standing for the Knesset in next month's general election in Israel are Tzipi Livni, who has a distinguished record of negotiating with Palestinians, and Zahava Galon, the leader of Meretz, a party committed to ceding territories and making peace with the Palestinians, there are female candidates who hold different, even anti-peace, views.

The aim is to involve both women and men in the struggle for peace. In the words of the "Women Wage Peace" handout: "The last round of violence has made it clear to all that we must break out of the spiral. Whether left or right-wing, religious or secular, Arab or Jewish, we want to live in a society characterized by normality, prosperity and human rights."

Though many Jews around the world share these hopes, most seem to support Israeli political parties that haven't placed peace prominently on their election platforms. A list of wealthy Jews abroad who've made financial contributions, published in an Israeli paper recently, suggests that neither Livni nor Galon, but rather hardliners, are the main recipients.

Of course, everybody talks peace, irrespective of party affiliation, but only some are prepared to take the risks of trying to make it. They refrain from blaming the other side for intransigence and war-mongering.

It wasn't very different in Northern Ireland, yet in the end, the seeming naiveté of ordinary women and not the ostensible sophistication of seasoned politicians carried the day. The same must happen in Israel. The alternatives are too grim to contemplate. ■

New methods needed to keep memory of Shoah alive

Eli Pfefferkorn

A foul-weather friend who saw me through some hard times told me that the institution he worked for had undertaken a collaborative project with the March of Living organization. It was to be an intergenerational effort in which Jewish students would interview survivors in order to write an essay before embarking on the trip. Would I be willing to give an interview?

I'm openly reluctant to be interviewed. The interviews are usually pre-prepared and superficial. I pleaded interview weariness, but my friend would not let it go. He found a spot on my Achilles heel and shamelessly rubbed it until I surrendered.

My two interviewers arrived at Toronto's Lipa Green Centre, one equipped with a laptop, the other with an iPhone, and both holding a sheaf of sheets in their hands. A quick glance at the sheet listing the questions bore out my foreboding.

To save the evening from platitudes, I suggested that we reverse the order of the interview. I would go first and interview them, and they would follow by interviewing me. What I wanted to find out was whether they had signed up for the March because of peer pressure, "Auschwitz fashion," or some other adolescent whim. Their immediate responses were taken straight from the Holocausters' handbook, giving off a stale odour with tired slogans such as "Never again" and "We'll turn it around."

To get around the sloganeering, I looked for language that was familiar to their own experiences and yet hinted at concentration camp realities.

"One of the most devastating encounters in the camps was the disconnect between cause and effect," I said. "In your life, you take for granted that when you work hard on your essay, you expect a decent grade, and if you feel that you've been wronged, you have recourse to complain. This was not true in a concentration camp."

Citing a paragraph from my book *The Muselmann at the Water Cooler*, I meant to illustrate the inmate's helplessness to foresee the result of an action and calculate the consequences of his tormentor's reaction to his move, being prey to his rapacious mood.

This palpable description of life under siege elicited questions that flowed from the depth of the students' being, such as "How did you survive?" and "How did you feel after liberation?"

These two questions showed the inadequacy of the questions that they had been primed to ask, which were listed as "Suggested questions/topics: Details about their experience during the Shoah: Were they in a concentration camp? Were they a partisan in the forest? What was a typical day like?" In their formulation and tone, these questions conjure up a scene in which a mom greets her returning kid from summer camp with, "How was your day in camp?

And the counsellor, was she nice to you?"

After all these years, I can't help but wonder why March organizers have failed to develop a language that would resonate with young people and at once convey the darkness of that time. The only sensible explanation I could come up with was that its leaders settled into the comfort zone of "If it ain't broke why bother tinkering with it?"

Yet while it may not be "broke," its parts are visibly worn out by age.

The intergenerational project is nearing its inevitable end. Survivors are a dying species, but memory should be kept alive. This requires shaping a tradition in which each March of the Living becomes a milestone on the road of remembrance, in the Hebrew sense of *masoret*, of passing on memory.

In the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple, our sages created constructs and rituals that preserved the memory of the Second Temple for 2,000 years. Preserving the memory of the Shoah is doable. The intellectual and financial resources are available.

What is urgently needed is to think and act upon it. ■

Eli Pfefferkorn fought in Israel's War of Independence. His memoir The Muselmann at the Water Cooler *won a Jewish Book Award in 2012. He lives in Toronto.*

The challenge of black-Jewish dialogue

Good things happen when communities work together, but is a new generation willing to continue the struggle?

RONA ARATO
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When protests erupted over Garth Drabinsky's production of the musical *Show Boat*, Karen Mock was among those who searched for ways to calm the waters. At the time, Mock, an educational psychologist specializing in human rights, hate crime and diversity issues and multicultural/anti-racist education, was the national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada.

"The minute I heard *Show Boat* was being produced in [Toronto], I knew there would be serious problems," she said. "It provided a good example of the importance of effective black-Jewish dialogue."

Morley Wolfe, a judge and human rights advocate and then-chair of the league's intercultural dialogue committee, agreed. "The production of *Show Boat* intensified the black-Jewish dialogue. Members of the black community were concerned about the people involved with the production. They feared that blacks would be stereotyped and negatively portrayed."

Wolfe invited his longtime friend, Arthur Downes, also a judge, and a man of colour, to work with him. "We already had an ongoing program with the Jamaican Society, so we invited them to a Passover lunch. I checkerboarded the tables so blacks and whites sat side by side. When they asked us, 'What's the program?' I replied that they were the program."

The result, he said, was an amazing afternoon of exchange of information and contacts.

"*Show Boat* was an explosive situation, and our dialogue program, co-chaired by Morley and Arthur, helped diffuse the tension," Mock said.

Mock began working with the League for Human Rights in 1989. She said that at the time, community groups were grappling with growing white supremacy issues. Organizations with vested interests in improving race relations were brought together under the auspices of the Ontario Race Relations Directorate to form Toronto Cares. In 1990, as a result of the relationships made in that program, members of the league, the community relations committee of Canadian Jewish Congress, the Jamaican Canadian Association and several other groups in the black community got together and created the Black/Jewish Dialogue.

Morley Wolfe, left, with longtime friend Arthur Downes at Wolfe's 80th birthday.

That initial group met monthly, alternatively in black and Jewish community venues, and encouraged the leadership of both communities to learn more about each other, to share mutual concerns and work together to combat racism and anti-Semitism.

"Regretfully, that initial dialogue program waned, more because of challenges within each community, not between the two communities," Mock recalled. "But the relationships formed helped get us through the *Show Boat* controversy in 1993, until it was clear that the rise in worldwide anti-Semitism and anti-Israel activity had spilled over into the anti-racism movement, and we felt the strong need in 1999 to intensify the Black/Jewish Dialogue."

Once again, Wolfe and Downes, served as co-chairs, and a joint planning committee did a major re-launch of the Black/Jewish Dialogue during Black History Month in 2000.

"The program took place at the B'nai Brith building under the auspices of the League for Human Rights," Wolfe said. "We invited people from the black community to join us. We expected about 60, and 300 showed up!"

The first session included a presentation, a photo exhibit and a forum on the past, present and future relationships between blacks and Jews in Toronto, and called for them to unite in common cause. The intention was to remind both communities of the many positive changes made in the past when fought for together. Roundtable discussions were set up to encourage members of both communities to share and hear each other's stories and promote social and professional contacts. The program was the launch of Blacks and Jews in Dialogue, an ongoing group that met monthly, jointly staffed by Mock and Lorne Foster, currently with York University.

"Historically, Jews and blacks in Canada had worked together and helped bring in civil rights and anti-racism legislation," Mock said. "Jewish people worked side by side with people of colour at the forefront of the human rights movement, and we wanted the next generations to understand this, and not import tensions and hatred from elsewhere, thinking their histories were similar. We wanted to educate the students who needed to know that blacks and Jews had, and could, work together."

Zanana Akande, a high school principal, whose parents immigrated to Canada from the West Indies, was a participant in the dialogue. She brought her daughter, who was in university at the time.

"Our children hadn't experienced the kind of prejudice we had lived with. Jews and blacks had been thrown together by a shared rejection by the greater community and we wanted to show them that we had been supportive of each other in order to get through tough times," Mock said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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GTA students to participate in Kindness Week

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A wave of acts of kindness is sweeping across the GTA.

Some 7,000 students, including kids from six local Jewish day schools, will be participating in the second annual Human Kindness Project event, Kindness Week, to be held March 1 to 6.

The Human Kindness Project is a non-profit organization that provides educational programs to develop positive social skills, compassion, resiliency and leadership in children and young people to affect change through acts of deliberate kindness.

"Kindness Week gives teachers the resources to teach kindness, and students the opportunity to demonstrate kindness. Programs are aimed at students from kindergarten to Grade 12," said Modya Silver, founder of Kindness Week.

By participating, students will increase their knowledge of the positive impacts of kindness on themselves and those around them, and experience how giving leads to improved self-esteem and empathy.

There is no religious or political component to Kindness Week. Any school, youth group or camp can participate.

"Last year there were 31 participating schools. We're expecting to double that this year," Silver said. "So far, we have six Jewish day schools participating: Leo Baeck, Eitz Chaim, Netivot, CHAT, Tiferes Beis Yaakov and Robbins Hebrew Academy. In addition, the Beth Sholom Hebrew School and Jewish camps Shalom, Solelim and Moshava Ba'ir are also taking part."

Silver, a 53-year-old father of five who works in high-tech marketing, said the Human Kindness Project evolved from his own personal growth.

"I study at the school of Mussar, a Jewish movement that focuses on character strength development. For a year and a half, I worked on the trait of kindness, of *chesed*. I wanted to turn that into something bigger that could potentially make a difference in Toronto and across Canada by focusing on children and youth, giving them a platform to demonstrate what I believe is their innate kindness," Silver explained.

According to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, one in three adolescents in Canada has been bullied, and one in two parents reports having a child who is a victim of bullying. As well, levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in children and youth are reaching epidemic proportions.

"Science shows that kindness can serve as a preventative measure... by giving students the tools to develop stronger social connections and a greater ability to deal with adversity," Silver said.

Students greeted 20,000 commuters in one hour at Union Station during last May's inaugural Kindness Week.

In exercising their "kindness muscle," students can go to a grocery store and help people carry bags out to the parking lot, write inspirational cards, or create a food drive, he added.

"A lot at the elementary level happens inside the school. The class will create their own homemade gratitude card and either give it to someone inside the school – a teacher or a principal – or in some classes they might walk to their nearest fire hall or ambulance station and give it to the emergency first respondents."

Silver, along with business partner Jessica Fowler and a volunteer team of 10, will be building awareness across the city during Kindness Week.

"While the thousands of students across the city are doing projects either in their schools or in the local neighbourhood, we are doing one awareness-building activity each day during Kindness Week," Silver said.

"We will take a bus load of kids to the airport and greet all the foreigners coming into the city, wish them well, let them know it's Kindness Week, and give them a treat. We will also give them a Kindness Week challenge card where they will have 24 hours to do an act of kindness and blog or post it with the hashtags #bkind and #kindnessweek," he added.

Partnering with the TTC, another activity will involve greeting commuters at three subway stations. "There will be a group of us chanting kindness slogans, while others are handing out goodies, all the while spreading awareness and kindness," Silver said.

So how can the kids keep kindness alive during the rest of the year?

"We have hired someone to design a kindness curriculum with lessons planned for grades 1 through 8 available to any of the schools that signed up for Kindness Week, who will get this material for free," he said.

"Ultimately, students who perform acts of kindness inspire greater kindness among their peers." ■

For more, visit www.kindnessweek.ca

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Israeli film aims to show 'human face of the IDF'

JODIE SHUPAC
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Bnei Akiva leaders pose with Eden Adler.
ALI MARTELL PHOTOGRAPHY

Eden Adler is, in the most superficial sense, the picture of a soldier: handsome, strapping and eminently self-possessed.

The 22-year-old Israeli was, before completing his military service two months ago, a commander at the Israeli Defence Force (IDF)'s 101st Paratrooper Brigade basic training base, and therefore, at just 21, directly responsible for the safety and operations of 42 recruits and three sergeants.

But, as Adler stressed Feb. 19 to an audience of nearly 300 people invited by the youth movement Bnei Akiva of Toronto to watch a screening of a new documentary film featuring his and four fellow soldiers' experiences, "that was a nice movie in a nice theatre, with nice seats, and popcorn, but that's not a movie. That's my life."

The film, *Beneath the Helmet: From High School to the Home Front*, is a production of Jerusalem U, an Israeli non-profit that creates films and film-based educational programs with the stated goal of "making young Jews feel proud of being Jewish and emotionally connected to Israel."

It captures the trials and triumphs of four Israeli high school graduates and Adler, their commander, as they experience eight months of basic paratrooper training.

Bnei Akiva of Toronto organized a special screening of the movie, held at Empress Walk cinema.

Before the film, DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general in Toronto, briefly addressed the audience, noting that, "As a graduate of the Bnei Aikva [movement], I certainly feel very at home in this community."

Schneeweiss explained that Jerusalem U produced *Beneath the Helmet* to make Israel more "accessible and intelligible to a contemporary audience," as well as to show the "human face of the IDF."

He emphasized the value of creating an emotional connection with Israeli soldiers, both for Jews in the Diaspora and non-Jews.

"There's no better time or place to show this film," he said. "So much that is told and written about the IDF is impersonal, and often there is a demonic representation of it. Movies like this are key... We need to fight the battle of ideas [in the international media] about Israel, but there's also nothing so compelling as seeing flesh and blood human stories of soldiers living everyday lives."

Beneath the Helmet focuses on five soldiers with diverse backgrounds and personal challenges.

Adler is the son of an American mother and a Yemenite father, raised in the Western Galilee town of Kfar Vradim. Though he's now confident and composed, the movie portrays how as an adolescent, he was quite troubled and struggled with learning disabilities – experiences that have shaped his ability to be an empathetic and effective leader.

Eilon Kohan, raised in Ashdod, is gregarious and fun-loving, and struggles to reconcile the rigours of the military with his free-spirited nature.

Mekonen Abeba is an immigrant from Ethiopia. A dedicated soldier, he must simultaneously contend with immense family stresses and financial difficulties.

Coral Amarani is from an affluent neighbourhood in Herzliya Pituach. Self-described as a formerly "spoiled child," the film shows how she blossoms as a drill sergeant at Michvei Alon, a pre-basic training program that helps soldiers from abroad integrate into the IDF.

Finally, Oren Giladi is from Switzerland, and must deal with the hardships of being a "lone soldier," unable to go home to family on weekends.

The film depicts the daily physical and emotional hardships – the exhaustion, fear, homesickness and self-doubt –endured by these soldiers, but also shows the enduring friendships that develop between them, and their growing sense of assuredness and pride about their mission to protect the State of Israel.

Adler, who spoke and took questions from the audience after the screening, said that travelling outside Israel after his military service and coming to understand the complexity of being Jewish in places such as Europe and North America, bolstered his decision to promote the film.

"I realized it's not too cool to be Jewish and in university [in North America]," he said. "I saw BDS, I saw Israeli Apartheid Week. A lot of kids don't have a tool to combat this. But after seeing the movie, I believe they have a tool. To get to know five soldiers and get a sense of who Israelis really are and who the Jewish people really are, *that's* a tool." ■

Sun TV's close lamented by pro-Israel groups

PAUL LUNGEN
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Sun News Network never acquired a mass audience comparable to established media outlets, but the now-defunct network "made a difference" and influenced the mainstream media's coverage of issues it would otherwise have ignored, said Ezra Levant, a former *Sun* host.

Sun TV tackled issues other news agencies avoided, was never afraid to mince words when it came to terrorism, and avoided kid-glove coverage of convicted terrorist Omar Khadr, he said.

Sun influenced the mainstream media, who realized "they couldn't get away with things... I think we lived rent free in the minds of the rest of the media," Levant said.

Sun TV ceased operations Feb. 13 after nearly four years in operation. Its supporters blamed the CRTC for failing to give the network the same public access enjoyed by its cable news competitors run by CBC and CTV.

Sun TV "made a difference. We had a small viewership, but our videos [online] went viral," Levant said.

In addition to reporting on the rise of Islamic extremism in Canada, Levant said *Sun TV* presented its viewers with more balanced coverage and analysis of the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as the wider Middle East. No one else in Canadian television covered the 2014 New York Muslim Day Parade float that featured caged women, he added.

Sun also reported on the chants of "Heil Hitler" during a pro-Hamas rally in Calgary. Levant noted that a print journalist avoided reporting on the contents of the chant. Afterward, *Sun* questioned police and political officials on why they didn't lay charges against four pro-Hamas demonstrators who assaulted a half-dozen counter-demonstrators in broad daylight in the streets of Calgary. Charges were eventually laid.

Levant and other former *Sun* employees have launched *TheRebel.media*, an online venture that's covering the sort of issues tackled on *Sun*. One of its first items was a report on a Toronto imam who claims 9/11 and the *Charlie Hebdo* massacres were government plots that had nothing to do with Muslims.

Spokespeople for several Jewish groups lamented the loss of *Sun TV*, both for the coverage it gave to issues they found important, and because it signalled yet another diminishing of the news media landscape.

Mike Fegelman, executive director of Honest Reporting Canada, said *Sun TV*'s reporting on terrorism, the spread of radical Islam, and "contextualizing Israel's security threats," will be missed.

Ezra Levant

Fegelman said "*Sun TV* produced critical coverage that the traditional media was afraid to touch upon," including local manifestations of radical Islam.

Sun TV provided "a counterbalance" to the news you'd see on CBC. "You'd see sources you'd never see on the CBC that present a conservative bent," he said.

Local Jewish organizations often appeared on *Sun* programs. "I fear you won't see pro-Israel Jewish organizations getting as much of a platform in the mainstream media," he added.

Martin Sampson, director of communications and marketing for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said "We had a very collegial relationship with many people at *Sun TV*."

He added: "I think the Canadian media landscape is poorer without *Sun*. I think what we want in a democracy is a whole array of voices and they gave voice to a particular part of the political spectrum – small 'c' conservative, the right."

CIJA was often called on to present its views on issues involving Israel and the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, he said.

Jonathan Halevi was a frequent guest on *Sun*. A retired Israeli Defence Forces intelligence officer, he would update viewers on the support for terrorism in Canada and in the Middle East.

"*Sun* did a very good job covering radical Islam in Canada," he said. "That was a huge contribution to the public debate."

For his part, Halevi presented *Sun* viewers with videos and other evidence that there is local support for terrorism and radical Islam. These are openly available, he said, and let viewers to hear "what they were saying in their own words."

Halevi said the mainstream media doesn't adequately report on radical Islam in Canada and avoids "the big stories" *Sun TV* was more apt to cover.

Levant said when *Sun TV* folded, he lost "the best job of my life," but making the best of a difficult situation, he said *TheRebel.media* will step into the void left by *Sun TV*'s departure to present Canadians with a conservative perspective on events. ■

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Israeli minority students aim to disprove apartheid myth

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A handful of Canadian philanthropists partnering with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) are working with minorities in Israel to bring 12 young leaders to Toronto next month to help fight myths typically propagated during Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) on North American campuses.

The Connecting Leaders in Communities (CLIC) project was established to empower students and young adults to create meaningful relationships with Israel and Israelis, especially among non-Jews, and to promote democracy and shared values.

The 12 students who will be coming to Canada in March were selected from more than 200 candidates.

They come from minorities in Israel, including the Bedouin, Druze, Muslim, Circassian, Arab Christian and Jewish communities, and highlight Israel's multicultural society, with its diverse faces and backgrounds, said Shirin Ezekiel-Hayat, the director of CLIC in Israel.

In a telephone interview from Israel, she said there are two components to the training program: providing the CLIC students with information and knowledge on Israeli history, as well as its image and its challenges; and workshops to improve the students' public-speaking and presentation skills so that they can better share their personal stories.

Israeli students in the CLIC program celebrate together before leaving for Canada.

The 12 Israeli students will be visiting Canadian campuses from March 7 to March 14 during IAW in order to counter its messaging and that of the related boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement.

The Israeli students will take part in different events, including panels and class discussions on women's rights, diversity, innovation and more.

Ezekiel-Hayat said the purpose of the program is to "encourage students to engage others in conversations and to establish ongoing relationships with other student groups and enhance relationships."

She said several campus Hillels, as well as the Ashkenaz Festival and Stand With Us, will host the campus events.

Another key component of the CLIC program is to create meaningful meetings between non-Jewish young leaders and student groups in Israel, and to bring a select group of young leaders to Israel from different communities in Canada, including from East Asian, South Asian and Aboriginal communities.

The new leadership program was created to fight anti-Semitism by connecting young Israelis and Canadians, in order to advance advocacy efforts and create allies in non-Jewish communities.

Ezekiel-Hayat noted that recent events have led to a dramatic increase in anti-Semitism worldwide.

"Our goal is to cultivate a cadre of young Israeli and non-Jewish activists who through personal example and exceptional leadership will advance our vision for the future," she said.

"We need to make an effort to reach out to different groups and campuses and in the overall community, to create allies that will promote tolerance, democracy and stand up for shared values."

Judy Zelikovitz, CIJA's vice-president of university and local partner services, said CIJA understands the value of Canadian students meeting Israelis in Canada on their own campuses.

"Also the missions to Israel... make the CLIC program unique." ■

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Seniors anxious for Wagman Centre pool to re-open

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

For a 90-year-old retiree, Murray Hoffman is pretty active, but not as active as he'd like to be.

Hoffman, like hundreds of other seniors, enjoys the water exercise programs offered in the salt-water pool at the Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Centre and Terraces of Baycrest Retirement Residence.

The trouble is, the pool has been out of commission since December and is not slated to re-open until April. And every year, the pool shuts down a couple of times a year for maintenance that usually last three or four weeks at a time.

Hoffman and his wife, Evelyn, live on their own, but they join many others from the Terrace and from outside to use the pool.

"We seniors depend on that place," Hoffman said. "It's hard for us to walk, and we can do our exercise in the pool. We depend on it. Our health depends on it."

Hoffman said it's taking too long to get the pool up and running again.

A water aerobics class at the Wagman Centre. The pool is under repair until mid-April.

According to Anna Ballon, director of the Terraces of Baycrest, there's a good reason repairs are taking so long.

To start with, the ceiling in the pool room requires repairs.

"Due to the exceptionally cold weather, Baycrest repair crews have been responding to urgent repairs on the main hospital campus related to pipe freezes and other cold-weather issues. Baycrest will make the pool room repairs a top priority as soon as the cold-weather emergency repairs to building infrastructure are completed," she stated.

In addition, she said, "the pool is closed three times a year for two weeks at a time for general maintenance.

"Baycrest apologizes to all those who depend on and enjoy the pool program. We appreciate everyone's patience while repairs are underway," Ballon said.

"The warm-water, salt-water pool... is an important part of the health and well-being of our members and residents.

"The pool was closed in December as part of a regularly scheduled maintenance inspection, which takes place three times a year. In the most recent inspection, it was determined that repairs are required to the pool area in order to continue to offer the water programs. We are addressing the work that is required and plan to re-open the pool in April.

"In the meantime, we have increased the complement of our other programs, and all members and residents are invited to attend an unlimited number of them until the pool re-opens."

Approximately 355 Wagman Centre members use the pool. ■

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CJN writer one of three honorees at Cavalcade of Stars

JODIE SHUPAC
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Cynthia Gasner, a longtime freelance journalist for *The CJN*, is one of three Jewish women being honoured with a "Women of Accomplishment" award at the 21st annual Cavalcade of Stars Evening of Jewish Music.

The event, held each year in support of the counter-missionary group Jews for Judaism, will take place March 22 at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

Gasner, 83, has been contributing news and feature stories to *The CJN* for 45 years and is known for her extensive involvement in the Jewish community.

Her contributions include working as director of information and public relations at the Kashruth Council of Canada, sitting on Baycrest's board of governors and working as a comptroller at the Jewish Camp Council of Toronto.

"I'm not that comfortable with publicity," Gasner admitted over the phone, in reference to the award. "I'm accustomed to writing about other people's accomplishments. That said, Jews for Judaism is an important cause and I'm glad to be involved."

Also being honoured is Toronto oncologist Dr. Ellen Warner, affiliate scientist at Sunnybrook Research Institute, known for her work on making annual MRI screenings standard practice for women genetically predisposed to breast cancer.

Radio personality and staunch Zionist Zelda Young, who has hosted the Jewish talk program *The Zelda Young Show* on 100.7 CHIN FM for more than 25 years, will also be honoured.

Proceeds from the Cavalcade of Stars, which last year raised more than $50,000 from ticket sales and donations, will help strengthen Jews for Judaism's educational, outreach and counselling activities, which have been established to counteract the efforts of cults and missionaries seeking to convert Jews.

The Cavalcade of Stars is the brainchild of Jerry Genesove and his wife Sandra, co-chairs of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation's entertainment and cultural committee, who have co-ordinated the musical showcase for the past two decades.

"I was just a stripling of 63 when we started doing this," Genesove, 84, a retired schoolteacher, deadpanned. "My wife must've been about 23."

He paused for effect. "Well, that's not true. She *is* younger than me, but who isn't?"

Cynthia Gasner is one of three women being honoured at the March 22 event.

The evening will feature a showcase of musical talent from the community, as well as the presentation of the "Women of Accomplishment" awards.

Genesove noted that all three recipients were selected for their deep and diverse commitments to the Jewish community.

"So many people have told me Dr. Ellen Warner has saved their lives [when they were sick with cancer]," Genesove said. "Zelda Young is really dedicated and has been doing what she's been doing for many years... and Cynthia [Gasner] I've known personally for years. She always comes out to support the Jewish community, and she's very well-liked."

The 10 or so acts at the show will include singing from Shaarei Shomayim's Rabbi Noah Cheses; Cantor Zvi Katzman and "the Shaarei Shomayim Enthusiasts"; the synagogue's Rabbi Chaim Strauchler delivering "rabbinical humour"; and a performance by the Netivot HaTorah choir.

Genesove, who said most of the money raised comes from anonymous individual donors, has been fundraising over the telephone for months, with his wife keeping records.

They have already collected about $40,000, and are hoping, in the coming weeks, to surpass last year's $50,000.

"It's important to me," Genesove said. "When I was 17, I remember being at the Hadassah bazaar and someone coming up and telling me some missionary stuff. I remember I was shocked... These people take our Torah and turn it around so you'd think Christ was our messiah. They pervert it. That's why [Jews for Judaism] is a very important cause."

He emphasized the support of Shaarei Shomayim, which provides the Cavalcade of Stars with a venue each year.

The event begins at 6:30 p.m. Admission is $25 per person, $39 per couple. ■

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ONE WHO SAVES A LIFE, SAVES AN ENTIRE WORLD

New Winnipeg pro-Israel group makes presence known

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

A recent appearance here by anti-Israel activist Jeff Halper highlighted the presence of a new player on the pro-Israel side in town.

Almost half of the 50 or so people who showed up at the Free Press Café for Halper's interview with *Jewish Post & News* publisher/editor Bernie Bellan were affiliated with the new Winnipeg Friends of Israel.

"We are a grassroots organization that was established by individuals who are passionate and care deeply about Israel" says Winnipeg Friends of Israel co-founder Yolanda Papini-Pollock. "Our organization is made up of various people from all walks of life, including people from several religious groups."

An Israeli-born teacher and documentary filmmaker who has lived in Winnipeg for the past 24 years, Papini-Pollock got the ball rolling on Winnipeg Friends of Israel last summer after the Gaza War.

"I was frustrated by the media bias, the coverage without context, the attempts to delegitimize Israel and deny our people the right of self-defence," she said. "Violent demonstrations, hate crimes, anti-Semitic comics, blood libels allegations and hostile media coverage were a daily event that led people to question whether Israel has the right to exist or defend herself against repeated terror attacks.

"During the Operation it became evident that we can no longer observe the matter as bystanders and watch a 'big lie' grow bigger without challenging it with dissemination of the truth. I started emailing friends and found that there were many others who shared my frustration."

The group held its first program at Papini-Pollock's home this past December. The guest speaker was Kasim Hafeez, who was at the time doing outreach and education programming for B'nai Brith locally. As reported last year in *The CJN*, Hafeez is a British-born Pakistani Muslim who switched from being virulently anti-Israel to supporting Zionism after reading Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz's *The Case for Israel*. Because of his understanding of Islam and the anti-Israel perspective, he is able to counter many myths and teach Israel advocates how to more effectively counter anti-Israel arguments.

Hafeez has now spoken three times to Winnipeg Friends of Israel at the homes

Yolanda Papini-Pollock

of Bernie Bellan and Papini-Pollock, most recently on Feb. 24. Winnipeg Friends of Israel supporters also heard from Steve McDonald, associate director of communications for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), who came from Toronto to address the group.

In addition to these programs, the group has been encouraging supporters to buy Israeli products that are locally available. Members have also been monitoring local media for anti-Israel bias and advocating for Israel on social media.

"Our objectives are to proactively promote Israel during peaceful periods, to effectively defend Israel during times of war or when Israel is misrepresented in the media, disseminate true information about Israel thought mainstream media and expose the true Israel that we all love and admire," Papini-Pollock said.

Papini-Pollock said the organization has a Twitter account and a Facebook page, with more than 145 followers so far, and is working on developing a website. She said as many as 30 individuals have attended the speakers programs and interest is growing.

"We have been getting a lot of help from Shelley Faintuch [community relations director for Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and CIJA's associate director of local partner services] as well as support from Bridges for Peace [a Christian Zionist organization with branches across Canada]," Papini-Pollock said. "We are prepared to work with whoever wants to work with us."

Winnipeg Friends of Israel's next program will be an evening learning about minority groups in the Muslim world. The event will feature a presentation by a local Yazidi woman. The Yazidis are a minority group based in northwestern Iraq whose lands have fallen under the control of ISIS and whose people have been murdered in large numbers over the past few months. ■

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American-Israeli critic of Israel makes pitch in Winnipeg

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Israel academic Jeff Halper brought his message to Winnipeg earlier this month and was grilled by local newspaper editor Bernie Bellan in a question-and-answer session at a local venue.

Halper, an American-born Israeli academic who is noted as a virulent critic of Israel, is the co-founder and director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. Its mission is to challenge the Israeli policy of demolishing Palestinian homes in the West Bank and to organize Israelis, Palestinians and international volunteers to jointly rebuild demolished homes.

On Feb. 8 and 9, Halper brought his cross-Canada tour to Winnipeg, sponsored by Independent Jewish Voices.

His itinerary consisted of a presentation at a church on Feb. 8, sparsely attended talks at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba on Feb. 9, and, the highlight, a one-on-one live interview Feb. 9 in the evening with Bellan, editor and publisher of the *Jewish Post & News* at the Winnipeg Free Press Café downtown.

The café seats about 50, and just over half were filled by local supporters of Halper and the rest by supporters of Israel. While Bellan is pro-Israel, he is on record as encouraging a diverse number of voices to be heard and strongly believes in dialogue. He said that he tried in his questions to steer clear of Halper's favourite subject – Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes.

Bellan posed a number of challenging questions to Halper. "Why," he asked, "do you focus solely on Israel when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is just a small piece of the larger war with Islamic extremism?"

Halper responded by quoting U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to the effect that solving the Israel-Palestinian conflict won't resolve all the issues in the Middle East, but it would remove a major irritant. He also referred to Israel as a European colonial society and mentioned Americans arm sales to Israel.

"I can't do much about the rest of the world," he said. "But, as an Israeli Jew, I will do what I can to bring about change in Israel."

Bellan asked him about the likelihood of there being a one-state or two-state solution to the conflict.

Jeff Halper, left, and Bernie Bellan on Feb. 9
MYRON LOVE PHOTO

"The PLO recognized Israel in 1988, but Israel has consistently refused to recognize the Palestinians and wants to keep all of Judea and Samaria and Gaza," Halper said. "I have to conclude that the two-state solution is dead."

Bellan asked about the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement's boycott of Israeli universities and faculty, which Halper is on record as supporting, suggesting that Halper himself would be affected by it

"The boycott only applies to Israeli universities that are part of Israel's military-industrial complex," Halper replied. "Individual Israeli scholars aren't affected."

He went on at length about Israel violating Palestinians' human rights, with reference to reports by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and he claimed that Israel ranks high on the U.S. State Department's list of countries that violate human rights.

He further accused Israel of wanting to hold on to the occupied territories in order to have testing grounds for Israeli-made weapons and said that Israel attacked Hamas in Gaza last summer so that it could show off its weapons systems to potential international buyers.

During the discussion, Halper praised Bellan for his willingness to provide a forum for both sides.

Following a question-and-answer session, Bellan expressed his satisfaction with the evening.

"I hope to see more such events where supporters and opponents of Israel can engage in respectful dialogue," he said. ■

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YouTube parody offers religious take on Tinder

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

A still from *Religious Tinder*, which had more than 13,000 views as of last week.

The video begins with a stereotype of a religious Jew – payot, black hat and all – sitting next his bored, eye-rolling, nail-filing daughter, swiping through the eligible bachelors on Religious Tinder, trying to find a mensch, or "bubbie's wet dream" to marry his daughter.

"Rabbi? Lawyer? Butcher? Another rabbi?" the father enthusiastically offers.

"At Religious Tinder, we've simplified the arranged marriage process without losing the essentials," an actor explains in the parody video of the highly popular smartphone dating app Tinder.

"That's how we make wedding your child fit in the palm of your firm, but fair, hand."

The video, which is available on YouTube and has been viewed more than 13,000 times in about a week, is the brainchild of four Toronto-based Jewish friends, Adam Cohen, Nir Zahavi, Jeff Topol and Jon Corbin.

"The natural dichotomy between Tinder, the pre-eminent hook-up app on the market, and the restrictive world of modern Jewish Orthodoxy, was something I felt would make for a hilarious and creative endeavour," said Cohen, a 30-year-old comedy writer and producer.

Corbin who managed the post-production process through his production company, Corbin Visual, said, "I've seen a lot of parody videos online these days and knew that if we were going to throw our hat into the mix, it had to be a standout piece."

Cohen said he and Zahavi had been brainstorming ideas about the concept of videos that parody popular apps for a while. "We were looking for a twist we found interesting and engaging, and entertaining to people."

While Cohen and Topol wrote the piece, Zahavi funded it and Corbin handled post-production. This is the first video parody the four friends have worked on together, but Cohen said in the 2-½ years since he left his law career behind and dove head first into the comedy scene – much to the disappointment of his parents – he's worked on similar projects.

"I did a piece called Mother Russia, which was a musical parody of Russian homophobia right before Russia hosted the Olympics, and it got about 200,000 hits on YouTube and we got interviewed by the *Global News* morning show," Cohen said.

Cohen and his friends hope to use *Religious Tinder* as a springboard to create a comedy brand. "We came up with a whole bunch of different ideas," Cohen said, adding he hopes to produce other parodies that match apps with outdated traditions, such as, an Uber-like app for a private taxi service run by the Amish, and eBay for slave traders.

"We're thinking of branding it as modern apps but with a kind of sarcastic edge to it… edgier for sure, like an Instagram account devoted entirely to cannibalism. It's weird, kind of twisted stuff," he said.

"*Religious Tinder* is our initial foray into whether this concept can breathe and survive… We have these ideas, and we have an idea of where we want them to go, but at this point, we want to wait a little while longer to see what the response is to this piece."

So far, Cohen said the response has been largely positive, and he hasn't heard from people who were offended. "Personally I don't think it really crosses a line. I've done edgier stuff like Mother Russia and that got a whole lot of negative responses with the positive, and we continue to today. That was very controversial subject matter, whereas this is safer, more family-friendly." ■

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OPINION

Closing Ottawa's Jewish high school is a mistake

Faith-based education that ends at adolescence is ineffective in inculcating a commitment to one's tradition

Anne Vallely

What if the research is right? What if all our efforts to provide our children with a rich Jewish education during their elementary years are simply sowing the seeds for an adolescent rejection of their tradition?

This, it appears, is precisely what is happening. Kathryn Owens, a clinical supervisor at Jewish Family Services in Ottawa, spoke recently of rather disturbing research findings: faith-based education that ends when adolescence begins is profoundly ineffective in inculcating a commitment to one's tradition. Worse, it may ensure its rejection. In the subconscious mind of late adolescence, early faith-based education comes to be associated with SpongeBob and games of hide-and-seek – in other words, with all that one has out-grown.

I have taught world religion courses to thousands of university students over the past 11 years. In that time, I have encountered the paradox of which Owens spoke. Students who had early but unsustained exposure to their faith traditions (Jewish, Catholic, Hindu, etc.) were typically the weakest students, often cynical, disinterested, and usually profoundly ignorant not only of other traditions, but of their own as well. I often get to know these students more than their peers, since, near the end of term, they're the ones who come in to my office in droves to try to salvage failing grades.

By contrast, students who have had absolutely no prior religious education are often among those who do the best. Their interest in their own tradition emerges in the context of maturity, and is an expression of their own self-directed growth. They are eager to know more.

Owens explained that the adolescent mind should be thought of as "under construction." Adolescence is a time of tremendous growth in cognitive capacities, most pointedly in the areas of self-reflection and critical thinking. During this tumultuous and creative process, the stuff of childhood is up for grabs, to be retained or set aside. For whatever reason (and there are a great many intervening societal factors), the commitment to a faith-based tradition is commonly set aside – often forcefully.

Every culture institutes rites of passage at precisely this juncture because we know intuitively what modern psychology now confirms: adolescence represents a kind of "birth," a profound rupture with early life that needs to be honoured and handled with care.

Students who continue in faith-based education through their adolescent years go through the same process of transition as every other adolescent. But now they confront a tradition that bears little resemblance to the spinning of dreidels and performance of Purim theatrics for the delight of bubbies and zaides (all of which are precious and wonderful engagements for the young child).

Now they confront the full force of a grand, imposing and intellectually demanding tradition that has nourished among the most fertile minds known to humanity. And here, most crucially, they find their own intellectual queries and existential yearnings being asked and debated within their tradition. This is true every bit as much for the secular Jew as for the Orthodox. Jewish tradition's deep philosophical roots transcend sectarianism. Indeed, they speak directly to the human condition.

And that is why I believe the recent decision to close Ottawa's lone Jewish high school after this academic year is a profound mistake. The school provides an outstanding intellectual learning environment, one that's welcoming to the entire Jewish community. It is a place where students apply the same skills of critical thinking to every subject and where they excel academically (as evidenced by a surfeit of university scholarships).

To be sure, the high school is in a very precarious place, but as a vital limb of the Ottawa Jewish communal body, it is in need of healing, not amputation. Unfortunately, it has not yet received any. Instead, the high school has suffered neglect, treated as the orphan child.

The school's board has felt compelled to see the school close because it is not financially viable at current enrolment levels. But this is like a physician who, after reading the declining vital signs of a patient without ever administering oxygen, pronounces the patient's doom. The board's job is bigger than that of financial responsibility and requires a vision more expansive than that of an accountant.

Ottawa's Jewish high school needs healing. Let us try as a community to provide it with that. ■

Anne Vallely is an associate professor in the department of classics and religious studies at the University of Ottawa.

Play vs. pray: Which twin has the better life?

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Larry, left, and Jeff Deverett

The event poster, featuring a playful split image of identical twins Jeff and Larry Deverett engaged in divergent activities – Jeff swinging a golf club, Larry davening at the Kotel, the caption underneath reading "Jeff plays, Larry prays" – belied the ultimate seriousness of a talk held Feb. 17 at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation.

The Toronto-born brothers, 53, were in town to promote their 2013 co-authored book, *Play or Pray*, which explores how, after Larry became a ba'al teshuvah at 30, their lives deviated radically. It also presents the twins' decades-long debate over who has the better life.

About 30 people came to hear the twins describe their upbringing, Larry's transition and their struggle to comprehend the other's life choices.

Despite the frequent banter and mutual ribbing one might expect from twins, the talk veered into weighty territory, as the men broached subjects such as the meaning of life, the existence of God and the afterlife. It was followed by a lively and, at times, charged audience question period.

Jeff, who currently lives a secular life in San Diego, and Larry, who lives observantly in Israel, began by recounting what they said was a happy childhood: Their family belonged to the Reform Temple Sinai Congregation, both had many friends, and they were good at sports.

They explained that they are mirror image twins, meaning they exhibit some mirror image traits: Larry is right-handed and has a dimple on his right cheek, while Jeff is left-handed and dimpled on the left. Each has a somewhat misshapen thumb on the opposite hand.

Strangely, Larry has four daughters, Jeff four sons. Jeff joked they might also have a "psychological mirror image feature."

"Basically, at 30, I drank the Kool-Aid," said Larry, who works in business and developed his faith after studying with the Orthodox organization Aish HaTorah.

"I became religious. My wife and I…We took on the Torah, Shabbat… Five years ago, we made aliyah."

Jeff works in film, lives with his wife and children in a home overlooking a golf course and, though he enjoys certain cultural aspects of Judaism and even sends his kids to Jewish day school, is agnostic and staunchly non-religious.

"Larry thinks my life is wasted. He feels bad for me," Jeff said. "He calls me a 'comfort-seeking Jew.'"

But Jeff thinks Larry is the real comfort-seeker. The leap of faith needed to believe in God, he argued, and a Jewish God, entails a fabrication or self-deception that helps one contend with the harsh uncertainties of being human.

"As a rational human being," Jeff said, "it doesn't make sense – a physical and non-physical being can never connect… I'll never truly know my purpose – where I came from or where I'm going [after I die]. [Larry] just made it up. *That's* more comfortable! It's uncomfortable *not* to know."

Larry countered that many things in life – evolution, nature – seem logical, but human beings have simply "gotten used to them," and that physicality and spirituality are intertwined.

"Yes, certain things we cannot know for sure," Larry said, "But we can get closer to them… We owe it to ourselves to find out."

In addition to arguing that his life has deeper meaning because of his relationship with God, Larry said Jews' assimilation and materialism is throwing the rest of the world "off base."

"There's more intermarriage and non-observance among Jews now, and that leads to the world going crazy, to things like ISIS," he said. "Jews are a light unto the nations. We're steering the ship for the rest of the world."

He added that Jeff's partial cultural observance of customs such as Shabbat doesn't suffice. "It's not about the food or the family – all that's really nice," Larry said. "But that's just the window dressing. Shabbat's not a vacation day. It's a taste [of divinity]."

Jeff said the Judaism he practises gives him a sense of community, though, ultimately, he would accept his kids intermarrying.

"You'd really be OK if Judaism didn't exist in your family in three generations?" Larry asked.

"Honestly, I'd be happy if, in three generations, religion didn't exist at all," Jeff replied.

Several audience members challenged Jeff on his claims that humans cannot prove God's existence, and one woman said Jeff's intimation that religious people aren't as broad-minded as secular insulted her.

The brothers concluded by embracing and insisting that, despite their differences, they love each other very much. ■

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GUEST VOICE

The JDL is neither needed nor welcome in Montreal

Rabbi Boruch Perton

Like many Montrealers, I received an invitation recently to attend a meeting of the Montreal branch of the Jewish Defence League (JDL). Growing up in New York in the late '70s, I had a personal connection with the JDL. In fact, my synagogue's official youth group was the JDL.

We marched in parades in our signature fatigue pants, JDL fist T-shirts and cool-looking berets. We demonstrated for Soviet Jewry and chained ourselves to the Russian consulate chanting, "Every Jew a .22," referring to handguns and not passively ignoring the plight of fellow Jews.

We also learned self-defence and attended classes focusing on Jewish pride and identity. I felt like I was part of something great and that I was protecting the Jewish Nation every time I shouted, "Never Again!"

Several years later, I went to Israel and continued my connection with the JDL, meeting the group's founder, Rabbi Meir Kahane. Joining him for Shabbat meals and attending his weekly Torah studies classes, I was taken in by his charisma and dynamism. However, I also remember the encouragement to break laws and get arrested, because after all, "You're still a minor. How much trouble can you really get into anyway?" Thank God I never followed that advice.

I also recall the leadership, including Rabbi Kahane, spewing hatred: It was not uncommon to hear the same words the greatest anti-Semites throughout the ages used toward us, but directed toward Arabs. "Expulsion," and even worse expressions, were a part of the JDL's vocabulary.

Quebec is a very special and unique place. I am an individual who is here by choice. I moved here from Ottawa, and prior to living there, I lived in the United States. Over the years, I have been offered opportunities to return to the States, and each time I turned down positions because this is where, until I make aliyah, I choose to call home.

One of the greatest elements that make Quebec, and Montreal in particular, so special is that our society cultivates and fosters a sense of community with members of other cultures and faiths. Interfaith celebrations are common here. So are social settings that cultivate respect and appreciation for our diversity.

I just met with a young couple to plan their wedding, and they asked if I could co-officiate with their closest friend – an Islamic notary. The answer was yes, and I am looking forward to getting to know my new friend Karim better. What other province or state has a curriculum called "Ethics and Religious Culture," whose purpose is to educate our children about other faiths and cultures? We are a city that holds summer festivals celebrating our unique diversity. What a wonderful place to live and raise children who will appreciate others and be part of a broader world while understanding and valuing their own unique identity as Jews. I am proud to be a Montrealer.

> *Our society cultivates and fosters a sense of community with members of other cultures and faiths*

I denounce fundamentalism in every community – Jewish, Arab, Christian or any other group – and will speak out against it whenever I can. Any faith or group that preaches hatred instead of peace and building bridges needs to be condemned and has no place anywhere, and certainly not in our city. I applaud any group that teaches Jewish pride and how to stand up strong and proud as Jews and Zionists.

I abhor in the strongest manner possible any organization that in the guise of pride, teaches and instils racism and bigotry. The JDL does just that. While their message may sound convincing, it is no more than hate-mongering. I encourage the Jewish community to send a very strong message to anyone who wishes to support and bring the JDL to Montreal to say, "Don't set up shop here. Move along."

I am not putting my head in the sand.

The solution is never to become what we despise most. ■

Rabbi Perton is the spiritual leader of Beth Zion Congregation in Cote St-Luc, Que.

JDL Canada, CIJA clash over Montreal expansion

JANICE ARNOLD
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The militant Jewish Defence League of Canada (JDL) came to Montreal to find recruits for its resistance against those it views as radical Islamists, but its first battle here is with the leadership of the Jewish community.

JDL director Meir Weinstein, who revived the controversial group in Toronto about six years ago, blasted the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) for its denunciation of the JDL's attempt to form a Montreal chapter.

Before about 100 people on Feb. 16 at Ruby Foo's Hotel, Weinstein called it a "disgrace" that CIJA would speak against the JDL. He said CIJA's main spokesperson on the issue, Rabbi Reuben Poupko, is "two-faced," because Weinstein alleged he used to be a JDL supporter.

(Rabbi Poupko responded to *The CJN*, "I question the premise that one's views in 1981 are relevant to this discussion.")

He was referring to a CIJA statement issued a few hours before the meeting in which Rabbi Poupko, a CIJA board member, is quoted as saying: "The Jewish community of Quebec categorically rejects the sensationalist tactics of the JDL and rejects its claim of ensuring the safety of Quebec Jews and their institutions.

"The JDL is a small, marginal group that does not receive any substantial support within our community. By claiming that Jews need a rapid response team to anti-Semitic threats, the JDL is irresponsibly contributing to the creation of a climate of fear within the Jewish community."

Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre also tweeted that the group is not welcome nor needed in Montreal.

Those who attended the widely publicized meeting – the second attempt by the JDL in six months to set up a chapter in Montreal – appeared to be supportive of Weinstein's message that Jews are at risk and the established community is not doing enough to protect them.

Many in the mostly middle-aged and older crowd gave Weinstein a standing ovation when he "pledged never again will we turn a blind eye and place our faith in false leadership."

The evening was without incident. About a dozen JDL "marshals," burly young men in black jackets emblazoned with "never again" and clenched fist on a yellow star logo, with bullet-proof vests underneath, patrolled the venue.

Both Weinstein and Julius Suraski, the JDL's co-ordinator for Ontario, described themselves as sons of Holocaust survivors and several times invoked the Holocaust while painting a dire picture of the peril Jews face today. Muslim extremists want to kill Jews, they said, and Jews have to know how to defend themselves physically.

However, they stressed that JDL members

Jewish Defence League of Canada director Meir Weinstein, right, speaks with audience members after Montreal meeting.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

aren't vigilantes and don't carry guns or other weapons. They say they're law-abiding and work with police and government, monitoring and infiltrating groups that they deem a danger to Jews.

(This was backed up by CIJA, which stated that the JDL in Canada has "never committed any criminal or violent act, nor has it been accused of inciting hatred.")

Suraski noted that he is active with the federal Conservative Party, heads his riding association, and was a member of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's delegation on his official visit to Israel last year.

Nevertheless, Weinstein said, "We have to be on the street and show we are not afraid of the bullies."

Weinstein, who first became involved with the JDL in 1979, expressed admiration for its American founder, the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose extremist Kach Party was banned from Israel's Knesset, for his "use of violence to make Soviet Jewish emigration a page 1 issue."

He also has no regrets about his past. "In the 1980s, when the neo-Nazis tried to attack me or other Jews, I'm not ashamed to say that we smashed them," Weinstein said.

One audience member, who described himself as "on the fence" about the JDL, asked Weinstein about Israeli Baruch Goldstein's murder of 29 Palestinians in 1994. Goldstein was a onetime member of the JDL.

Weinstein said he would have stopped Goldstein if he had known ahead of time. "But you have to understand the context: Goldstein was a doctor who was saving Jews and Arabs, who saw mobs massacring Jews, who was held back by mobs from treating them. He lost it."

Suraski said the JDL now has "a good core of supporters" in Montreal and will establish a chapter, with details of its activities to be made known soon. It's also trying to form chapters in Ottawa, Calgary and Vancouver.

Jack Kincler, chair of the independent Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, told *The CJN* he did not think his organization could work with the JDL, but added: "We need both. We complement each other. We are more academic, and they are more action-oriented."

Another well-known community member, Evelyn Bloomfield Schachter, was unreserved in her support for the JDL.

"The community's *sha shtil* ["be quiet" policy] is not working. We need to defend ourselves," she said.

Similar views were voiced by others.

Lisa Benhaim, a signed-up Montreal member who used to live in Toronto, said she is impressed by how the JDL behaves at pro-Islamist rallies there. "My daughter was at Concordia [University] for three years, and she was afraid to wear a Jewish symbol. Something is wrong here. Our youth need to be ready, to be educated."

She believes many Montreal Jews "secretly" support the JDL.

As Weinstein and Suraski noted, the JDL works with other faith groups – Christians, Hindus and even Muslims, of whom they named a few.

Two non-Jewish friends in attendance were introduced: André Drouin, a councillor of the small Mauricie town of Hérouxville, who authored the 2007 "code of conduct" for immigrants, targeting supposed Muslim and other minority religion practices, which made international news; and Valerie Price, a local leader of Act! for Canada, a group that warns Islamism threatens democratic values.

Price said she has admired the JDL since members drove in from Toronto to join a demonstration outside Huntingdon town hall against its mayor, Stéphane Gendron, for his anti-Israel remarks in 2012.

The last word went to artist Haim Sherff, who said he had been an Israeli air force member: "Your group is absolutely necessary. There is no need for us to be sheep for the slaughter any more." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 26, 2015

El Paso rabbi to tell the story of hidden Jews

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The story of the expulsion of Spanish Jews is pretty well known. In 1492, after about 100 years of persecution and forced conversions, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella ordered the Jews of Spain to leave.

An estimated 200,000 departed but tens of thousands of others remained as Christian converts.

One study, which has been disputed, suggested that nearly 20 per cent of the people in Spain and Portugal possess DNA reflecting a Sephardi Jewish heritage.

Many of those who remained practiced Judaism in secret – the so-called crypto-Jews (or hidden Jews). Some departed for the new world, heading for border areas where they would be far from those who would look too closely as to how they lived their lives.

That's where Rabbi Stephen Leon comes into this story. In 1986, Rabbi Leon, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., moved to the west Texas city of El Paso, across the border from Juarez, Mexico. Within days, he experienced three incidents in succession that led him to further study the fate of crypto-Jews, also known as *anusim*, the Hebrew word for "forced ones."

Rabbi Leon will tell the story of hidden Jews in an address at Congregation Darchei Noam on March 9.

Shortly after his arrival in El Paso, Rabbi Leon received a phone call from a Mexican Catholic man in Juarez who had some questions for him.

They met at his synagogue, and this is the story Rabbi Leon tells. The man's grandmother had just died. Together they had shared a ritual every Friday night ever since he was a little boy. His grandmother would take him to a room in private, light two candles and say some prayers in a language he didn't understand. Then they would rejoin the rest of the family for dinner.

When he mentioned the weekly ritual to his family, they didn't want to talk about it, though they referred him to a local priest for an answer. The priest told him that hundreds of Catholic women in Juarez perform the same ritual, but he should see a rabbi to explain it.

So he asked the rabbi, "What does this mean?"

It's actually a Jewish custom, the rabbi explained.

When he heard that, "I thought he was going to fall off his chair," Rabbi Leon said.

The fellow had grown up as a Catholic with no idea what a rabbi was, let alone what the Spanish Inquisition or the Spanish expulsion were.

The Juarez incident was the first of three in succession that led the rabbi to an interest in *anusim*. The spiritual leader at Congregation B'nai Zion, a Conservative synagogue, he's also known as rabbi for the crypto-Jews of the southwestern United States.

Over the years, more *anusim* have come

Rabbi Stephen Leon in his office

forward, reclaiming their heritage, while at the same time, there has been outreach toward them.

Rabbi Leon cites Rabbi Juan Mejia, who hails from Bogota but now lives in Oklahoma City, as a descendant of *anusim* who has assisted others in Latin America reclaim their past and convert to Judaism.

Rabbi Mejia studied in Jerusalem and is the first descendant of *anusim* to be ordained as a rabbi. He regularly visits communities in South America, Spain and Mexico, advising crypto-Jews about their heritage and how to return to the Jewish fold.

The Internet and social media are useful tools in keeping in touch with *anusim*, and they're used by *anusim* to find more materials to help them connect to Judaism, Rabbi Leon said.

For his part, Rabbi Leon was instrumental in organizing the Sephardic-Hispanic Anousim Learning Center in El Paso, and he collaborates with Sonya Loyo, a returned Jew, in the annual Sephardic Anousim Conference.

Rabbi Leon has converted 60 families to Judaism through the beit din he operates, but he acknowledges that many *anusim* bristle at the requirement that they convert. He can understand why.

"Do they have to convert to something that was stolen from them?" he said.

So how many *anusim* are there?

There is no definitive answer, he said. The exact number of Jews who were lost to Judaism – either expelled, converted or killed – is estimated to range from 200,000 to 800,000. (Other sources put the number who converted at close to 50,000.) If you take a middle number, say 300,000 to 400,000 and extrapolate from 1492 to today, there might have been 100 million Jews alive today, he suggested.

It's all very speculative, Rabbi Leon acknowledged. But Latinos are a fast-growing population, which means there are many potential Jews out there, he said.

Even for those interested in rejoining the Jewish People, many constraints arise.

"People have had difficulty being accepted by the Jewish community and they face rejection by their Catholic families." They've been told they will go to hell, Rabbi Leon said.

Still, 500 years of tenacity are difficult to ignore. The first fellow he met, the man from Juarez, attends Yom Kippur services at his shul every year.

But he comes alone. ■

Jews and blacks have led anti-racism efforts in past

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

After the initial Black History Month launch, on June 5, 2000, about 60 participants who wanted an ongoing program attended the second meeting of the Black/Jewish Dialogue and Action Group, facilitated by Carol Tator and Hamlin Grange. The goal was to set up and prioritize initiatives to pursue over the coming year. They were divided into six tables, and each set up a list of goals. These included developing a program designed to heal tensions between the black and Jewish communities, organize a youth forum and engage in outreach educational programs, and develop a resource pool.

According to Downes, the goal was to "open channels of dialogue and discuss in a forthright manner areas of mutual concern." Those areas, he said, covered topics as diverse as dating and employment.

"It was about respecting other people's cultural traditions. What we accomplished was learning how to speak to each other. It educated all of us," he said. "For example, I quite often advocate for Jews when there aren't any in the room."

Mock said the urgency for dialogue and joint action programs had increased because the Mike Harris government had eliminated the anti-racism divisions of the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, and of the Ministry of Education. "The non-government organizations (NGOs) took over. We did leadership development to equip people to deal with situations as they arose. Our efforts ultimately helped bring in further anti-racism and equity strategies for the province by keeping the issues alive."

The group produced a manual documenting the history of blacks and Jews in Canada and offering suggestions and strategies for programming. One of those programs was a Passover seder titled "From Oppression to Freedom: Our Shared Experience and Vision," in which the black and Jewish participants shared

> *What we accomplished was learning how to speak to each other*

the Passover experience and their common historical links to slavery.

Although the formal Blacks and Jews in Dialogue group has been discontinued, there are attempts from time to time to keep the conversation going. More recently, a play titled *The Black-Jew Dialogues* has been presenting similar themes. The play, which was written to stimulate discussion about race and diversity, was performed at Ryerson University in February 2012. The two-actor play explores the absurdity of prejudice and racism and the power of diversity. The program combines fast-paced sketches, improvisations, multi-media, puppets, a game show and a post-show discussion.

Mitch Reiss is a student at Ryerson who helped bring the show, which originated in Boston, to Toronto. The show was sponsored by Hillel, the Caribbean Students' Association and the United Black Students Association. The performance was open to the public.

"The community was very responsive," Reiss said. "All the groups came together to talk about stereotypes. For the groups involved, it created a better commonality in the micro sense. It opened up conversations."

Mock points out that Jewish people working side by side with people of colour have historically been at the forefront of the human rights and anti-racism movement in Canada and the United States. "One hopes," she adds, "that the new generation will continue the struggle – together." ■

INTERNATIONAL

David Cohen becomes CIA No. 2

RON KAMPEAS
JTA, WASHINGTON, D.C.

David Cohen's path to second in command at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is, in many respects, a typical one in Washington, D.C.

A seasoned Ivy League lawyer who began his career defending the right of religious groups to display menorahs on government property, Cohen was the Obama administration's top Iran sanctions official as the Treasury Department's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence.

But in other respects, the 51-year-old Cohen's ascent to deputy director is less typical. A number of Jews have long alleged they hit speed bumps in the U.S. security services, their careers in some cases temporarily obstructed over security clearance questions. For others, accusations of espionage based on ties to Israel, however remote, have driven them from their jobs following home raids and round-the-clock surveillance.

Two federal employees – Adam Ciralsky, a CIA lawyer who was investigated in 1999, and David Tenenbaum, a civilian army engineer whose home was raided by the FBI in 1997 – uncovered evidence they were targeted because they're Jewish.

Ciralsky learned his distant relationship to Israel's first and long dead president, Chaim Weizmann, and the fact his father had purchased Israel Bonds were held against him. Tenenbaum was deemed suspicious in part because he spoke Hebrew, even though it was helpful in performing his official duties as a liaison to Israeli counterparts.

Ciralsky and Tenenbaum each filed suit against their respective agencies, both of which ultimately admitted the men were victims of religious discrimination. Ciralsky quietly dropped his case in 2012. Tenenbaum's case is ongoing.

Jewish leaders said those incidents, along with the most notorious case of a Jewish government career run aground – the Navy intelligence analyst Jonathan Pollard, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987 for passing state secrets to Israel – are now fading from memory. In their wake, they said, the outlook for Jews at the highest levels of the U.S. security apparatus are improving.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said complaints to his organization of bias against Jews in government have diminished nearly to zero in recent years.

"The problem related to Pollard and the stereotype of dual loyalty," said Foxman, whose group until two years ago provided diversity training to the CIA. "I would say we have mostly overcome the residual issue of trust of Jews in intelligence issues."

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice-chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, called Cohen "one of the heroes" of the effort to pressure Iran economically over its nuclear program and said his appointment shows the government is sensitive to cases of past bias.

Jewish-Americans have been working in American intelligence since the days of the CIA's predecessor, the World War II-era Office of Strategic Services. Their skills were in demand in part because so many were recent immigrants, or were the children of immigrants, and were familiar with European languages and customs.

Some Jewish agents enjoyed long careers in U.S. security agencies with nary a hiccup. A smaller number have risen to its upper echelons. John Deutsch served as CIA director for 17 months in 1995-96, the second Jew to hold that position. James Schlesinger, who was born Jewish but converted to Christianity as an adult, was CIA director for several months in 1973. Another David Cohen was deputy director of operations in the 1990s.

The number of Jewish security personnel who have hit roadblocks isn't clear. Lawyers who represent security personnel denied the clearance necessary for advancement say they've fielded dozens of complaints from Jews.

Sheldon Cohen, a lawyer who handles such cases, said he's won every Jewish case he's taken. He said he was likelier to encounter problems with clients from Muslim countries and has lost a number of those cases.

David Cohen

One reason David Cohen may have avoided such pitfalls is that he rose up through the Treasury, a relative latecomer to the intelligence game, but which has become one of the busiest intelligence hubs in government. The department Cohen headed there, the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, has existed only since 2004. His immediate predecessor, Stuart Levey, also was Jewish.

The CIA did not consent to an interview on Cohen.

Cohen is from Boston and in high school became friends with Jamin Dershowitz, the son of Harvard professor and well-known Israel advocate Alan Dershowitz. Cohen and the younger Dershowitz, who is general counsel to the WNBA, are still close. ■

Jerusalem mayor, bodyguard subdue Palestinian stabber

JTA, JERUSALEM

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat and his security guard apprehended a Palestinian teen who stabbed a haredi Orthodox man near City Hall.

Barkat was on his way to City Hall for a meeting on Sunday evening when he saw the attack taking place near Safra Square in central Jerusalem.

The victim, reportedly in his 20s, was stabbed in the stomach and taken to a Jerusalem hospital for treatment. He is in moderate condition.

The alleged attacker, 18, a resident of Ramallah who was residing illegally in Jerusalem, was taken in for questioning by police. ■

Mayor Nir Barkat, centre, at the scene.
ISRAEL HATZOLAH TWITTER PHOTO

Grave of Breslover founder's daughter vandalized in Ukraine

JTA

The grave of a daughter of the Breslover movement's founder, Rabbi Nachman, was set on fire and daubed with a swastika.

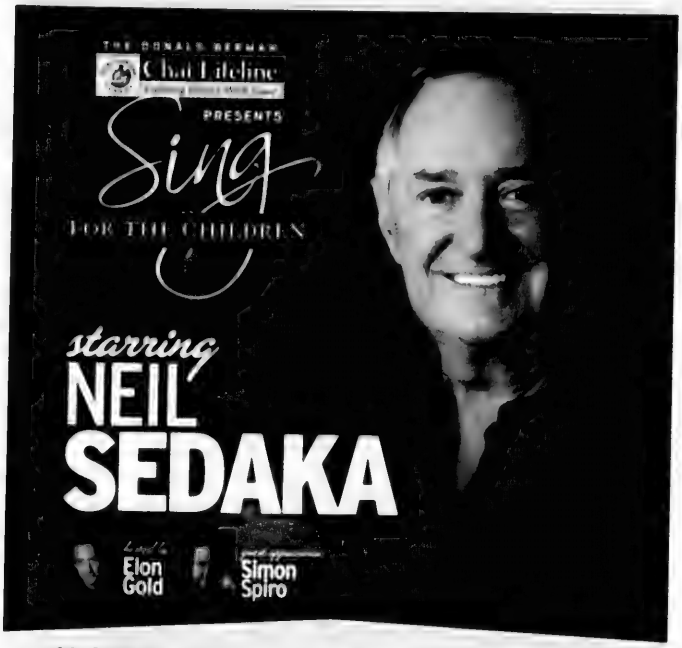
The 1831 grave in the central-Ukraine city of Kremenchuk was set ablaze some time after the completion last month of its renovation by the Oholei Tzadikim association, which works to restore Jewish burial sites throughout the region. It was discovered Feb. 16, the association said.

"The damage is very extensive," Rabbi Shimon Buskila of the World Breslov Center told *JTA* on Sunday. "They destroyed the structure that was only recently erected."

Pictures of the site showed the charred interior of a small structure constructed around the headstone. A swastika was drawn in black ink on the exterior of the structure, with a face and the words "Office Man Serega" in Latin.

According to Oholei Tzadikim, the area was designated to become a construction site, but the association cited its sanctity in preventing the project. Police have been informed and are working to prevent its recurrence, Rabbi Israel Meir Gabai, the association's director general, said. He added the group will repair the damages.

Rabbi Nachman's teachings have inspired thousands of followers. His grave in Uman, Ukraine, is among the chassidic world's most visited burial sites. ■



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OPINION

Where is dangerous?

Sagi Melamed

I recently spent a week in Eilat with my son Ari. In addition to being a particularly enjoyable time, it fulfilled two promises: one we made to Ari to let him take a scuba diving course after he achieved high grades last year in high school, and a promise I made to myself to finish writing my new book by Passover. But most important of all – it was quality father-son time.

In January, Eilat is a great place for a vacation in Israel. A beautiful beach with clear waters, a feeling of relative isolation from the world and reasonable prices (prices soar in the summer and during holidays). For six days, we disengaged from everyday life. Ari learned to dive while I sat and wrote, and in the evenings we enjoyed ourselves together.

The hotel, on Eilat's south beach, was almost empty. In addition to us, there were a few couples from Europe and one Israeli couple. It was so empty that one morning they sent us to the neighbouring hotel for breakfast. (Ari would have preferred the Israeli breakfast to be served at lunchtime, because who can eat so much food in the morning before diving?)

As we sat at breakfast on Tuesday, the peace was suddenly shattered by a woman yelling, "Uri, shall I bring you an omelet? They've got omelets with all kinds of fillings."

I turned toward the shouting and saw a woman bringing several plates laden with food to the corner table where her husband sat. He looked from his boisterous wife toward me, a little embarrassed by her behaviour and yet a little annoyed at my intrusive gaze. I politely averted my eyes, but my ears could not escape the woman's loud voice.

She went to the omelet station, where a hotel employee was frying omelets.

"Where are you from?" she asked him in English. "From Africa," he replied in Hebrew. She insisted on continuing in English, so the conversation was conducted in basic Hebrew on his part and broken English on hers.

Her: "Isn't it dangerous in Africa? I heard that there's a lot of violence. Explosions and shooting."

Him: "Not really. If you have work, it's a beautiful place to live. It's a wonderful place for tourists."

> *In just the last few weeks, there have been terrorist stabbings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, attacks in the West Bank and on the Lebanese border, shooting from Syria, terror in the Sinai Peninsula and tension in the south*

Her: "I wouldn't want to go there, it's too dangerous. I don't understand how anyone could live there without being scared."

Overhearing this, I recalled recent events in Israel and thought to myself: in just the last few weeks, there have been terrorist stabbings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, attacks in the West Bank and on the Lebanese border, shooting from Syria, terror in the Sinai Peninsula and tension in the south. Several senior police officers accused of sexual harassment have resigned or been removed from office... A mere two years after the previous elections we are going back to the polls and will probably elect yet another government that will be unable to govern. And she thinks Africa is a dangerous place!

Then I remembered a conversation I had a number of years ago in Los Angeles, during a dinner with a pleasant Jewish couple. I invited them to visit Israel and the woman responded that she was afraid to come.

"Israel looks too dangerous, full of bombings and shooting."

I did not pressure her. But when we left the restaurant and the man pointed out a high school where the previous week a student had been killed in a shooting incident, I could not restrain myself and I said with a smile, "Are you sure it's Israel that's the dangerous place?!"

So where does that leave us? Perhaps with the conclusion that danger is relative. That the known is generally less scary than the unknown. That there's no place like home. And, of course – with the recognition that we have no other country. ■

Jerusalem co-op to provide transportation on Shabbat

JESSICA STEINBERG
JERUSALEM

Shabus organizers stand outside Jerusalem's Lev Smadar Theater, a secular Jerusalemite hangout on Saturdays. SHABUS PHOTO

No, not Shabbos – Shabus. That's the name of a new Jerusalem shared transportation co-operative, offering a way to get around the city on Shabbat and Jewish holidays, when there is no public transportation.

Laws prohibit *public* transportation on Shabbat in Jerusalem, but there's no prohibition on travelling with *private* transportation, said Laura Wharton, a Jerusalem Meretz party city council member, who is part of the co-operative.

Shabus, said Wharton, is a response to an existing social problem, not a challenge to the religious establishment.

"If you have a car, you can do whatever you want. But because of religious coercion and laws that exist, there's no public transportation. So if you can't afford a car or a taxi, you're trapped."

The co-operative, whose board members include Wharton and longtime Meretz council member Pepe Alalu, formed the Co-operative Transportation Association of Jerusalem to try to solve the Saturday transportation issue, said Wharton.

Shabus will offer an alternative, co-operative form of transportation, which will run on Fridays and Saturdays for members of the co-operative.

Egged, the country's public bus company, does not run most of its buses on Shabbat or Jewish holidays. Service ends on Friday afternoon and resumes Saturday evening, after Shabbat, although buses do run in certain areas such as Haifa, where there is a large non-Jewish population.

The subject of public buses in Israel on Shabbat tends to be a sensitive one. Last fall, when daylight saving time went into effect, Egged announced that some intercity bus routes would stop running at an earlier hour on Friday, in order to avoid conflicting with the earlier start of Shabbat on Friday evenings.

There was a flurry of Knesset debate and blogger discussion about the situation.

Israel's prohibition of public transportation on Shabbat is based on a 1947 understanding between then-prime minister David Ben-Gurion and the Agudat Yisrael movement, which represented the ultra-Orthodox community of that period. This became the basis of many religious life decisions in Israel, including the issue of public transportation on Shabbat.

"We can't offer Shabus to the general public," said Wharton. "That would break the law." Instead, the co-operative is offering a NIS 50 membership and has launched a 45-day crowdfunding effort on Headstart. The campaign aims to get people signed up and to raise NIS 100,000 ($32,270 Cdn) to cover the costs of advertising and make arrangements with a private transportation company.

The plan is to start operating Shabus by Passover – "the symbolic holiday of freedom," Wharton said, when people want to travel around the city. "It's... frustrating for Jerusalemites," she continued. "There are so many places that are open, restaurants and museums and the zoo, but you can't get to them if you don't have a car."

The co-operative has been working together for about a year, Wharton said. They formed a charter, and then hired a lawyer and an accountant, with the aim of making sure that Shabus could be feasible economically.

It's not the first time there have been efforts to create a transportation alternative for weekends in Jerusalem. In 2012, the Hebrew University's student union tried to operate a van service for students to get from campus to the city's downtown area on Friday nights.

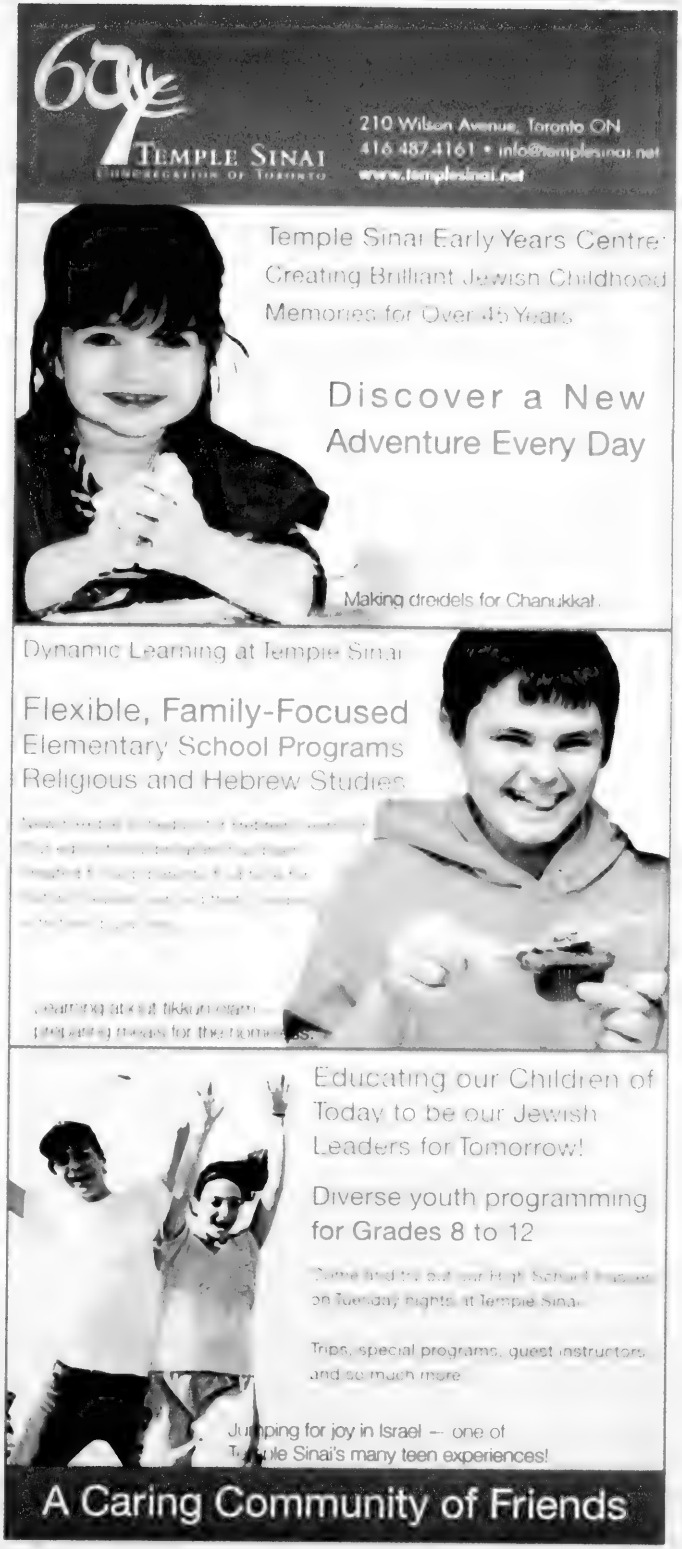
Wharton said thousands of Jerusalemites could be part of the co-operative. Some 20 per cent of the city's population is secular and many don't have cars.

The Shabus board is just handling Jerusalem for now, Wharton said. But it could work anywhere in the country.

"As long as it's a co-operative and not a public company, it's groups of people co-ordinating together," Wharton said. "This is something I believe in for any field: if you have a problem and the government and authorities aren't helping solve it, organize. It's a real, positive model of grassroots organizations working for the benefit of their residents."

If government policy ever changed and allowed Egged to operate on Shabbat, the co-operative would "happily defer to Egged," she said. "We're not asking for public funding or to change the policy. We're just trying to help people move around on Saturdays, to get into town or visit friends or family. It's a special movement to overcome limitations that now exist." ■

Times of Israel
TimesofIsrael.com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A Caring Community of Friends

More Israeli Arabs volunteer for National Service

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

Majd Abu Diab crouches next to Jacqueline, an older Jewish woman in a wheelchair who has lost the power of speech. He sings a song in Arabic as he drums his fingers on her wheelchair. Her eyes light up and her head bobs along in tune. At the end of the song, they hug.

In the next room, another woman is thrilled to see Abu Diab, who everyone here at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem calls Glory, the English translation of Majd. He reminds her that she has physical therapy soon and says he'll come back to get her.

"Remember, you promised to blow dry my hair later," she says coquettishly.

Abu Diab is three months into a year-long stint as a volunteer in Israel's National Service, an alternative to compulsory military service. Most of those exercising this option are Orthodox Jewish women who aren't comfortable with men outside their family. But a growing number are Arabs, mostly citizens of Israel, but even some, like Diab, who are residents of Jerusalem, although he is a Jordanian citizen, are opting in.

"I come from a rich family where I got everything I wanted, and I never gave anything to anyone," he said. "I decided I wanted to give something back to this earth."

He tried to join the Israeli army but says that he was rejected because he was Arab. He spent a few months learning Hebrew, which he never learned in high school. Then he received this posting, where he works basically as an orderly. Like all National Service volunteers, he receives a small stipend of about $200 per month, which he supplements by working in a shoe store in the evenings.

"I lift the patients in and out of wheelchairs and I make sure they get to their appointments," he said. "Sometimes I bring supplies to the ward."

But mostly, he makes the patients happy. "One of the patients had a birthday and Glory brought in balloons and a card for her," staff member Tami Buzaglo said. "He is always smiling and he makes everyone laugh. We just love having him here."

While most Jewish citizens are conscripted (girls for two years, boys for three), Arab citizens of Israel are exempt,

> *"I come from a rich family where I got everything I wanted, and I never gave anything to anyone. I decided I wanted to give something back to this earth."*

although certain sectors including the Druze and the Bedouin volunteer for military service. About 50 Christian Arab citizens join the army each year, even though most Arab citizens oppose this, as they see the Israeli army as perpetuation of Israel's control over the West Bank and Gaza.

When it comes to national service, Arab opinion is divided, analysts say. In most cases, national service is done in local Arab communities, in schools and hospitals. It especially offers a chance for girls, who are sheltered in traditional Arab culture, to learn skills while still living at home.

"National service is an entry into Israeli society," Sammy Smooha, a professor of sociology at Haifa University said. "Especially for girls, it offers a good option for the time after high school. Boys can work or study, but Arabs still like their girls to stay close to home."

The numbers have been steadily increasing. In the past year, the number has jumped 30 per cent to more than 4,000 non-Jews serving. When they finish, they receive the same benefits that anyone who has served in the army receives, including a grant of several thousand dollars, and subsidized college tuition.

Smooha said Arab leaders have discouraged national service, because it is run by Israel's Defence Ministry. But more young Arabs are joining, seeing it as a way to achieve personal fulfilment and to get ahead in Israeli society.

Abu Diab said he hasn't experienced any anti-Arab feeling from either staff or patients, and feels he's helping them.

"We don't look if you are Arab, Christian, Muslim or Jewish," he said. "Everyone welcomed me." ■

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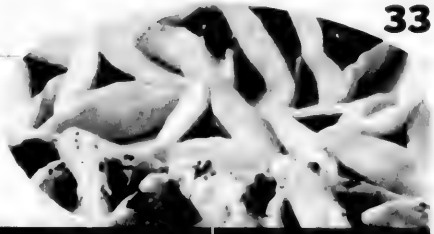


Actress strikes it rich in Netflix series

Brooke Wexler RUSSELL BAER PHOTO

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Up-and-comer Brooke Wexler, 21, is starring in Netflix's newest series, *Richie Rich*, which debuted Feb. 20. *Richie Rich* is the live-action TV adaption of the celebrated comic book character about the richest kid in the world, created in 1953.

Born and raised in Toronto, Wexler plays Irona, Richie Rich's robot maid. She spoke to *The CJN* from her current home in Malibu.

"Irona was portrayed very differently in the comics than she is by me. I think they wanted to create a younger companion – not on the same level as the kids. A modern portrayal of the comic book," Wexler explains.

Irona is not the robot people expect her to be.

"There is no silver! Irona doesn't like to clean, and has a little attitude, but she is still considered a friend, not just an employee," said Wexler.

Wexler comes to the role following another TV series, *Sequestered*, a courtroom drama produced by Sony Digital that aired on Apple and Crackle TV.

The two projects could not be more different from one another.

"I went from acting in a heavy drama in *Sequestered* to high comedy. It was very exciting to delve into different characters and genres as an actor," she said.

Richie Rich is brought to television by DreamWorks Animation's AwesomenessTV with a modernized version of the traditional story. The new edition follows Richie as he adjusts to life as the richest kid in the world. However, unlike the original version where Richie Rich was born into wealth, here he is self-made, creating his fortune by inventing and selling cool green technology.

> *I have always known acting is what I wanted to do*

Following his overnight triumph, he moves his father and sister into his newly-built mansion. He also shares his success with his two best friends, Darcy and Murray, embarking on a series of adventures such as exploring Antarctica, making a movie with his friends, and meeting celebrities.

"I think the characters are being emulated from the original content but it's more modern because technology has really taken off. The writers and executive producers worked hard in being creative and coming up with new ideas. Each episode is different from the next with new gags and story lines to keep it interesting and fun. To work with the Netflix team was an honour," she said.

Geared for kids eight to 14 years old, the 21-episode series is available in Canada, the United States and Latin America.

"It's like watching Disney, in that families will watch it together. The show will appeal to everyone. There are some jokes slipped in for adults, who will probably end up watching parts of it."

Wexler moved from Toronto to Los Angeles when she was 18, and is a third-year student at Pepperdine University, where she studies media production.

In Toronto, Wexler trained at the Toronto Academy of Acting. As a young student, she attended Bialik Hebrew Day School, and later the girls' school Branksome Hall.

She exhibited a flair for drama performing in shows such as *Twisted*, *Hercules*, *Willy Wonka*, and *Dream Girls* from 2005 through 2007. She also modeled swimwear on *Sports Illustrated*.

Once in California, she continued acting lessons and appeared on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno in a comedy skit. She was also in a video by boy band The Vamps, *Somebody to You*, featuring Demi Lovato.

"I love going to movies, I am an avid reader, and enjoy watching lots of TV shows – it gives you a sense of different people and different stories. When you get an audition there is so much more to pull from to be creatively inspired. I have always known acting is what I wanted to do," she said.

Wexler tells young actresses that perseverance is key. "There will be people and situations that will prove as obstacles due to the challenges of breaking into the industry, but the main person that will push you forward is yourself. Always believe in yourself and your dreams," she emphasized.

Asked what she would do with Richie Rich's millions, "I would definitely buy material things like a new car or a beautiful beach home but I would get more satisfaction from spending my money on the people I love and on charities I believe in.

"If I had millions, I would want to make some sort of positive impact on the world," she concluded. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 26, 2015

Israeli academic discusses the history of mankind

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Israeli academic Yuval Noah Harari's *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* presents us with a refreshing and original way of perceiving the history of our species, Homo sapiens, since its emergence in East Africa about 2.5 million years ago. Just the vast scope of the book alone makes it seem a clever novelty.

Humans once had various "siblings" such as Neanderthals, which we evidently wiped out almost everywhere we encountered them. But we also loved our enemies. DNA evidence shows that, back about 30,000 or 40,000 years ago, some sapiens and Neanderthals mated and reared families. That's just one of many skeletons in our closet that Harari rattles in this imaginative and thought-provoking book.

Homo sapiens underwent a critically important "cognitive revolution" about 70,000 years ago, which drastically improved our ability to use language, make art, create myths and indulge in abstract thinking. As a result, masses of ancient humans banded together in increasingly larger tribal units. Tribes of hunter-gatherers that had a shared belief in myths or gods could co-operate with each other in greater numbers, which became a competitive edge when rival groups battled for supremacy.

For countless millennia, human tribes wiped each other out on a regular basis. Also great despoilers of nature, we were equally adept at expunging mammoths and other great beasts that once roamed the earth.

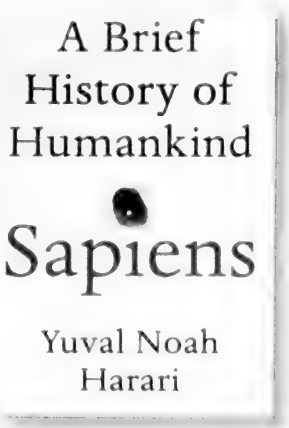
With an impressive array of scientific and historical knowledge in his quiver, Harari brings home ideas like an expert marksman. His comparisons of human cultures (i.e., Mayan vs. Roman) and epochs (Stone Age vs. Internet Age), seem especially enlightening and entertaining.

"The instinct to gorge on high-calorie food was hard-wired into our genes," he writes. "Today we may be living in highrise apartments with over-stuffed refrigerators, but our DNA still thinks we are in the Savannah. That's what makes us spoon down an entire tub of Ben & Jerry's when we find one in the freezer and wash it down with a jumbo Coke."

In the days of the hunter-gatherers, humans were spread out thinly over vast areas and a person might encounter no more than a few hundred others in a lifetime. Until the Agricultural Revolution of about 12,000 years ago, there were fewer people on Earth than the present population of Cairo.

Harari offers fascinating insight into the era when barley, rice, potatoes and other crops were first cultivated, a period that saw the rise of cities, city-states, and eventually political empires and universal religions. I was disappointed that he didn't discuss this transformative epoch in relation to the emergence of the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish people – certainly an important historical moment – but that clearly wasn't his interest. As for the Jews, he observes that they, along with the Armenians and Georgians, could justly claim descent from ancient Middle Eastern peoples, but notes they have picked up much baggage in their travels.

"It goes without saying that the political, economic and social practices of modern Jews, for example, owe far more to the empires under which they lived during the past two millennia than to the traditions of the ancient kingdom of Judaea," he writes. "If King David were to show up in an ultra-Orthodox synagogue in present-day Jerusalem, he would be utterly bewildered to find people dressed in east European clothes, speaking in a German dialect (Yiddish) and having endless arguments about the meaning of a Babylonian text (the Talmud). There were neither synagogues, volumes of Talmud, nor even Torah scrolls in ancient Judaea."



SAPIENS: A Brief History of Humankind
Yuval Noah Harari
(Signal, McClelland and Stewart)

The latter sections of *Sapiens* focuses on the history and significance of money and the rise of global religion and political empires. Depending on their political views, some readers may find a number of the author's assertions to be provocative. The Agricultural Revolution is "history's biggest fraud," he asserts, because it promised but failed to deliver a better quality of life for the world's peasant class. Instead, it enslaved us, tied us to the land, and put us in "artificial enclaves" called homes. He also questions whether the Scientific Revolution that began about 500 years ago has actually been beneficial to us.

A certain cynicism seems to ooze from the page at times, as when Harari contends that there's no such thing as human rights, that humans live their lives in perceptual prisons, and that Westerners have experienced 2,000 years of "monotheistic brainwashing." But sadly, few can quibble when he declares that humans are destroying the planet.

In contrast to his dystopian vision of modern Western society, he seems to regard the era of the hunter-gatherers as an idyllic utopia. Apparently everyone ate a nicely balanced diet back then and no one had to work too hard. No matter that a much higher proportion of humanity died in war or from disease.

During an interview in Toronto in mid-February, Harari told me that modern man has lost the ability to live richly and spontaneously. "Hunter-gatherers always lived in the present moment," he said. "They were extremely aware of their sensory world, of everything they heard and smelled and touched, because their survival depended on it. Today, especially in advanced societies, people don't need to pay attention in order to survive; therefore we are continually distracted and we have lost much of the ability to actually inhabit our bodies and our world, and to pay attention to what we hear, see, smell and touch."

A lecturer in history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the Israeli-born author was teaching a course on world history a few years back when he noticed that his students craved a Hebrew-language book on the topic. "I took my lecture notes and transformed them into a book," he said. "And when it became a huge bestseller in Israel, I translated it into English, and now it's been translated into almost 30 languages worldwide."

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind opens as a witty page-turner about the human family but its extended and uneven discussion of money robs it of some of its lustre. Even so, there is still a mother lode of gold here amidst the dross. ■

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH RECALLS LEGENDARY MOLLY PICON, "QUEEN OF SECOND AVENUE"

Friends of Yiddish presents a "Purim Freylekhs" featuring **Deborah Staiman** in *Molly Picon: The Life and Music of the Darling of American Yiddish Musical Theatre*. An operatic singer and cantor who has performed widely in Canada, the United States, Israel and London, Staiman talks about the life and career of the famed "Queen of Second Avenue" and sings some of Picon's classic favourites and lesser-known gems.

The afternoon is free for members, $10 for guests; includes refreshments and door prizes. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. (between Sheppard and Finch). Sunday March 8, 2 p.m. Please RSVP by March 4 to 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca

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Jewish Radio Hour: Tickets recently went on sale for *Jewish Radio Hour*, written and directed by **Theresa Tova** and starring herself, **Aviva Chernick, Harvey Atkin, David Gale** and **Moish Kanatkin**. The show pays loving homage to the golden years of the *Jewish Radio Hour (the Yiddishe Shtunde)* that was popular in southern Ontario households between 1936 and the late 1950s.

"Guaranteed to bring back memories, make you laugh and even shed a few nostalgic tears." Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, Wednesday June 17, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $36. 905-787-8811, jewishradiohour.ca or rhcentre.ca

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Names in the News

The Museum of Jewish Montreal has made a "pop-up exhibit" about **Samy Elmaghribi (Salomon Amzallag)**, a Montreal cantor and famed performer of Moroccan Jewish music, considered by many as the **Frank Sinatra** of Morocco. The exhibit is to be featured in Montreal's Nuit blanche on Saturday Feb. 28 from 7 p.m. until 2 a.m. Elmaghribi's daughter **Yolande Amzallag** will be curating performances throughout the evening featuring diverse Quebec musicians interpreting her father's music. The family operated an Oriental pastry shop on Victoria Avenue in the 1970s. http://imjm.ca

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Arts in Brief

•Jazz pianist-historian **Jordan Klapman** riffs on the history of jazz as he plays riffs and great historic recordings in a program titled "All That (Jewish) Jazz." Who could ask for anything more? Second of two parts; $4 at the door. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday Feb. 26, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Samy Elmaghribi

• Opera educator **Iain Scott** presents a four-part series on opera and **Shakespeare**, inviting participants to rediscover the genius of Shakespeare's most beloved scenes as interpreted by **Verdi** and other major opera composers in works such as *Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Otello* and *Falstaff*. Series $60, drop-in $18. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays March 2, 9, 23, 30, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. To register phone 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• United Jewish People's Order marks International Women's Day with a concert focused on songs of social justice featuring the New York-based folk trio *Gathering Time*, playing iconic songs by *Bob Dylan, Peter Paul & Mary, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs* and others. $15 advance, $20 at the door. Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. Sunday March 8, 7 p.m. 416-789-5502.

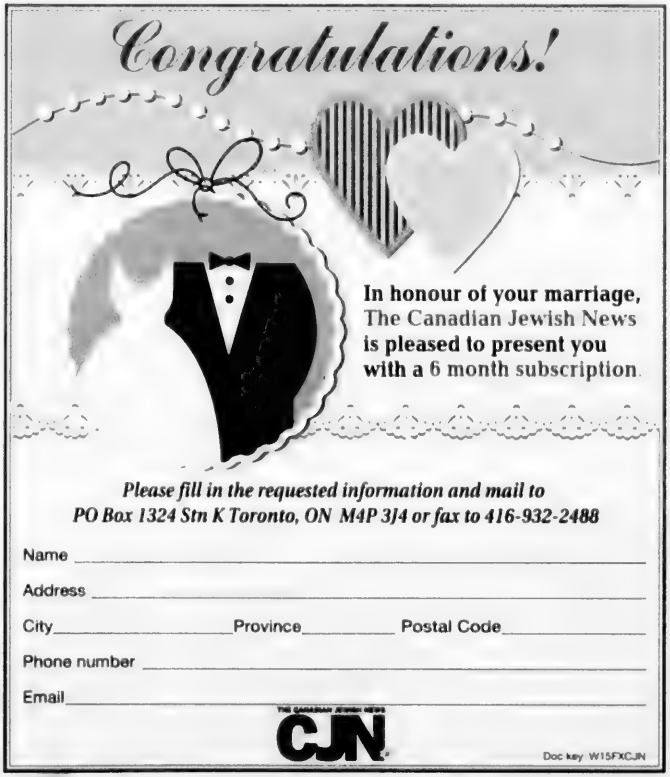
• Jazz guitarist Stan Samole performs at the Bistro Grande kosher restaurant in support of the Jewish Women Renaissance Project in association with the Dan Family Village Shul. $50 per person includes three-course gourmet dinner. 1000 Eglinton Ave. W. Two seatings, Tuesday March 24, 6 and 8 p.m. Reservations, 416-782-3302.

• • •

At the Galleries

• The Art Gallery of Ontario's First Thursdays event presents a fierce lineup of art projects, live music and pop-up talks for 19+ party-goers. All the works are inspired by the work of groundbreaking comics artist **Art Speigelman** – whose retrospective show "Co-mix" is currently on view. Thursday March 5, 7 to 11:30 p.m. www.ago.net

• Paintings by **Wanda Wintrobe** and **Elaine Sugar,** both senior members of the Willowdale Group of Artists, are scheduled for exhibit at the Ben Navaee Gallery in Lesieville. Wintrobe, a veteran painter who works in acrylic and cites **Miro** and **Chagall** as major influences, says she is thrilled "to be given the opportunity to show a body of my works in a gallery for the first time." 1107 Queen St. E., March 20 to 26, 1 to 5 p.m. or by appointment. 416-999-1030. ■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Toronto photographer reconnects with his Slovak roots

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Yuri Dojc in his Toronto workshop with one of those stunning images. JORDAN ADLER PHOTO

Photographer Yuri Dojc was at his father's funeral in 1997 when he met a Slovakian woman who had survived Auschwitz. This woman led the now Toronto-based photographer to a small but vibrant community of Holocaust survivors from that nation, where only around 2,500 Jews live today.

Although he had also grown up in what was then Czechoslovakia after the Holocaust, Dojc was told by his father to deny his Jewish identity in public.

"I had a need to recover something which I lost," Dojc tells *The CJN*. "This [project] was a better education than anything else."

Dojc spent more than 15 years taking portraits of survivors, as well as the last vestiges of prewar Jewish life in Slovakia. The photographs now fill a book, *Last Folio*, and are a memorial to those who perished during the Holocaust and those who survived but can no longer tell their stories.

Some of his photographs are on display at the Art Gallery of Ontario until June 14, 2015, as an extension of the exhibit on Lodz Ghetto photojournalist Henryk Ross.

Dojc's urge to capture the last remnants of Jewish life was assisted by film producer Katya Krausova, who also had Slovakian roots. They traveled to their homeland with some seed money to make a documentary.

The two of them kept coming across incredible places and people, finding traces of Jewish life often by incredible luck.

In a small town in eastern Slovakia, Dojc was taking pictures of a couple when their neighbour knocked on the door. The man heard about the project and was begging to show them something.

The Christian man had a key to an old school for Jewish students before the war. Those who attended the Jewish school were deported to the camps in 1943. Ever since, much of the school remained untouched.

"The whole project changed suddenly," Dojc says. "We couldn't believe what we saw."

The discovery of the Jewish school had extra meaning for Dojc, since his mother and father were teachers. Ludovit and Regina Dojc had teacher friends who were Lutheran and hid them during the Holocaust.

Dojc admits that he had little interest in the story of their survival when he was growing up in Slovakia.

"I was brought up under Communist rule. When you're a teenager, the last thing you want to know is some heavy questions," he says.

From this discovery, much of the rest of the project came together as a result of chance encounters. Dojc and Krausova would enter a town, only to hear from random people about cemeteries, synagogues and other portions of Jewish history that had been hidden or ignored.

The photographer was stunned when he found a prayer room with piles of books. The books look tattered, crumbling into dust due to their age. Their covers were torn, but still thick like bark.

As the creative partners sorted through the books, Krausova asked Dojc about his family history and the names of his grandparents. It turns out that, amidst the several books in the room, was one that belonged to Jakub Deutch, his grandfather.

"There were so many serendipities," Dojc says. "Nothing was planned. We didn't [know where to find things]. Every picture was done by some unbelievable coincidence."

During his travels, he found a man on the cusp of renovating a vast, abandoned synagogue. The man gave Dojc the key and the photographer then made the most of his day, snapping away inside the empty, dilapidated holy site.

On another day, he was driving past a cemetery. When he stopped to look around the site, it turned out to be a Jewish burial ground.

"It was like somebody was guiding us," he says. "I'm not a religious person but this was too many coincidences."

The images from *Last Folio* have already been shown at museums around the world. On the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in January, the exhibition was featured at the UN in New York.

During this anniversary year, the photographs will be displayed in Berlin and at Moscow's Museum of Tolerance.

Meanwhile, Krausova's documentary of the same name is finished and is scheduled to screen in Slovakia later this year. (There is no planned distribution in North America.)

Dojc has been a commercial photographer for much of his life, ever since moving to Toronto in the late 1960s. He helped with memorable advertising campaigns for companies like Porsche, Coca-Cola, Canon and Apple, and still works for various magazines.

However, he says he was not prepared for such a personal project to consume him. Working on *Last Folio* reconnected Dojc to his fragmented Jewish roots.

"I can read history, I can read the Bible if I want to," he says. "But nothing can teach you more than actually physically going through the places, walking up the steep hills with a bunch of Gypsy children, because they're going to show you a Jewish cemetery."■

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Montreal rabbi raises parchment prayers to fine art

HEATHER SOLOMON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, MONTREAL

Rabbi Yair Mordechai Tanger often enters the Manoir Montefiore synagogue in Cote St. Luc with his suit speckled with bits of gold, silver and copper.

His congregants tell him, "Rabbi, you're glowing with sparks!" To say that the sparks are emanations of holy inspiration would be truthful.

This is because they originate from the whisper-thin foil he applies to the decorations on his calligraphic creations as a manifestation of *hiddur mitzvah*, enhancing the mitzvot through beauty.

"Instead of having only plain writing, you can add beauty to it and for the *Eshet Hayil* [Woman of Valour] prayer, for example, that is said by the husband on Shabbat, it becomes a reminder of the beauty of the relationship between husband and wife" he says.

Not only are the words of the prayer written in heart formation but the rabbi has added golden birds holding a personalized banner containing the wife's name and more birds perched on a branch at the bottom, "symbolizing a peaceful house". Flowers in blue and red foil garland the prayer.

"Most of the time I use real 22-karat gold and I found a kind of gold leaf that has a marbling effect for the flame of Shabbat candles. Everything is done by hand. Each piece is unique," says the rabbi who applies special glue within the outlines of his decorative motifs, rubs on the foil or gold leaf and brushes away the excess, sometimes building up the image to a raised and burnished gleam.

In his tiny office on the ground floor of the seniors' residence, just steps away from its on-site shul, Rabbi Tanger welcomes those who wish to speak with him whether it's for counselling, advice or to see what is currently under his quill.

Working in this seniors' residence, as he has done for the past four years, has special significance for the rabbi. The seniors inspire his work, which is a visual reinforcement of tradition.

His exquisite creations are made on parchment derived from cow hide, similar to that used for Torah scrolls. He has rolls of the parchment shipped from Israel, cuts them to size and floats the finished pieces between glass inside frames.

Rabbi Tanger has been a sofer (scribe) for a decade and continues to write and verify tfillin, mezuzot and sifrei Torah in the community. He arrived in Montreal from Los Angeles in 2003 having left Israel with his parents in 1999.

"I was born in Yamit in the northern Sinai that was given back in 1982 to the Egyptians as part of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. I was the last baby to have a brit milah there before the town was evacuated," he says.

He is now working on a Magen David surrounding the prayer for soldiers said in most synagogues, using a new technique juxtaposing copper and silver leaf.

The rabbi began using gold leaf three years ago and now commissions take up the free time outside his rabbinic and sofrut duties. His work is not only popular in households but as gifts from clients to their clergy members and to other professionals for their offices.

Rabbi Yair Mordechai Tanger HEATHER SOLOMON PHOTO

"I have illustrated the blessing for success in business with the Key to Parnassa, the symbol of a good livelihood," he says. The household prayer follows the shape of a roofline, and a harp decorates the *Nishmat kol chai* prayer. Other examples will soon be found on a website he is building, www.sofer.info.

Rabbi Tanger upholds good causes with his artwork, especially the auctions of the Académie Yeshiva Yavne in support of scholarships and the Caisse Beth Yossef that comes to the aid of needy Jews.

Those who observe his works are immediately touched by their prayerful and visual beauty. "You have to be inspired in order to inspire someone else," says the rabbi. ■

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Prayer explores Hebrew language through art

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Israeli-born, Vienna-based artist Dvora Barzilai is one of many talents who are showcasing their work in Toronto this winter through the second annual Spotlight on Israeli Culture.

The two-month showcase that is running until March, features the best of Israeli music, theatre, film, dance and visual arts, and brings together a number of local organizations, including Israel's Office of Cultural Affairs of the Consulate General of Israel in Toronto, the Aga Khan Museum, Ashkenaz Foundation, and Austrian Cultural Forum.

Barzilai, a mixed-media artist who made her work available for the event in Toronto despite not making the trip to the city herself, said having her art on display in another city without her reminds her of the famous poem by Yehuda Halevi, a medieval Spanish-Jewish poet.

"He says, 'my heart is in the east, and my body in the west', so I can say the same because I am in Vienna and my art is in Canada. I hope people like it," she said in an interview with *The CJN* from her Austrian home.

"This week I got a very nice letter from the Israeli consul and he wrote that he enjoyed it... so I'm happy."

The exhibit, called *Prayer*, which explores the Hebrew language in prayers, liturgy, songs, contemporary Hebrew proverbs and forgotten texts, and utilizes materials including gold leaf, tempera, sand, cement, ashes, oils and canvas, has been on display this month at the Miles Nadal JCC.

Barzilai said she's been working as an artist "since I've known myself."

She explained that there are a number of artists in her family and her father worked in Tel Aviv's art scene when she was a child.

"My father was working in the port of Tel Aviv [Namal], so as a child I would go and see the painters, and that for me was very inspiring... When I was a child I used to come with my father to walk on the port...

A piece from Dvora Barzilai's art exhibit called *Prayer*.

> *I got a very nice letter from the Israeli consul and he wrote that he enjoyed it... so I'm happy*

if someone brought an exhibition to Tel Aviv, I would go with him to see that everything was alright, and it was also a part of my inspiration... Until today, I go there to sit and think about the art," she said.

Barzilai said that she trained with a number of Israeli artists while she grew up in Tel Aviv, before she moved to Vienna in 1992 with her husband and children.

"The reason we moved to Vienna was for my husband because he learned cantorial music in Tel Aviv and he got a job at the main synagogue in Vienna, so we moved the whole family," she explained.

"I started painting there, but we lived in a very small apartment and there was no room, so I took a pencil and I opened the Bible and started to sketch things about the Bible."

That paved the way for much of her artwork, which falls under the theme of religion and Jewish tradition.

Although she draws much of her inspiration from living as an observant Jew in Vienna, not all of it is based in religion.

For example, one of the pieces in her *Prayer* exhibit features the lyrics for Israel's national anthem, *Hatikvah*.

"Sometimes it is modern, sometimes it is songs or text that I like. I can't say it is only religious," she said.

Barzilai's work and outdoor installations have been displayed internationally, in places including Moscow, Romania, Bulgaria, and Austria. ■

For more information about her work, visit www.dvora-barzilai.com.

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AUTHORS & POETS

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS CJN

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original short stories or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 2, 2015. Not all submissions can be published, and not all those selected will appear in both Toronto and Montreal editions. We look for originality. Please don't send more than three entries. We cannot correspond with submitters.

Deadline for submissions is Feb. 27, 2015 at 3 p.m.

E-mail submissions to:

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We can only accept email submissions. We prefer Word documents.

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Purim: the fun holiday

JUDY BART KANCIGOR
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

"Eat, drink and be merry." Hardly a directive one would expect from the pulpit. But this is Purim, and revelry and festivities are the order of the day.

Comic elements exist in the Megillah: a king's wife spurned, a beauty contest to choose a new wife, an evil prime minister, the near annihilation of our people, a palace plot thwarted and our enemies defeated through the machinations of said new wife.

Surely God had a hand in the outcome, yet there is no mention of God in the Megillah, a source of debate for centuries.

Purim is a holiday of masks, and the miracle of our redemption unfolds through a series of natural events and "coincidences," but were they really? Just like the filling in the hamantashen, the role of God in the Purim story is hidden," writes Paula Shoyer, a graduate of the Ritz Escoffier pastry program in Paris, and author of *The Holiday Kosher Baker* (Sterling).

"And just as with the hamantashen, the true significance of the holiday unfolds. We should always look for the hidden and deeper meaning of our experiences in life as a way to acknowledge the unseen forces in the world."

In her cookbook, Shoyer presents traditional desserts with a distinctively modern twist with clear, detailed directions and lavish colour photos.

Along with new versions of sponge cakes, blintzes, challahs and rugelach, you'll find a chic Raspberry and Rose Macaron Cake, a Salted Caramel Banana Tart Tatin and recipes for low-sugar, gluten free, vegan and nut-free treats.

"Interestingly, the Megillah is the first place in the Bible where the word 'Jew' appears," Shoyer notes. And leave it to the Jews to commemorate this near tragedy with humour. "Purim is the most whimsical holiday of the Jewish calendar," she says. "We put on Purim spiels, comedic plays that enact the Purim story, and dress in costumes."

And of course we eat hamantashen, those three-cornered cookies filled with jam, poppy seeds, prunes or even chocolate, that are supposed to resemble Haman's hat. Whether Haman ever wore a hat, three-cornered or not, is in question by some, as is the whole story altogether.

"The filling is mostly hidden," Shoyer writes, "and only when we break open the cookie do we experience the flavour inside." The book includes recipes for eight varieties, including Raspberry, Vanilla Bean, Low-Sugar, Green Tea and Gluten-Free.

We celebrate Purim with the mitzvah of mishloach manot (literally "sending portions" in Hebrew), giving sweets to family and friends.

"The giving of gifts celebrates our survival, an acknowledgement that we are still here," says Shoyer. Her recipes in this chapter reflect the fun and whimsy of the holiday: Decorated Brownie Bites, Licorice or Root Beer Chocolate Truffles, Mazel Cookies (her take on Fortune Cookies), Homemade Marshmallows: Coconut or Raspberry Swirl, and Tie-Dyed Mini Black and White Cookies, "my whimsical Purim version of classic chocolate and vanilla black and white cookies," she says.

If Purim is here, can Passover be far behind? Heads up: *The Holiday Kosher Baker* contains 45 Passover recipes, including Lemon Tart with Basil Nut Crust, Chocolate Chocolate Éclairs and Lime Macarons.

Chocolate Chip Hamantashen

Dough

- ❑ 3 large eggs
- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 1/2 cup canola or vegetable oil
- ❑ 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ❑ 3 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
- ❑ dash salt
- ❑ 3 oz. semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped into small pieces no larger than 1/4-inch (very important)

Filling

- ❑ 6 1/2 oz. semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, cut into 1/2-in. squares or
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups chocolate chips

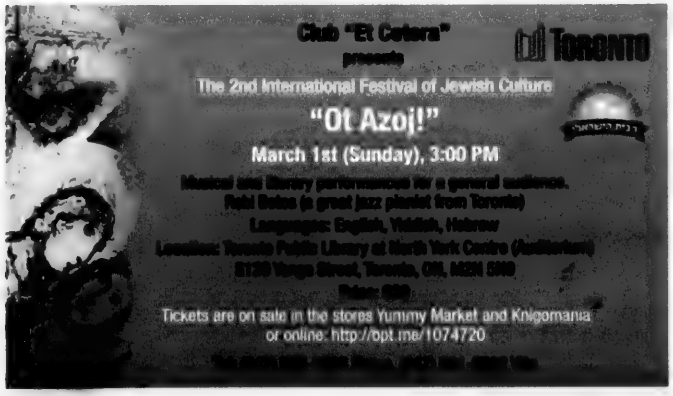
In large bowl, mix together eggs, sugar, oil and vanilla. Add flour and salt and mix until dough comes together. Add chopped chocolate and mix in gently. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate one hour to firm up.

Preheat oven to 350. Line 2 or 3 large cookie sheets with parchment. Divide dough in half.

Sprinkle flour on another piece of parchment, place 1 dough half on top; then sprinkle a little more flour on top of dough. Place second piece of parchment on top of dough and roll on top of parchment until dough is about 1/4-in. thick. Every few rolls, peel top parchment and sprinkle a little more flour on both sides.

Use a 2- to 3-in. cookie cutter or glass to cut dough into circles. With metal flat-blade spatula, lift circles and place on another part of flour-sprinkled parchment. Place one 1/2-in. square of chocolate or 7 chocolate chips into centre and fold three sides together very tightly. Place on prepared cookie sheets. Repeat with remaining dough.

Bake 14-16 minutes or until bottoms are lightly browned but tops are still light. Slide parchment onto wire racks to cool. Store in airtight container up to 5 days or freeze up to 3 months. ■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What's New

FEB. 26 - MARCH 5

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, Feb. 26

GIRLS NIGHT OUT
Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) Tamid chapter presents an evening of improv comedy, silent auction and desserts, 7 p.m., St. Michael's College School Centre for the Arts, 1515 Bathurst St. Tickets $50/ $118. For tickets, 416-630-8373.

PURIM IN THE TIME OF GEMARAH
Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky discusses "Purim in the time of the Gemarah and beyond," 8 p.m., B'nai Torah Congregation.

Saturday, Feb. 28

NA'AMAT & MOSAIC CLUB SHABBAT
Na'amat Canada Toronto and Mosaic Outdoor Club hold a Shabbat service, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Potluck kiddush and Shabbat walk after services. RSVP 416-636-5425.

PERSIAN SHABBAT
Beth Tikvah Synagogue celebrates Persian culture and heritage at Shabbat services, 9 a.m.

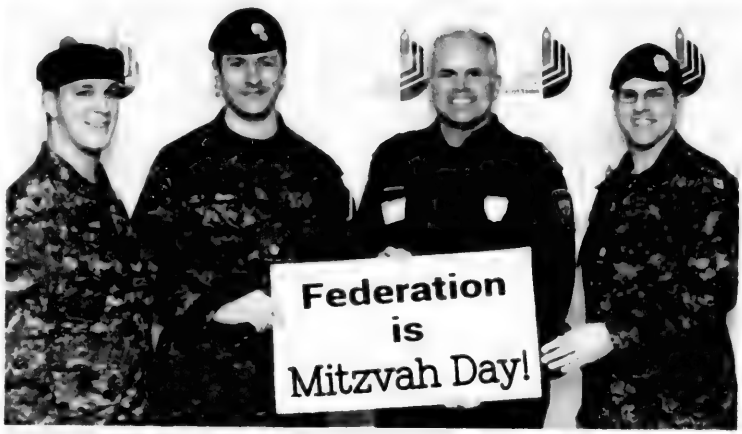
MOTOWN SINGALONG & DINNER
Cantor Simon Spiro leads a Motown singalong telling the Purim story, 8 p.m., Beth Tzedec. $36/$18.
RSVP 416-781-3511.

Sunday, March 1

JEWS IN SPORTS
David Grossman discusses Jewish athletes in non-traditional sports, 10:30 a.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. RSVP 416-781-3511.

TOUR AND TEA
Enjoy tea and a tour of DANI's facilities, 11 a.m., Garnet A. Williams Community Centre, 501 Clark Ave. W. 905-889-3264, ext. 226.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of March 12 is March 2. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**



Mitzvah Day in Ottawa

More than 650 people came out to Ottawa's ninth annual Mitzvah Day earlier this month. Volunteers helped more than 20 different agencies. Among those participating were from left, Corporal Aaron Levine from the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa; Alain Cohen, Deputy Commanding Officer of Les Fusilier Mount-Royal; Charles Bordeleau, Ottawa's Chief of Police, and Major Ryan S. Hartman of the Royal Canadian Regiment. IVANETTE HARGREAVES PHOTO

PURIM FUN
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a Purim carnival, 11:30 a.m.- 2 p.m.
Morris Winchevsky School holds a Purim party, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., 918 Bathurst St. $10/$5.
Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds a Disney Purim carnival, 2-4 p.m. $18/$28 per family. RSVP 416-221-3433.
Temple Sinai and Leo Baeck Day School host Purim in Zooshan at the Toronto Zoo, 9:30 a.m.- noon. RSVP 416-487-4161.

Tuesday, March 3

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Tony Curtis: Driven to Stardom*, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz**, 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

Wednesday, March 4

PURIM FUN
Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds a disco night following Megillah reading, at 6 p.m. Purim brunch March 5, following morning services and Megillah, which begin at 6:45 a.m. RSVP 416-221-3433.
Temple Sinai presents "Studio Audience Night," 7:30 p.m. Students in grades 4 to 6 can take part in an improv workshop with a *Second City* comedian, 5-7:45 p.m. RSVP 416-487-4161.
B'nai Torah Congregation, 465 Patricia Ave., holds a Purim carnival after Megillah reading.
Temple Har Zion presents *All That Jazz* Purim shpiel and Megillah reading, 7 p.m. Purim Carnival March 8, 10 a.m.- noon. 905-889-2252.
Beth David Synagogue holds a Purim carnival after Megillah reading 6-9 p.m. $10. Register at www.bethdavid.com.
Beth Emeth Synagogue presents *Les Miz Gilla, according to Judge Judy*, following Megillah reading at 6:30 p.m. and March 8, 1:30 p.m., followed by a Purim carnival. 416-633-3838.
Temple Kol Ami holds a Mario and Luigi Purim, 5:30 p.m. for pizza, Megillah at 6 p.m. RSVP 905-709-2620.

Thursday, March 5

MORE PURIM FUN
The Jewish Russian Community Centre reads Megillah at 4:30 p.m., banquet at 5:30 p.m., Sephardic Kehila Centre, 7026 Bathurst St. For tickets, 416-222-7105 or www.jrcc.org/purim.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
Reena is looking for a male volunteer to participate in social activities with a young adult male. Call **Mille Chadwick,** 905-889-2690, ext. 2112 or mchadwick@reena.org.
Circle of Care needs volunteers to deliver meals to Holocaust survivors. Call **Lysa Springer,** 416-635-2900, ext. 496.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH
Deborah Stalman presents the "Life and music of Molly Picon," March 8, 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP **Sandy,** 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

CAMP SOLELIM'S 50th
Canadian Young Judaea celebrates the 50th anniversary of Camp Solelim, March 7 at the Warehouse. For tickets, www.campsolelim.ca.

TRIVIA AND AUCTION
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a trivia and silent auction night, March 7, 8 p.m. For tickets, trivia@shaarshlom.ca.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PASSOVER COOKING DEMO

Canadian Hadassah- WIZO (CHW) Atzmaut Chapter presents a kosher cooking demonstration and wine tasting with chef **Gadi Braudi,** Kehillat Shaarei Torah, March 15, 2 p.m. $36. RSVP before March 2, 416-630-8373.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Na'amat Canada, along with the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims celebrate women, March 8, 1:30 p.m., Borochov Cultural Centre. 416-636-5425.

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GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

- Let's Be Blunt: An evening forum for parents on teens and drug use, March 24, 7:30 p.m.
- Looking Ahead: A 6-session group for newly-separated or divorced individuals, starts March 26, 7 p.m.
- Widow/Widower under 65: A 6-session group for people under 65 who have recently lost a spouse, starts March 31, 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800 and ask for intake.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Adult 55+ Miles Nadal JCC.** Musician **Jordan Klapman** discusses "All that Jewish jazz," Feb. 26, 1:30 p.m.; Purim Party and Shpiel with the WEL Group Players, March 5, 1 p.m. $8. **Donald Stuss** discusses "The amazing plastic brain," March 12, 1:30 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org, or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Spa day, facials, manicures, barber, hairdresser, March 12, 10 a.m. Thursdays, social bridge, 12:30 p.m.
- **Circle of Care.** Free, 5-week stress management workshop, starting March 5, 1-2:30 p.m. Call **Revital Shuster** 416-635-2900, ext. 463.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. March 2, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Great Jewish painters of the 20th century," Mondays until March 16, 1 p.m.; March 3, **Osnat Lippa** discusses "Facing the modern Vienna's art scene – Part II," 10 a.m.; March 5, **Jane Teasdale** discusses "Hiring a caregiver," 1:30 p.m.
- **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. March 11, **Dr. Mortimer Mamelak** discusses "How to get a good night's sleep," 1:30 p.m.; March 25, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or **Judi,** 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub. Players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays, 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin,** Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org.
- **Beth Sholom** seniors group meets for lunch and exercise Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Strengthen your legs in a free trial class, March 2. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com.
- Engage with your grandchildren during PJ Plus, a structured Jewish program for children 18 months to 3 years. Contact adina@srcentre.ca
- Teens aged 13-17 are invited to join the JCC Maccabi ArtsFest delegation. Specialties include acting, dance, musical theatre and more. Contact Jennifer@srcentre.ca
- **Galya Sarna** shares recipes as she prepares an Israeli-style meal with a French twist, March 19, 6:30 p.m.
- JCC book club discusses *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats*, by **Jan-Philip Sendker,** March 30, 1 p.m.
- Portrait sculpture with **Kathryn Chelin,** April 13-June 15, 7 p.m.
- Art portfolio class is designed to improve technical skills and artistic knowledge, April 19-June 14, 11 a.m.
- Moving meditation, March 12-April 23, 10:30 a.m.
- Dance and yoga for young adults with an intellectual disability, April 14-June 16, 6:15 p.m.
- Learn to play bridge or mah-jong, starts April 16.

Miles Nadal JCC

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- Purim Carnival, March 1, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. Food, music, games and more.
- *Creating Futures: threads of hope for African grandmothers* is in the gallery until March 9.
- **Iain Scott** teaches a course on "Opera and Shakespeare," Mondays, starting March 2, 1:30 p.m.
- **Annie Matan** explores Purim with improv games and storytelling, ages 18+, March 5, 11 a.m.
- Voices of power, grandmothers creating the future: **Michele Landsberg** is among the speakers honouring Canadian and African grandmothers committed to social justice. March 8, 2 p.m., Al Green Theatre. www.algreentheatre.ca. $20.
- Shabbat family party (ages 0-4 with an adult). Fridays at 11:15 a.m.; Shabbat club (ages 3-5) meets Fridays 12:30 p.m. Call ext. 388.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Ongoing admission. strengthandself@mnjcc.org ,or call ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in community-building and entrepreneurship. Email lizar@mnjcc.org, or ext. 321
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200

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Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St., 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs presents "Israel, conflict and the media: how to talk to our children about issues facing Israel and the Jews," March 24, 1 p.m.
- Single and over 50? Enjoy an evening of live entertainment, March 14, 7:30 p.m. Pre-registration required.
- **Marcela Rosemberg** teaches a glass fusion workshop on making your own seder plate, March 10, 7 p.m.
- Paint your family history, April 17-June 19, 1-4 p.m. ■

SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Our Holocaust legacy: can it be maintained?

Dr. Michael Gordon

The 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz has come and gone. There were memorials around the world, with a primary ceremony at the camp itself, attended by world leaders or their delegates. In Canada, there were remembrance events, one of which I attended at Baycrest Centre, the place where, over my almost 40 years there, my patients' stories exposed me to their personal sagas of horror and survival.

I knew little about the Holocaust during my developmental years. My grandparents were immigrants to the United States from the preceding era – that of pogroms, when many eastern European Jews, especially from Russia or – as in the case of three out of four of my grandparents – from Lithuania, left their strife-ridden homeland for the mystically welcoming shores of America. Their life wasn't easy during this massive immigration: I heard many of the stories directly from my maternal grandmother who lived with me and helped raise me. She, like many others, managed to get an education, find a place to work and ultimately raise a family.

That immigrant population forged what became part of the vibrant population of America, with strong pockets of Jewish culture and creativity in the major cities. New York, which was my home, was a beacon for many. It was during my childhood, after World War II ended, that I met Holocaust survivors, through my grandmother's involvement in a Yiddish choir in which she performed.

We went on a summer vacation to a farm owned by an eastern European Holocaust survivor where there was a reunion of other survivors from neighbouring shtetls who also sang in the Yiddish choir. I became aware that, except for my grandmother, all the other guests had pale blue numbers tattooed on their arms. Two things, however, I recall most vividly. One was how the young daughter of the farm's owner taught me to catch flies with a sideways swoop of my hand,

> *I fear that without the first hand witnesses, the power of the Holocaust will gradually fade into the annals of history*

after which she would release them into a spider's web and watch the magic of a spider ensnaring its prey. The other was the boisterous and energetic singing of songs in Yiddish and Russian every evening.

It took many years of travel and study, and ultimately my first visit to Israel, for me to have any medical contact with Holocaust survivors. In 1964, as a medical student from Dundee Scotland, I spent a month in the obstetrics and gynecology department of Rambam Hospital in Haifa, under the tutelage of a professor, Aharon Peretz, who – although I did not know this – was a critical witness at Adolf Eichmann's trial.

The professor's testimony makes chilling reading. Prof. Peretz allowed me accompany him to a clinic where he examined Holocaust survivors and determined if their obstetrical or gynecological disorders could be attributed to their Holocaust experience and thereby qualify them for financial reparations – which, according to Prof. Peretz "every one of these people qualify" for. Most patients had pale blue numbers on their arms if they were in concentration camps.

Over the years at Baycrest, I have heard the vivid stories of scores of survivors. During the past decade, most of the patients I have seen were child survivors of the Holocaust. But they are reaching the last period of their life. There will be diminishing numbers who will keep the memory alive, but their families will not likely forget their legacy. But I fear that without the first-hand witnesses, the power of the Holocaust will gradually fade into the annals of history, always important to the Jews of the world, but less so to others, for whom the powerful human tragedy will become distant and increasingly impersonal. ■

Family Moments

Naomi Cohen travelled 3,000 miles with Beverley, Mark and Corey Silverman to Glasgow, Scotland, to surprise her twin sister, Ruth Karpf, on their 95th Birthday.

Mazel tov to Sonia & Nat Gampel on their 64th anniversary, March 4. Love and wishes for good health! Mark, Alan and Joann, and Deborah.

Mazel tov to Coby Joshua Goldberg on becoming a bar mitzvah! We are so proud of you! Love from your family always.

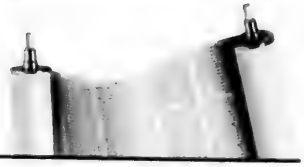
Happy 99th birthday to our special Balka Klajman – bubby, mom, auntie and cousin! Mazel tov and continued good health.

Mazel tov to Belle Feldman on the celebration of her 90th birthday. You remain beautiful! Love from your husband, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Tetzaveh | Exodus 27:20 - 30:10



Yacov Fruchter observes leadership lessons, from Moses to Mordechai
Rabbi Shalom Spira examines what it means to publicize a miracle
Rachael Turkienicz considers the role of fashion in the Torah

Yacov Fruchter

The Torah portions that we have recently read and will soon read highlight three lessons that were meant for leaders, but are relevant and inspirational for us all.

Yitro notices that his son-in-law Moses is spending day and night answering all the questions and settling all the disputes that his people bring to him. Yitro teaches him that you can't do it alone. By assuming the entire burden of the Jewish People upon yourself, you and the nation you lead will be worn down. Power and responsibility are meant to be shared. Moses heeds Yitro's advice and delegates power.

In this week's portion, Aaron the high priest is instructed to wear the *choshen*, a chest plate bearing 12 stones, representing the 12 tribes of Israel, whenever he would approach God in the *Mishkan* (tabernacle). The commentator Sforno explains that having the *choshen* pressed up against his heart would inspire the high priest to pray for the welfare of the entire nation. Though he only wore it in moments of worship, the verse describes the high priest as bearing the judgment of the people in his heart, always. A leader can never ignore the needs of those he or she is responsible for.

Finally, next week, we'll be reading a synthesis of these two lessons in Mordechai's timeless challenge to Esther, when she resists his request to approach Achashverosh on behalf of the Jewish People. "If you remain silent at a time like this, delivery and relief will come from somewhere else, but you will be forgotten. Perhaps for this exact moment you arrived to your royal position." (Esther 4:14)

Esther responds by instructing the Jews in her city to join her in fasting for three days. She takes responsibility for her people, but shares the power to change their destiny by uniting them in action. At certain moments, we don't have the luxury to wait for another to step in, nor can we achieve greatness on our own. May the joy of Purim open our hearts to those who need us most. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"*V'nishma kolo*" – "and his sound shall be heard" (Exodus 28:35). Ba'al ha-Turim observes that the word *v'nishma* appears thrice in Scripture: here regarding the Temple service, in Exodus 24:7 regarding Torah study, and in Esther 1:20. Ba'al ha-Turim links the three references by pointing to the Gemara, Megillah 3a, which derives from Esther 9:28 that we should cancel both the Temple service and Torah study on Purim in order to hear the Scroll of Esther, because *pirsumei nissa* (publicizing the miracle) enjoys priority.

Accordingly, Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chaim 689, *se'if katan* 18) expresses dismay that the custom of graggering has risen to such prominence that it risks drowning out the Esther reader's audibility. Perhaps we can suggest the following charitable justification.

The Gemara, Shabbat 88a, reports that whereas at Mount Sinai the Jews accepted the Torah out of awe, on Purim the Jews re-accepted the Torah out of love. Further, the Gemara, Megillah 6a, derives from Zechariah 9:7 that Roman theatres and circuses will eventually be employed by Jews for spreading Torah study.

Elsewhere, the Gemara, Makkot 24a, observes that a characteristic of the Roman Colosseum is that its cheering crowds can be heard from a great distance. Rabbi Akiva comments regarding this cacophony that "if such is the jubilance that transgressors of the Will of the Holy One, blessed be He, enjoy, then how much more so will be the jubilance of those who actually follow His Will."

Thus, on Purim, when we celebrate the re-acceptance of the Torah, we imbue the synagogue with a stadium-like character where we jubilantly cheer to express thanksgiving for the gift of the Torah. Of course, this is purely a philosophical insight, and it remains our legal duty to follow Mishnah Berurah's guidance by listening carefully to every word of Esther. ■

Rabbi Shalom Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

In this week's Torah portion, there is a description of the clothes that the high priest is to wear. It becomes obvious that the man will almost disappear in the clothes.

Every layer has significance and the outcome is a multi-sensory experience. In ancient Israel, the high priest is seen at a distance and heard approaching as there are bells on his hemline. Clearly, the person in the clothing represents the office and does not impose personal creativity onto his position. I do not want a creative high priest.

However, as the office of the high priest declined, the role of the rabbi came to the forefront. Today, rabbis dress to reflect the communities they represent. We watch what they wear, if even on a subconscious level. But was that always the case?

In the Talmud, the sages discuss what to wear when they go to pray. Yes, that age-old question: "What do I wear to shul?" is truly age-old.

Yet there is difference between how we ask the question and how they asked the question.

Today, we wonder how others will view us in the outfits we wear. When did I wear it last? Is it fashion-appropriate? Am I overdressed? But in the Talmud, the focus was how my clothing enhances or detracts from my prayer statement. If I'm dressed lavishly, can I ask God for worldly goods? One sage offered the opinion that his prayers focused on the world's needs rather than personal need. If the world was at peace, he'd dress beautifully, to reflect the optimism and gratitude he wished to communicate in his prayer. If the world were in dire need, he dressed to reflect that need.

In the Torah, the clothes reflect the office. In the Talmud, the clothes reflect the prayer. Perhaps we should revisit the question of what to wear to shul and bring it to a meaningful place. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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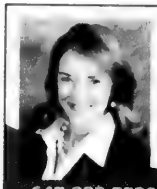

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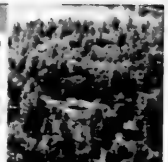

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Belgian museum opens people's eyes

TOBY SALTZMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Beyond its brutal past, Mechelen is a scenic and lively city bustling with cafes, shops and outdoor markets. TOBY SALTZMAN PHOTO

Europe these days is rattled, its political institutions on high alert and its Jewish communities reeling with angst as security steps up at key locations. As newscasts portray events, and world leaders speak of snagging terrorists and trying to change the mindsets of youths who may be swayed to do harm, my mind veers to Mechelen, Belgium.

In this ethnically diverse city located halfway between Brussels and Antwerp is a museum that aims to open people's eyes to conditions that provoke human rights violations, and render the Holocaust relevant today by exposing how irritated masses, perpetrators and quiet bystanders can ultimately create victims.

Flanking both sides of a river that streams to the vital port of Antwerp, Mechelen is architecturally pretty, the embellished Flemish façades of its historic buildings facing wide squares and boulevards, many lined with stylish shops and cafés. Some structures date to times when Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa of Austria built Het Hof Habsburg in 1756 as *kazerne* (barracks) for her infantry. (Interestingly, the empress was infamous for her anti-Semitic idols.)

When the industrial revolution whistled into Belgium – stringing continental Europe's first railroad from Brussels to Mechelen in 1835 – the city became a prominent manufacturing hub. After World War I, Het Hof Habsburg was renamed Kazerne Dossin after triumphant Austrian Gen. Emile Dossin. It became a prestigious training school for Belgium's future military officers.

Between July 1942 and September 1944, the Nazis would choose their *kazerne* as a convenient assembly depot for Jews from Belgium and Northern France who would be summoned for labour mobilization, not suspecting the "final solution."

Ultimately, here around 25,500 Jews and 352 Roma were thrust into 28 rail transports bound for Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Nazis' explicit records note that 583 people escaped.

One of them was Joseph Peretz who penned his experiences in his memoir *The Endless Wait*, and lives in Toronto today. Peretz's remarkable saga encompasses his childhood in Antwerp, his happy antics as a handsome officer-in-training in Kazerne Dossin, his multiple escapes from incarcerations in France and Belgium, and the joyous love story of his marriage to Josie and birth of daughter Kitty. [Sadly, Josie died a month ago. Peretz turned 94 on Jan. 29.]

There was no train in sight on the day I visited, yet – touching my toe to the rail that curves past Het Hof Habsburg – I imagined the rail rumbling with terror as trains rolled into Mechelen at the height of Belgium's occupation during World War II.

Stepping into the courtyard where budding soldiers once practised military strategies, I imagined rows of families clinging together, parents and children wearing tags numbered for transport cars, their possessions hurled aside. Bile curled up inside me when my guide explained: "This entire three-storey building block languished until the 1980s when a section was turned into condominium lofts. Everyone in Mechelen knew what had happened here, yet later buyers 'pretended' they had no idea."

Today the rest of the infamous edifice is the Museum of Deportation and Resistance. Literally a witness to history, it houses a Holocaust research data base brimming with the Nazis' own meticulous documentation of every Belgian who entered Kazerne Dossin in preparation for annihilation. Among the few who returned to Mechelen, the late Natan Ramet was a driving force in the creation of the museum. He was knighted by King Albert II in 2005.

Across the way stands the new Kazerne Dossin Memorial, Museum and Documentations Centre on Holocaust and Human Rights built in 2012, its pathway marked by a parade of towering poles with banners showing faces of people. Upon entering the building – where a three-storey interior wall shows more than 18,000 faces of lost Mechelen residents, along with spaces for people to add missing pictures – visitors learn the grave consequences of complicit bystanders who "followed orders" and the worth of valiant activists who formed the Jewish resistance.

Kazerne Dossin's exhibits, artifacts, cartoons, sculptures and videos speak of global concerns, among them issues of refugees, Chinese dissidents, genocide in Africa and Armenia, as well as discrimination based on race, gender and sexuality.

Beyond the museum's solemn stature, Mechelen is delightful to explore, its river boardwalk, main squares and cafés lively with a cosmopolitan mix of people whose chatter mingled English, French and Flemish dialects, all reflecting a peaceful sense of integration. Wandering through a labyrinth of narrow streets, I arrived at a market that seemed a world unto itself: most of the merchants and shoppers had olive-coloured skin and spoke a different language; the women wore headscarves.

My guide explained, "These are Muslims from Morocco who live in clusters scattered throughout Belgium. They dominate our Sunday market." Imbibing the scenes and scents as I strolled among the stalls, I felt comfortable, with no sense foreboding the events of today.

Mechelen may not headline itineraries for people eager to experience Belgium's resplendent historic sights and new museums in Brussels and Antwerp, the poignant war commemorative sites in Ypres, the scenic canal-side enclaves of Ghent and Bruges, or the gorgeous Ardennes wilderness, but it's worth a side trip for Kazerne Dossin. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
FEBRUARY 26, 2015

A.B. Yehoshua: only a national unity government can head off a binational state

ELIAS LEVY
elevy@cjnews.ca

The great Israeli writer A.B. Yehoshua, was born in Jerusalem to a father whose family had lived in Israel for six generations and a mother of Moroccan origin.

This brilliant novelist, whose work has been published throughout the world and translated into 35 languages, is a tireless advocate for rapprochement between Israelis and Palestinians. He has received some 15 respected international literary awards, and in 1995, he received the prestigious Israel Prize, the highest honour awarded by the state to Israelis who have distinguished themselves in a specific field.

Abraham B. Yehoshua BARSO CANNARSA OPALE PHOTO

What do you think about the current Israeli electoral campaign?

It's a dirty, contemptible campaign that's a disgrace to Israeli democracy. The political situation in Israel today reminds me of the one in France in the 1950s. The government fell every year. France was facing a big problem that seemed unsolvable: French Algeria. Today we are living in a similar situation in Israel. The government coalitions in power never manage to finish their mandate. And the Palestinian question is the French Algeria of Israel.

What are the main issues in these elections?

The major problem Israel is facing today is the Palestinian question. So, I hate the fact that in this campaign, the principal political parties have been avoiding this question that's so crucial for Israel's future. All the other problems are secondary. The very sensitive Palestinian question has poisoned the daily lives of Israelis for several decades. As for the main source of this infernal problem, the policy of settlement in the Palestinian territories, it's a scourge that is eating away at Israeli democracy.

According to the most recent polls, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is the political leader best positioned to form the next government. I guess this perspective doesn't thrill you.

For me, absolutely the only path that Israel can possibly take for a frontal attack on the big problems and the many insistent threats facing it today is a national unity government. In Israel, this is an option that has proven successful in the past. I hope that this time, Netanyahu will not categorically exclude this sensible political option.

If he wins the election, the other political option Netanyahu would have would be to re-establish a government coalition with the parties on the extreme right and the religious parties.

A new alliance with nationalist extremists like Naftali Bennett, leader of Habayit Hayehudi (the Jewish Home party) and the opportunistic and obtuse religious parties will lead us right to another impasse that will be catastrophic. The major priority of this potential new government coalition of the extreme right will be to briskly pursue the settlement of the West Bank and to build hundreds of new homes in east Jerusalem – a disastrous policy that will further poison the already terrible, messy relations between the Netanyahu government and the Obama administration. This awful policy will be a fatal blow to the two-state solution and to relations between Israel and the United States.

Do you still firmly believe in the two-state solution?

There is no other way to ensure a secure and viable future for the State of Israel. I am an old Zionist, born in Jerusalem during the British Mandate of Palestine. I lived during some very hard times when Israel's existence was seriously threatened. This is the first time in my life that I have heard a political leader, Naftali Bennett, declare publicly that "there will never be peace with the Palestinians or with the Arab world." It's frightening. Even in 1948, when Israel was a very vulnerable embryonic state threatened with annihilation by seven heavily armed Arab armies, no political Zionist leader, on the right or the left, ever declared that peace with the Arabs is nothing but an impossible dream. Even in the Zionist revisionist movement, there has never been this kind of fatalism. We have to remember that Zionism has never been a synonym for defeatism. The late prime minister Menachem Begin, a leading figure in the ultra-nationalist, Zionist right, never made such appalling statements. On the contrary, Begin believed in peace with the Arabs.

Last fall, with some other Israeli intellectuals, you supported recognition of a Palestinian state by the European parliaments. Isn't that kind of European initiative idealistic and counter-productive when we know that an independent Palestinian state will never see the light of day through the goodwill of the Europeans, but only through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians?

That petition was signed by almost a thousand activists in the Israel peace camp: writers, including Amos Oz, David Grossman and myself; artists; university academics; former senior Israel Defence Forces and Israeli intelligence officers, and former senior officials. Everyone knows that this symbolic recognition will not have any concrete results on the ground. The Palestinian state, if it sees the light of day, will be the fruit of the necessary negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. We encouraged this initiative of the European parliaments, because we are convinced that, in the dismal context of politics in Israel and Palestine today, it's the only way to ward off the disastrous option of a binational Israeli-Palestinian state and to encourage the moderate elements of the Palestinian Authority to return to the negotiating table. If not, it will be the most radical Palestinians who will take charge, and they will end up eliminating any hope of peace. The binational state is a very bleak scenario that's becoming more plausible every day. In supporting the European parliaments' efforts to officially recognize a Palestinian state, those who signed the petition were not only performing a moral and existential act for the Palestinians, but also for the Israelis.

Do you believe then that a binational state is the antithesis of the Zionist plan?

Absolutely. In this kind of two-headed state, the Israeli Jewish identity is doomed to extinction. Today, many Palestinians, exasperated by a future that is likely to be darker and darker, secretly dream of living in a binational state. We need to put an end to this macabre dream. Time is against Israel.

How can one restart a peace negotiation process that's stalled today?

Let's not fool ourselves. The interminable conflict between Israel and the Palestinians cannot be resolved without the help of the Europeans and the firm intervention of the Americans. The likelihood that this more than 100-year-old dispute can be definitively settled through direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians is very minimal. The United States is primarily responsible for the perpetuation of this conflict. Since 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip after the Six Day War, the governments in power in Washington did absolutely nothing to end the Israeli settlement of the Palestinian territories. Nevertheless, since 1967, all the U.S. presidents, Republican or Democrat, have said that the Israeli settlements are an obstacle to peace. Unfortunately, nothing was ever done about it. The negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians can't be restarted with any serious intent as long as the Americans, and the Europeans too, don't put intense pressure on the two parties, because they are giving substantial financial aid to the Palestinian Authority. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity. For the full interview with A.B. Yehoshua in French, please visit www.cjnews.com. Translation by Carolan Halpern.

Emerson Swift Mahon: Canada's first black Jew

Backstory

EIRAN HARRIS

In 1912, a young black man left Grenada in a quest for learning. His voyage led him to Canada and conversion to Judaism.

"May you be written in the book of life in the New Year," says the greeting in Yiddish on the back of a photograph of a black man in a broad-brimmed hat (see picture on cover).

That man, Emerson Swift Mahon, Canada's first black Jew, sent the picture with a brief letter to Rabbi Herman Abramowitz of the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue in Montreal.

The letter, dated Nov. 16, 1921, is one of many treasures discovered in the Allan Raymond Collection housed at the Jewish Public Library Archives of Montreal. Raymond, a historical lecturer, retired from the insurance business to devote his time to the study and collection of Canadian and Canadian-Judaic history. Written in English and Hebrew, the letter is a fascinating glimpse of this remarkable man.

"It is to be regretted that I have neglected my study of Hebrew," Mahon wrote from Winnipeg to the rabbi. "What with the busy whirl of life...I had almost forgotten the saying of the sage."

That saying is written in Hebrew. "Whoso forgets one word of his study, him the scripture regards as if he had forfeited his life."

To be black and Jewish in Canada nearly 100 years ago was both unique and challenging. To be also literate in Hebrew and Yiddish was an indication of an unusual and determined personality.

Born a Catholic in 1891, he learned the importance of higher education from his father who was a head teacher in Grenada. His father also instilled in him the importance of the lessons to be learned from Judaism. We cannot be sure what made him interested in Judaism, but perhaps it was the influence of the Sephardi Jewish community in the West Indies, exiled from Spain during the Inquisition.

The educational facilities in the British West Indies being limited, Mahon left the islands for Canada. He farmed in Saskatchewan for two years before joining the Canadian army at the outbreak of World War I. There he met Rabbi Abramowitz, the chaplain to the Jewish soldiers of the Canadian contingent.

Mahon persuaded Rabbi Abramowitz of his sincere desire to convert, and after a lengthy course of instruction in the intricacies of Judaism, an appropriate test of knowledge and a religious ceremony, Rabbi Abramowitz signed the conversion certificate.

After the war Mahon settled in Winnipeg and graduated in 1929 with a science degree from the University of Manitoba. He later received a teacher's certificate from the Provincial Normal School. Unfortunately, the Depression forced him to accept a job as a sleeping car porter with the Canadian Pacific Railway, which lasted until his retirement in 1956.

Eventually, Mahon possessed one of the finest private Judaic libraries in Canada. At one time, he seriously considered enrolling in a theological seminary, with the intention of becoming a rabbi.

In Winnipeg, Mahon joined Young Judaea, a Zionist youth organization, and quickly rose through the ranks. His work on the railway enabled him to organize chapters throughout Western Canada as well as to photograph every synagogue between Winnipeg and Vancouver.

It is known that he married a woman of Russian-Jewish descent and that the couple had children, but the details are unknown.

His skin colour alone made him stand out at any gathering and there was hardly a Jewish person in Winnipeg who did not know him by sight. In fact, on the way to synagogue on Saturday mornings, it was quite common to observe Mahon urging his children, in Yiddish, to hurry along.

Mahon died in 1963 and his wife followed 15 years later. ■

Eiran Harris is archivist emeritus at the Jewish Public Library in Montreal.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

In Loving Memory of

LENNA GROSS ל"ז

Beloved wife of Arnie Gross, loving mother of Blayne & Brittany Gross, dedicated daughter of Manny & Natalie Langer, cherished sister and sister-in-law of Darlene & Larry Wronzberg and Gail & David Gluckman; very close extended family Alina Turk, Sally & David Laren, Helen, Larry & Cindy Turk, and aunt to Lynsey, Jesse, Tarah, Alexandra, Joshua, Mathew, Amanda, Dustin, Cody, Dylan, Samantha and Gillian

The Family deeply appreciates all of your kind words, condolences, support, comfort and donations that were provided to us during this difficult time

Your thoughtfulness is gratefully acknowledged by our entire family and we thank all of you

Lenna truly touched many hearts and will be dearly missed

Gross, Langer, Wronzberg, Gluckman, Turk, & Laren Families

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Eva Smugler	Feb 7/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Joshua George Lister	Feb 5/15	118 Wedgewood Drive
Diane Chapelle	Feb 7/15	141 Pineway Blvd.
Lola Goldblum	Feb 9/15	66 Sheppard Avenue, West
Pearl Feldman	Feb 7/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Rita Zlotkowski	Feb 8/15	91 Hove Street
Victor Romandel	Feb 9/15	125 Hillmount Avenue
Molly Lichtenstein	Feb 8/15	6200 Bathurst Street
Sadie Berger	Feb 10/15	35 Canyon Avenue
Gerry Steinhouse	Feb 9/15	19 Longbow Square
Barry Walton	Feb 9/15	120 Promenade Circle
Ignati Berkovitz	Feb 10/15	6108 St. Ives Way
Larry Stone	Feb 12/15	124 Virginia Avenue
Larry Silverman	Feb 12/15	208 Acton Avenue
Larry Tannenbaum	Feb 11/15	110 Promenade Circle
Al Freedman	Feb 11/15	1 Northwestern Avenue
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Leanne, Mount Sinai Clinical Nurse Specialist in Geriatrics and General Medicine, with patient Violet

PHOTO CREDIT: BRIAN MOSOFF

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With courses offered in the morning, afternoon, and evening, there is sure to be something that sparks curiosity and fits into one's busy schedule. Offerings include live performances by students of The Glenn Gould School and there are specific ticket offers, too. Upcoming courses include:

Mahler's Romantic Landscape of Song and Symphony, 4-week course, Thursdays, Feb. 26 – March 19, 1:30-3:30 p.m., instructor: Stephen Cera.

This course surveys the fascinating connections between Mahler's songs and song cycles, and his first four symphonies. Special focus will be paid to Mahler's *Second Symphony* (*Resurrection*), which will be performed by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, and vocal soloists in June 2015.

Music and the Third Reich, 4-week course, Tuesdays, March 3-24, 6-7:30 p.m., instructor: Simon Wynberg

Simon Wynberg, artistic director of the ARC Ensemble (Artist of the Royal Conservatory) will cover anti-Semitism and the early exclusion of Jews from the music industry, the concept of "entartete" (degenerate) music, the creation of the *Reichsmusikkammer*, and the predicament of German musicians and the artistic and moral choices they were forced to make.

Mozart: Man and Music, 6-week course, Tuesdays, March 10 – April 14, 10 a.m.-noon, instructor: David Bowser.

Join David Bowser, founder and artistic director of the Mozart Project and conductor of the Toronto Mozart Players, for a series of engaging and informative lectures offering insights into the life, personality, and music of this enigmatic and beloved composer.

Opera in the City, 6-week course, Tuesdays, March 24 – April 28, 1-3 p.m., instructor: Eric Domville.

Join University of Toronto professor emeritus Eric Domville for an illuminating journey into operatic history, and enhance your experience of the following four operas scheduled to be performed in Toronto this spring:

Berlioz's version of *Gluck's Orpheus* and *Eurydice* (Opera Atelier; opens April 9)

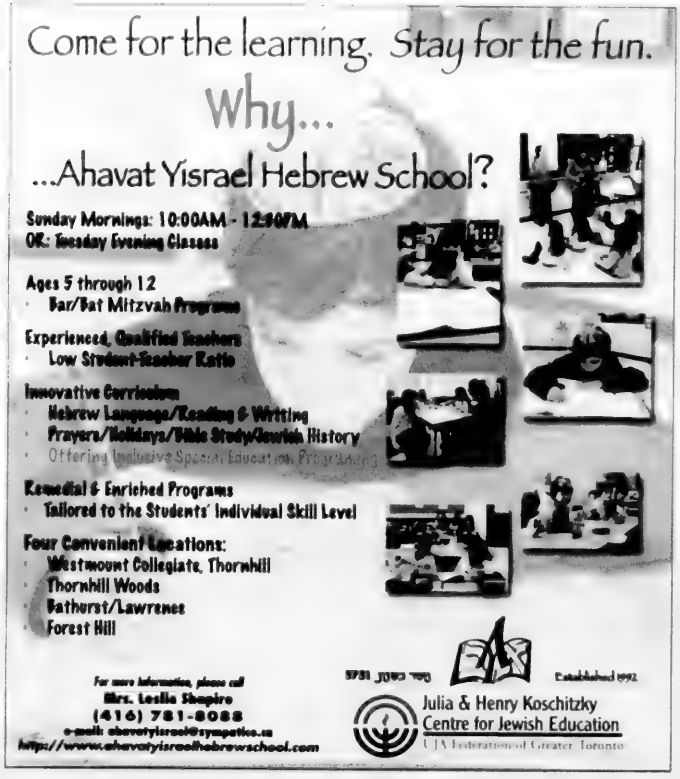
Rossini's comic masterpiece *The Barber of Seville* (opens April 17)

Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Schoenberg's seminal *Erwartung* (opens May 6.)

"Attending this course greatly enhances my appreciation of the operas when I attend the live performance," says a former student.

For detailed descriptions of course offerings and information or to register go to learning.rcmusic.ca/musicappreciation, call 416-408.2825, or visit us at 273 Bloor St. West.

Adult students may also explore individual and group instruction throughout the year in voice, woodwind, brass, percussion, string and piano. ■



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Beth Tzedec offers kids a new way to learn Hebrew

Beth Tzedec's Congregational School in midtown Toronto isn't your mother's Hebrew school.

There's no more boring recitations of Hebrew or endless drills about Jewish holidays. Instead, principal Daniel Silverman has reformed the curriculum to reflect an experience- and activity- based model of learning.

"We're not just taking the school model and changing what subject kids learn, and doing it on off hours. We're very different then what things used to be like 20, 30, 40 years ago," he says.

"We make sure that everything that we do is centred on, not what I want my students to learn, [or] what I want the students to get, but – how are my students going to experience this? What is going to be their take [on] how I'm going to present this material to them?"

Silverman accomplishes this through physical movements, props and games so that "they are beginning to develop a Hebrew vocabulary in a purely oral way," he says.

"And so, in a few years down the road when we actually sit down with them to learn how to read Hebrew, and how to write Hebrew, the content that they're learning they already know."

> *It is all happening in real time and in a relevant and authentic way*

One such way assignments reflect this is through baking. The children will have an ingredient list and recipe for chocolate chip cookies in Hebrew, which they will have to correctly translate before being able to eat and distribute the baked goods.

The end result is being able to place Hebrew in context, which will be more meaningful for them.

"When they learn all this Hebrew vocabulary it isn't just in this vacuum," Silverman says. "It is all happening in real time and in a relevant and authentic way."

The kids aren't bored or staring idly at the clock, watching the seconds tick by, like you may have done in Hebrew school. Instead, the youngsters at Beth Tzedec think Hebrew school is fun.

"They are learning, but they are also learning in a way that is engaging and fun and is connecting to that subject. Not in a 'This is what you have to know' way, but in a 'here's what we think this is what you want to know.'"

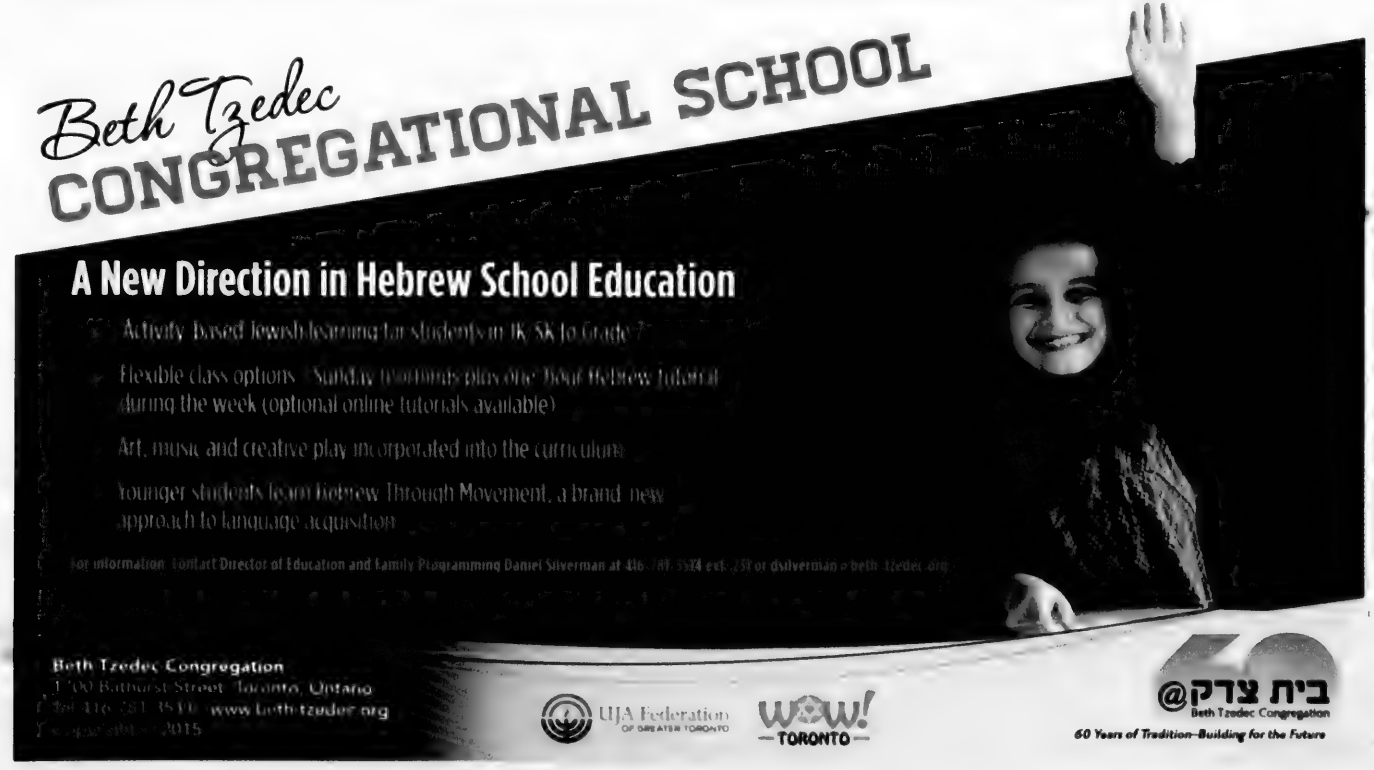
Silverman does this through the support of his faculty, who are all dedicated to helping children learn in the modern world.

"Here's the 21st-century aspect of it," he says. "As a teacher, you incorporate technology, you incorporate music, you incorporate art and it makes for a really robust and full experience for all of our students."

Beth Tzedec also offers options for busy parents with children in grades 3 to 7 who may not want to fight through Toronto traffic on a Wednesday afternoon. It offers a web-conferencing class where students can log on from their own home.

"We understand that we serve a wide geographic range and people have different and busy schedules, and parent can't always get their kids to our site at a specific time," he says.

Come see for yourself at Beth Tzedec's open house at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday, March 1. ■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Students with special needs have lots of options in day schools

VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jewish day school students with special needs or educational disabilities have many options to participate in the day school system, says Daniel Held, executive director of UJA's Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education.

The centre deals with Jewish education in day schools, supplementary schools, and programs throughout the city (including Jewish summer camps, March of the Living, Hillels, PJ Library program and more).

"The goal is engage the maximize number of students and offer high quality affordable education, to ensure the health of our community in terms of Jewish identity," says Held, who has also worked in the Jewish day school system and is a columnist for *The CJN*.

For students with special needs, there are a variety of options they can turn to in the Jewish community, says Held.

"Special needs is a diverse term. It encompasses students who need all kinds of different services from social work to remediation to extra time and coaching. [It also includes] students who have physical disabilities, and our schools offer a wide variety of services. Our partners at Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) and JVS offer services in school," he said.

When a student requires special assistance, the family and school can work together to develop an individualized education program (IEP) to best serve the needs of the student. "The IEP helps guide the work of parents and the staff who work with students, recognizing that every student who works with us has multiple touch points," says Held.

The role of federation is to assist schools with the cost and expertise needed to deal with diverse students' needs.

"We help build the schools' capacity to work with students with special needs, including consulting to develop best practices. We offer funding to circumvent the cost of servicing students with special needs."

Ultimately, the goal is to have students with special needs or disabilities integrated into the main classroom for the majority of the day, he said.

Organizations like JVS often partner with Jewish day schools to work with teachers, principals, and parents every day, says Held.

Other organizations such as Zareinu, an educational centre that provides individualized therapies and treatments along with Jewish teachings and traditions, are an option for students who need specific attention for their physical or developmental challenges, he says.

As the community grows and the variety of students' needs grow as well, challenges remain.

"We do have a real diversity of learners. Resources are tight. It's challenging for schools to reach the broadest spectrum. We're undertaking reviews of IEPs to understand who the students are in our schools and we're working with each school to understand what kind of needs they have so we can better understand how we can better help the school," says Held.

He says he's hopeful about the advancements being discussed and envisioned for special needs students in Toronto.

"We held a professional development day about a month ago for those who work with students with special needs across all 14 schools in Toronto," said Held. "We came together for one day to learn together about building IEPs for special needs. It was exciting to see their passion about building the best education." ■

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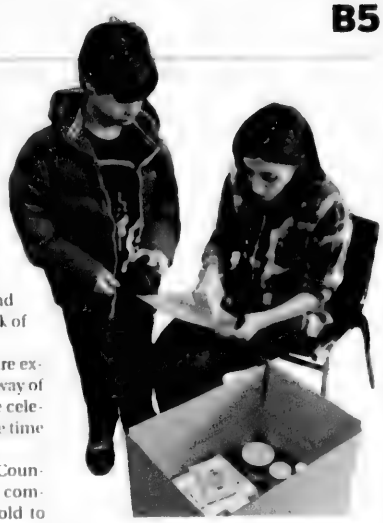

The Passover Food Drive, a project of National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto Section takes place this year from March 15 to 25.

Glenda Ephron Cooper, chair of the food drive, says that during this period the organization packs and delivers more than 2,600 boxes of kosher for Passover food to impoverished Jews living within Toronto.

"The number of recent immigrants, individuals with disabilities, and those with inadequate financial resources, continues to grow. It is our mission to provide these individuals with the essentials required to have a meaningful Passover seder, she says.

"Thirteen per cent of Jews live below the poverty line in the Greater Toronto Area, which amounts to almost 24,000 people. Added to this, we lose about 20 per cent when we have to spend U.S. dollars, and the cost of purchasing chickens has increased," Cooper says.

Monetary donations are vital to this cause as 90 per cent of the kosher for Passover food is purchased through wholesalers.

"The Passover Food Drive has a new look, which we are excited to launch with *The Canadian Jewish News*. We will also be launching a new website on March 1, www.passoverfooddrive.com.

"We are initiating some exciting fundraisers this year to supplement our donor campaign. We are announcing our first ever Passover Food Drive Raffle, Buy-A-Chicken, from March 1 to April 6. Tickets will be sold at $10 each or $25 for three. Money raised from this raffle will be used towards purchasing the chickens. Tickets may be purchased by phone, 416-633-5100."

Cooper says there are some excellent prizes: 1st prize is a travel voucher from Payless Travel; 2nd prize includes two nights stay at Best Western Hotel located on historic Lundy's Lane in a Tower Room, Clifton Hill Fun Pass for two, and Oh Canada, Eh, theatre tickets for two; 3rd prize is a Skylon Tower Fallsview dining voucher, and gift certificate at the Tango clothing boutique in Niagara Falls; 4th prize is a 60 minutes Pure and Simple facial from OM Spa; 30 minutes holistic nutritionist consultation from Nutrilicious and a beautiful necklace from Lineve Jewellery.

Other prizes include: art from Poster International; a Sobeys gift voucher; Supperworks gift certificate; seder plate from Matana; Starbucks gift basket, and three Second Cup vouchers.

Other fundraisers to help purchase chickens include, Passover greeting cards, which have been drawn and created by school children.

The drawings are designed depicting symbols and story lines relating to Passover. There will be five winners who win a Haggadah, and have their names printed on the back of their card.

"We also sell tribute cards. These are excellent for hostess cards, or an ideal way of honouring those around us who are celebrating special times and at the same time contributing to the community."

Delivery day is a hub of activity at Council House, 4700 Bathurst St., as the community gets together, young and old to deliver the food boxes to recipients, says Cooper.

The Passover Food Drive is totally volunteer based. "It is so community driven. It's an inspiration to see and be part of it."

Children come to pack on outings with their schools. High school students supervise, pack and help in the warehouse, and volunteer hour credits are given. Drivers are an essential part of the drive. They deliver the food boxes to recipients on delivery day.

"Family bonding is so part of this project. Toronto families have been doing this for 32 years. Those children are now parents of the next generation. The drive is part of the Jewish culture in Toronto."

Cooper says, "if you have never participated in the drive, come on delivery day, and feel the amazing energy at Council House. It is a marvellous learning experience for children and adults alike."

For more information regarding the raffle or to make a donation, call, 416-633-5100. You can also make an online donation by visiting: www.ncjwc-ts.org or www.canadahelps.org/dn/17133. ■

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Israeli schools tougher, inside and out

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The biggest adjustment making aliyah with children may be transitioning to the Israeli school system. Schools here are run down, and the chilly reception can be a shock.

For Rebekah Chaifetz Saltzman, who made aliyah in August from New York, the transition has been jarring. From an elite Jewish school with Smartboards and iPads, Saltzman's older son transitioned into Kitah Bet (Grade 2) and her younger twins into gan (kindergarten) in Haifa's Achuza area.

"The schools here are not as nice. Technologically, they're miles behind," says Saltzman. "It's so surprising from a high-tech startup nation."

Though her son's classroom has a computer with a projector, the building is bare bones. "The kids are wearing their coats all day long in the winter. That would never happen in an American school. They have heaters in the classrooms, but when you walk in the hallways, it's cold."

"Cold" also describes their reception from students, staff and families unprepared for olim. "The adjustment was rough... They don't teach their kids how to treat new people. It's cliquish... a lot of the families, the parents, grandparents live in Haifa, all the families know each other."

But Tara Gordon Carey, who made aliyah this fall from Toronto to Pardes Chana, says it depends on the school.

Carey visited three schools. At the third, "the *menahel* [principal] took me to the class, the kids stood up... they showed respect." Her daughters now attend that school, which is, like Saltzman's children's, a national religious school.

Carey, whose daughters attended Netivot HaTorah Day School in Toronto, has learned that "you have to be a strong advocate in this country for your children."

Few olim plan their aliyah around a school, as Yocheved Deltoff and her husband Marshall did. Moving from Thornhill last summer, the family chose Karmiel mainly for Amichai, an independent haredi school with a reputation for warmth and experiential learning.

On their daughter's first day, Deltoff says, the teacher gave out streamers: blue and white, and red and white. "They sang a song about who is from Israel, who is from Canada. I know not all the schools here are this warm," she says.

Stephen Epstein, who moved from Toronto to Israel in 2005 and lives in Rehovot, heard two warnings about Israeli schools before he came: "There's overcrowding in the classrooms, and the teachers are underpaid."

Nevertheless, his daughters, in grades 7 and 9, are getting a great education, one in a science-based school and one in a school mixing religious and non-religious students. He says the day school system in Canada takes an unrealistic toll on family budgets, making aliyah a reasonable alternative.

Carey agrees that schools here, though run down by Canadian standards, seem to have their priorities straight. Her daughters' school, "has a huge play structure... hopscotch, ball games, colourful squares in the whole outside yard."

What Carey's kids miss most is having Sundays off to go skating or hiking. "Especially when you're shomer Shabbat, there's no family *tiyul* [outing] time. The only family time is Shabbat."

"I told them there's good and bad in everything. There are good things in Toronto, bad things in Toronto; good things in Israel, bad things in Israel." ■

The Israeli education system

Israel offers three streams of free public education: national, national religious, and Arab. Any Jewish student may attend either a religious or non-religious public school at no charge.

There are also independent schools, usually aimed at families willing to pay a little more for a religious education. Registered schools receive government funding. In 2011-2012 around 56 per cent of the pupils in the Hebrew education system attended state schools, about 19 per cent attended state-religious schools, and about 25 per cent were enrolled in haredi schools.

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VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

To succeed in today's workforce, you need to know how to multi-task across devices and learn new technology at a moment's notice.

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"We're preparing kids for a future we have not yet lived in. What's out there now is so rapidly changing. Innovative programming promoting the skills needed in today's 21st century world are key, providing experiences where students have real life, contextual learning, collaborate in teams, communicate, and reach out to build relationships outside of the school," said Jennifer Fraenkel, head of school at Akiva School, a pluralistic elementary Jewish day school in Montreal.

This school year, they launched computer science and coding classes into their curriculum, for students from kindergarten to Grade 6. "We coined it the fourth language," said Fraenkel, in addition to the three languages the students already learn (English, French and Hebrew). Coding is one of the most sought-after skills in today's workplace, with the number of computer programming jobs expected to increase 30 per cent by 2020 (meanwhile, all other U.S. industries are only expected to grow by 14 per cent).

Other Jewish day schools are also following suit. At the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, students benefit from Smart boards in classrooms and can take technology courses with access to green-screens, soundproof rooms and recording booths.

At Associated Hebrew Schools, students work with iPads in the classroom and they've also started a new volunteer initiative called iParent where parent volunteers introduce JK/SK children to different iPad apps related to numeracy and literacy activities.

At Akiva, they're also taking learning outside of the classroom. Their Grade 5 students work on entrepreneurial projects with local businesses, learning how to solve business challenges.

Indeed, *Forbes* reports that success in the 21st-century workplace will not be dependent on technical ability but the ability to problem solve and make decisions, something which Akiva School hopes to instil in their students from an early age.

"What kids need is to take responsibility at a young age and know they can make a difference. The only way to do this is if they know the work they're doing in school is related to work outside of school," said Fraenkel.

"It's not about sitting in a classroom and working in workbooks anymore – it's about giving them a real audience and causes and having the work they do transcend the walls of the classroom. There's lots of brain research now on what motivates students and that's doing and speaking, which we put a lot of emphasis on. That's part of the basis why Akiva was founded (in 1968) and it's pretty amazing it holds true so many years later." ■

Advertising Feature

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Evan Glaizel

Evan Glaizel

JYN Hebrew School is the best Hebrew school EVER. There are fun educational games and they teach you all you need to know about Judaism.

At the beginning of the class we do all sorts of prayers to Hashem like one of most important prayers the *Shema*. Next we do our mitzvot for every Hebrew letter. Sometimes we even play fun games for the mitzvot we learned, and trust me, they are fun.

Then it is snack time. For snack we have kosher cookies. The kosher cookies taste so delicious. Also when we are at break we play fun games like octopus or tag.

After we are finished our break we do a really fun program called Alef Champ. What Alef Champ really is, is a program where kids at JYN Hebrew School get to practice their alef bet in a fun way. The first two colours (red and white) teach you how to read the alef bet. The next three colours (orange, yellow and green) teach you all the vowels. The next colour (blue) teaches you how to read fast and at the end of blue you have to read a lot of Hebrew letters in under two minutes.

The last colours (purple, brown, grey and black) teach you how to read from the Torah and that means when you are done black you will know exactly how to read the Torah. Right now I am on brown and now all I need to do to pass is finish brown and then do grey and black and then I have finished all of the levels and I know how to read the Torah (which is awesome to know how to read the Torah). Alef Champ is a really cool way to learn how to read Hebrew.

Next we write in our Jewish hero book. In our Jewish hero book there are questions about the history of Judaism that we have to answer. What I mean by Jewish heroes are people like Avraham (the first Jew) and Moshe (Jew to receive the Torah). So every week we learn about one amazing Jewish hero and that means we get to do one full page about one amazing Jewish hero.

Sometimes at the end of class we do something called food art. What food art is, is an activity where we make Jewish things out of food. How cool is that! Some examples of what we made are a sukkot (made out of graham crackers, marshmallow fluff, pretzel sticks and gummy worms) and a challah (see picture at left). We made braids with the challah, baked them and then ate them MMMMMMMM. All of the food was so amazing. The next thing is the worst. It is time to go home.

See, I told you JYN Hebrew School is the BEST Hebrew school EVER! ■

Shirley Goodman

Let me tell you about my time at the Peretz Folk School, in Winnipeg, Man. which was very much a humorous, varied, vital and most interesting learning experience.

Torah learning was most colourful, and I can still remember the story of Pharaoh's daughter finding baby Moses in the bulrushes on the Nile River.

Also, learning to read and write in both Hebrew and Yiddish was so meaningful for me, that to this day I love speaking Yiddish.

I began attending Hebrew school at eight years old, and being a hyperactive child, I was definitely not a sit and listen all the time student! Also, it was difficult attending Hebrew school Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 pm, after a full six hour day of public school. On top of this, I had to come home, practice my violin, do English homework and get to bed by 9 p.m.

My Hebrew and Yiddish teachers were well versed in their subject matters, and I learned to love both languages! My love of Hebrew was so strong that I elected to take Hebrew 1 at the University of Manitoba. To this day, I love singing in both languages and have done gigs at retirement homes in Toronto singing in both tongues.

Our Hebrew school had three floors. On the second floor was my classroom and on the third we had a Ukrainian/Russian caretaker who used to fry bacon and who knows what else. The strong smell of these non-kosher foods would drift down to our classroom, interrupting our Torah reading lessons. My reaction to this foul smell was an emphatic and loud "Phew"!!

Now, thinking back on my classroom

Shirley Goodman

disruptions, I know I was seeking attention and loved the laughter of my classmates. Of course I was punished occasionally for these disruptions and had to stand in the corner facing the wall, and this is when I most remember the smells wafting down from upstairs. Quite a strong memory even now!

Ironically, when I was in my 20s, I again met my parochial teacher, Mr. Greenberg, who smiled, remembering my loud classroom disruptions and said in Yiddish, Sarah, *fune dir ken ich krign a krankan hartz!* (You can give me heart failure.) Two years later, I noticed Mr. Greenberg's yahrzeit in the *Jewish Post* and he had indeed died of the heart failure he claimed I was going to cause him back then!

When I became a teacher and had a few kids who were disruptive to the class like I was back in my school days, I recalled my kind parochial teacher and wondered if this could be his revenge. And actually I soon realized that his kindness in handling me helped me greatly get through to these kids in my class.

In closing, I must say that the children who attended a full day Hebrew School program, seemed to have the best of both worlds. ■

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The CJN asked readers to share with us how their lives were positively influenced by their Jewish education. Here are our six winners and four runners-up.

Tillie Margolis

When I was eight years old in 1932 my widowed mother enrolled me at the Borochov Shule to receive a Jewish education. The tuition fee was $1 per week. The school was located at 1 Major St., just doors from my home at number 49. Several of my friends on the street were also enrolled. Every afternoon after school we all hurried to attend the class.

Our teacher was Mr. Menachovsky, a charming and dedicated man. The shule's founders were members of the Labour Zionist Movement. These were a group of men dedicated to preserving the Yiddish language. Hebrew and the learning of Torah were not on the curriculum. Instead, we were introduced to Yiddish writers who told wonderful stories about Jewish life in the old country, giving us a picture of their struggles to survive in an anti-Semitic culture.

A highlight of the school year was the annual concert arranged by our teacher's wife, Mrs.Menachovsky. We all took part in making costumes and planning the event.

Though my Yiddish studies were to end with my class's official graduation in 1936, I continued on with them for one more year just before entering high school. The five years I attended the Borochov Shule gave me wonderful insights into my Jewish heritage and were to have a lasting effect on my life.

In 1949 I was a newlywed and looking for interests outside the home. Some friends approached me about joining Pioneer Women (now known as Na'amat). I became part of a wonderful group who were doing outstanding (and fun) work for the women and children of Israel.

Na'amat is the leading social service agency in Israel. Imagine my surprise when I learned that Na'amat was affiliated with the Labour Zionist Movement, the same organization that established the Borochov Shule where I received my Jewish education.

I was now working on committees with many of the same men I had known as the school's founders! These were individuals of intellect and dedication and included Max Federman, then head of the Fur Worker's Union, Ben Himel, for whom the Borochov Centre on Codsell Avenue is named, and Israel Appel.

In later years, the Labour Zionist Movement attracted equally forward-looking individuals, such as Julie Sokoloff, Lou Kirshenbaum, Victor Topper and Harry Steiner, among many others. They continued their dedication to education by founding the Bialik Hebrew Day School, with which Na'amat Toronto is proudly affiliated.

I myself attribute the Jewish education I acquired in my childhood and early teens to having led me to my future path in becoming active in Na'amat.

Through my involvement in the organization, I've held a succession of senior roles, first as president of Club Masada, then Toronto Council, and eventually as national president of Na'amat Canada. In addition, as president, Ontario Region, of the Canadian Zionist Federation, for several years I was in charge of running the annual Israel Day Festival, now organized and co-sponsored by Na'amat Toronto.

On May 31, 2015, Club Masada will be celebrating its 70th anniversary in Toronto in conjunction with Na'amat Canada's 90th anniversary.

On reflection, I realize just how much my early Jewish education contributed to my future role in the community. ■

Len Phillips

When I was in kindergarten I got the strap for singing the ABC song. Why? Because you were supposed to freeze when the bell rang to enter the school, and I didn't freeze. I was in the middle of singing the ABC song, and when you're only five years old it is a source of great humour to say " El, Em, En, Oh, Pee!" But I hadn't gotten to the "Pee" part yet, and I was determined that I would say it, and so I continued to sing loud and clear, even though everyone else in the schoolyard was standing silently like you were expected to.

For this "crime" I was hauled into the principal's office for my punishment. The year was 1954, and I was a five-year-old boy attending school for the first time. The Associated had not yet moved up north (north at that time would be the Neptune Avenue school). I don't think it was even called The Associated at that time – it was known as the Talmud Torah, located on Brunswick Avenue.

Anyway, the principal at that time, Mrs. Snider, pointed out how wrong it was for me to not freeze when the bell rang, and then I saw what my punishment would be – the leather strap that she pulled out from her desk. I got smacked once on each hand, and was told never to break that rule again.

So how does this story highlight the value of a Jewish education? Well, we forget sometimes how far Jewish schools, and the public schools too, have come over the years. (When I became a teacher in 1972 it was still legal to use the strap in the public school system, even though no principal would dare use it at that point). Anyway, when I went home to tell my mother what had happened to me she wasn't horrified. She didn't call for the principal to be fired. She didn't alert the media. She simply reconfirmed what Mrs. Snider had told me – "Don't do it again." And I didn't.

Len Phillips

In those days the rules were black and white. Much of it would be unacceptable by today's standards, but the rules were clear, and there was a sense of security knowing what those boundaries were. Despite getting the strap in kindergarten I loved going to school – even now,at the age of 65, I still have vivid and fond memories of that first year in school.

The clear guidelines of what was expected in school created a safe and conducive environment to learning. Behaviour issues didn't take over class time. The emphasis was on learning, and that's where The Associated excelled. We were free to learn in an environment that wasn't really relying on fear of punishment anymore, but was focused more on the joy of learning without interruptions... even without the strap being given for singing in the yard. ■

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THE CJN's "*HEBREW SCHOOL CONTEST*" PRIZE WINNERS

Michael Litvak

Not every family committed to Jewish education can afford to send their children to day school. Such was my case growing up in the '50s and '60s. I was educated at the supplementary Hebrew school of Beth Am Congregation on Keele Street when the neighbourhood was predominantly Jewish (Beth Am is today part of Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am).

Beginning in kindergarten and studying through Grade 10 (I was part of the inaugural class of about a half dozen who continued long past bar mitzvah) I became a product of the supplementary system that my rabbi, Rabbi Michael Dolgin, likes to point out is proof that this type of learning can be successful.

Even though I was a rotten kid and tormented many of my teachers – did they really have eyes behind their heads to see

Michael Litvak

us? – the message definitely did sink in. Regardless of what my outward attitude may have been, these teachers and our long suffering principal, Dr. Samuel Rosenblum, got the message across. I became proficient in reading Hebrew (probably because I conjugated so many verbs as punishment!) and learned how to daven and chant Torah. At the tender age of 13 and just post-bar mitzvah, I began to tutor bar mitzvah students of my own. I continued this until I was 21 and away at university.

Learning how to daven at a shivah came from watching others until I eventually volunteered to do so as we seemed to do back then. Years later, as shuls began to provide shivah leaders, I became a part of a team that performs this mitzvah as a member of Temple Sinai Congregation. I have been leading services now, as required, for over 20 years.

Chanting Torah has always been a particular pleasure; I can learn a parshah (or part thereof) in somewhat short notice and have been a regular Torah reader in morning minyan, at Shabbat and High Holidays for over 20 years now. It gives me a great deal of satisfaction to be told by congregants that they enjoy listening to me.

I learned how to conduct the unveiling service and now serve as the alternate to perform this duty when there is a conflict and none of our clergy can be made available.

We have raised our children in a kosher home with lots of Yiddishkeit. They all were educated at Temple Sinai's supplementary school. With my wife, Judy, who has been involved in Jewish education her entire professional career, we supported that in the home. As well, I tutored each of our six children for their b'nei mitzvah. My family calls me a 'frustrated' rabbi. I would like to think of myself as someone who, at 61, has gained a great deal of joy and spirituality in his religious home away from home. As I become older and can impart some of this to our grandchildren, I look forward to continuing my education and being a lay leader in our congregation.

Go supplementary Jewish education!!! ■

Shavey Tisbler

I thought it might be interesting for you to hear from someone who had an extensive Yiddish education. This early experience opened my mind and heart to the value and importance of having a Jewish education as a little girl growing up in Toronto during the 1940s. As a result of that learning experience I continue, to this day, to study Yiddish. What follows is my story.

Standing at the door of the classroom, I remember the look on my father's face when Mrs. Smith said "I am sorry, Mr. Green, but your daughter is not able to join this class because there is no chair for her." We turned, and went home. After a short while, my father had banged together several pieces of wood and produced a chair. I remember as if it were yesterday, marching back to school, chair in hand, and my father saying to Mrs. Smith "Now she can start!" I was five years old and this is how I began my Yiddish education.

The Borochov School consisted of three rooms on the second floor, above the Bellevue Theatre, on College Street. By the time I had graduated at 14 years old, the school had moved to a beautiful new building on Lippincott Street, in downtown Toronto. I graduated in front of my proud family at a wonderful graduation celebration. My graduation speech to the audience was about the founding of chassidism.

Our home was Yiddish speaking. At school we studied Yiddish as a language and all the great Yiddish authors. Our teachers were the kind and gentle Mr. and Mrs Menachovsky. I went to Huron

Graduation day at the Borochov School with me and my proud parents, Lipa and Fanny Green

Street Public School, and Shule five days a week. From Monday to Thursday I walked from Dupont and Huron streets, to College and Brunswick streets, stopping at home for a quick snack, so I would not be late for the 4:30 class.

On Sunday mornings, again we had two hours of classes. I don't ever remember complaining or even thinking about not attending class. Shule was my haven and my solitude, where my thirst for learning was always being nurtured. Every Sunday, after class, my friends and I would go across the street to the local deli where we would buy our 10 cent hotdog and Coke. Shule was also a meeting place for me and my friends.

The Borochov School became Zionistic after 1948, so (after our hotdogs and Coke) we donned our blue shirts, held our blue JNF boxes, and went door to door collecting money to help plant trees in Israel.

Many years ago, Jewish education options were very limited. Today there are so many opportunities for young people to further their Jewish education. ■

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HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Lisa Cantkier

Our son Elan is 8 years old and in Grade 3. He started attending Jewish Youth Network (JYN) Sunday School Program in Thornhill when he was six and in the first grade. The program is led by Rabbi Shmuli and Chani Nachlas.

We honestly can't speak highly enough of the program. The caring, kind and warm atmosphere of the school and staff goes far beyond our expectations. Elan always looks forward to attending the program, and walks in and out with a huge smile from ear to ear. There is a fully unconditionally caring, non-judgemental and accepting philosophy that JYN and the Chabad organization offer to families and children alike, and it is reflective of the true spirit of being a Jew.

Beyond all of that, JYN offers a progressive and successful Aleph Champ Hebrew reading program based on passing various levels. Elan enjoys this very much and we have seen huge progress with his reading and understanding of written Hebrew. He learns about Torah, holidays and what it means to be a Jew. We believe JYN offers a program that is exemplary for what a Sunday school program should strive to be and we feel blessed to have found the program in our area. ■

Ryan Forman

Tanya and I would like to thank Rabbi and Rebbetzin Nachlas for all the warmth and support that they have shown our family in so many different ways. Our youngest son Ricky attends the JYN Hebrew school. There is nothing more special than when I or my husband arrive to pick him up from Hebrew school and to see him bounding down the stairs with a huge smile on his face, yarmulke on his head, random, messy project in his hand, chatting away to one of the friends that he has met at the school.

It is a testament to Rebbetzin Nachlas and her teachers who have taught Ricky to learn to read Hebrew so diligently. Ricky often comes home to tell us about the holidays that he learned about that week and is a willing participant when it comes to making the prayers over the challah or wine for Friday night kiddush or lighting the candles for the menorah on Chanukah.

All we can say is thank you to JYN Hebrew School for instilling Jewish values in our son and for helping to make him a true mensch. ■

Amy Papernick

Every Chanukah my kids get so excited and can't wait for the Jewish Youth Network's menorah-making contest. We talk about it for weeks beforehand and plan every detail to make the perfect menorah.

This excitement is what I love about the Jewish Youth Network's approach to supplementary Jewish education. Torah studies, prayers and holidays are brought to life every week through creative, passionate and enthusiastic teaching. Ongoing projects and reward systems keep my three children who attend the school each week engaged and excited about learning.

The Jewish Youth Network has been a great choice for a supplementary Jewish education for my family. It aligns perfectly with our Jewish and traditional beliefs. What's great about the school is that it feels like a real community. All of my children have friends from their local public school in their Sunday school class. It is so nice that on Sundays they all gather together to learn about Judaism. Whether it's a story, or a craft or a game, or a token for good work, the kids always have stories to share with us and with their friends back at school the next week.

The Jewish Youth Network strives to include every Jewish child in our community. We celebrate our Judaism and are encouraged and taught to do more.

At the Jewish Youth Network the students work every week on the Aleph Champ program where they learn to read Hebrew in preparation for their bar and bat mitzvahs. As I listen to them practice at home, I kvell and know that I have chosen the right supplementary Jewish school for my kids. ■

Elise Loterman

My journey with Jewish day school education began as a two year old at the Jewish Community Centre, continued at Associated Hebrew Schools, and culminated with four years at the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (CHAT).

It's true that my Jewish education did not conclude the day I graduated from CHAT, however it was definitely those formative years that turned me onto Jewish studies, taught me to speak Hebrew (almost) fluently, and gave me the opportunity to learn time management and organizational skills that have been crucial in my personal and professional development.

Growing up in a traditional Jewish family, we celebrated Shabbat, were conscientious of kashrut, and had large family holiday celebrations.

What Jewish day school provided me was the opportunity to dig deeper, and the opportunity to ask why. [I learned] not to accept our performance of Jewish customs and rituals "just because," but to learn the historical significance and the Jewish legal reasoning behind the action.

Upon completing high school, I proceeded to do an undergraduate degree double majoring in psychology and religion, and master's degree focusing on Jewish studies.

When beginning the job search, working in the Jewish community seemed like the most natural step. I had constantly been in awe of my Jewish studies teachers and rabbis and the amount of knowledge they were able to impart in me as my mind developed and grew. I wanted to have the opportunity to be that teacher, mentor, and role model.

This led me to embark on a career with Hillel. There is rarely a week that goes by that a student or colleague does not ask me a question about an upcoming Jewish holiday, Shabbat practice or fast day. My Jewish day school education provided the foundation to begin a meaningful and relevant career where I can confidently answer these questions. It provided me with the knowledge and interest to continue my Jewish learning and growth as an adult and helped me land me a career where I am excited to go to work everyday and share this wisdom with those around me. ■

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Homeschooling – an alternative education

SHAYLA GUNTER-GOLDSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Aileen Morris was in Grade 1, both she and her parents knew organized, traditional education wasn't a good fit. Aileen, now 21, was a square peg in a round hole.

Aileen has Asperger's, a mild form of autism. She is a bright, inquisitive and creative young woman. As a child, she displayed many of these same qualities, but the schools she was attending seemed to be killing her enthusiasm for learning. Her mother, Marni, began supplementing Aileen's education at home and by Grade 6 she was homeschooling Aileen exclusively. Or, rather, she began "un-schooling."

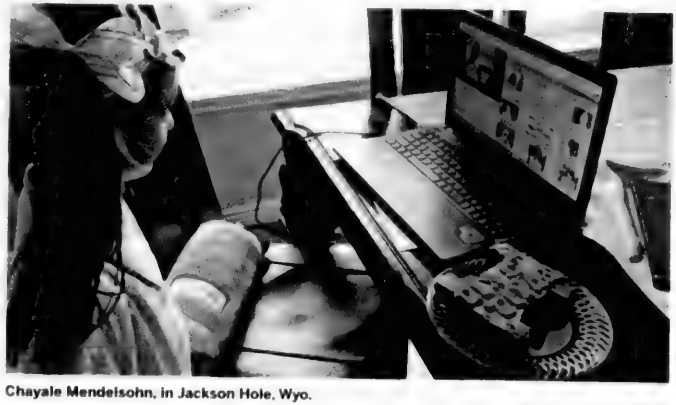
"Schools are set on the same template," explains Marni. "They focus on a rigid, behavioural approach to learning. They focus on getting the curriculum done and testing students. We believe the focus should be on developmental learning... how kids behave, how they best learn based on what their interests are and what they express their needs to be."

In homeschooling, or un-schooling, parents teach their children from either a set provincial curriculum, or based on child-directed needs. Some parents use the numerous lesson plans found online, or provided by provincial boards.

Many have less structure, but still have formal lessons. Others focus on life schooling. In the beginning, Marni provided a fairly structured path for Aileen and her younger sister Layla – both in English and Jewish studies. However, these lessons were using an academic approach, with little or no life learning.

"Isn't it better to learn about nutrition by going to the store, reading labels and cooking balanced meals together? If you're not really practicing it, it doesn't make sense to me," she says.

Rabbi Yossi Berktin of Chabad Markham agrees wholeheartedly. Three years ago he, along with a local family, created a "boutique" school. Four families were involved, with children between grades 2 and 4. They focused on the individuals rather than a grade. Two rabbis teach Jewish curriculum to the boys for part of the day – Hebrew studies, Chumash, etc., and in the afternoon, two mothers teach the English studies.



Chayale Mendelsohn, in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

The idea appeals to families who are seeking alternatives that allow them to stay within the day school model and curriculum, but also meet the individual emotional and behavioural needs of each child.

In Rabbi Berktin's model, the focus is on skill building, learning outside of books and a curriculum called "Limudei Emunah" – Faithful Learning. It is based on the idea that there are no mundane, secular studies, only holy studies, because God is ever present. Teachers attempt to make everything practical for students, encouraging discovery, experimentation and creativity. It's for families who want to stay true to how the Torah is taught, but also to include English studies – while personalizing studies based on individual needs.

Children who thrive in homeschooling are often bright, self-motivated and self-directed in nature. "They take the material we offer and go beyond where you could even possibly think about it," says Rabbi Berktin.

Chabad also has an international online school for shluchim, their representative families around the world. It's cutting-edge technology, using Skype to have children interact in a classroom. There are breakout rooms for the various grades, and Smart boards are used regularly.

Rebbetzin Raizy Mendelsohn lives in Jackson Hole, Wyo. This former Torontonian married a Lubavitch rabbi from Ottawa. Raizy says the program is "life-saving and phenomenal." The school is divided into time zones for Asia, Europe, and Western and Eastern Americas. "It's wonderful for those isolated from other Jewish schools, in remote areas... but also excellent for those having trouble in regular Jewish schools."

For homeschoolers, both in the Jewish and secular worlds, it's obvious that traditional schools are missing the mark when it comes to their children's learning.

"Life isn't really full of subjects," says Marni Morris. "But it is filled with experiences. And, that's what I'm trying to give my children." Raizy Mendelsohn agrees. "Do you have to be sitting at a desk to learn? Absolutely not."■

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Centre helps kids and parents deal with school anxiety

DANIELLE KUBES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Anne Marie Albano headlined Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre's conference, "Anxiety, Addiction, Avoidance," to celebrate its 40th anniversary helping youth transition successfully into adulthood.

Albano, along with four other panelists, discussed dealing with children who are so anxious that they avoid going to school, in this all-day conference at TIFF Lightbox last fall.

"You've got to help them figure out places that they can ease their way in and start to be successful," says Albano, who is the director of the Columbia University Clinic for Anxiety and Related Disorders.

Parents are an essential part of the helping to treat this sort of anxiety, says Albano, who advocates an old-school style of parenting, which is a mixture of tough love and using small rewards to shape behaviour.

If a young child is refusing to attend school for example, it's all right to offer him something he wants to motivate him to attend.

One child who Albano worked with, for example, loved Froot Loops. So she offered her a tiny cup of Froot Loops after a wholesome breakfast if she would attend school – not a whole bowl at once, Albano insists, but just enough. Then she would get more and more Froot Loops as her attendance increased. The incentive worked.

JEWISH FAMILY & CHILD
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KID CASS
Anxiety, Addiction, Avoidance

From left, Bruce Ballon, Dr. Alan Bardikoff, Linda Conn, David Kreindler and Anne Marie Albano

Albano cautions, however, not to offer kids lavish rewards, as they are often happy with the small things in life.

"They'll work for peanuts, kids," she says.

For an older child, who may be more demanding and have more desires, it's especially important for parents to restrain themselves.

Albano tells of one family from the United States whose preteen promised he would attend school if only the parents bought him an Xbox. The parents complied, and the child naturally stayed up all night playing video games and was too tired, never mind anxious, to attend school.

Albano advised the parents to negotiate small rewards rather than giving a large dose of the incentive at once. If the child went to school, for example, he would then be allowed to play 10 minutes of Xbox. Then, the rewards can grow in corresponding increases to compliant behaviour.

She calls this the "grandmother rule", and it can be applied to any number of situations, not only those surrounding anxiety, to get your children to listen.

The simplest example takes place at dinnertime when parents tell children that they can have a cupcake, but only if they eat dinner first – and then only one cupcake.

In general, the best way to deal with anxious children is to take it slow, praising small achievements, and calling in professional help when needed.

But anxiety is a mental health issue that affects people of all ages. The causes are not known, but the illness can manifest in ways that makes it difficult to function properly at work, home and during daily activities.

The Diamond Centre is a branch of Jewish Family and Child, which has served the Greater Toronto Area since the 19th century. The Children's Mental Health Centre opened in 1974 and was renamed after the executive director in the 1980s. It provides day programs and counselling to teenagers and their families who are struggling with psychological and academic challenges. ■

For further resources dealing with anxiety and other mental health issues, visit the website of Jewish Family and Child at www.jfandcs.com

Parents need to monitor children's computer use

To regulate children's consumption of technology, we must first start with ourselves, suggests Bruce Ballon, a panelist at Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre's fall conference, "Anxiety, Addiction, Avoidance."

Who hasn't seen four year olds on the TTC, faces buried in the flashing lights of a scrolling iPad, parents behind them, pleased their children are finally behaving on a crowded streetcar?

That's basically like saying, "Here, have cocaine for your four year old," says Ballon, head of the adolescent clinical educational services for problem gambling, gaming and Internet addiction at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

A study from *PLOS One* in 2012 showed that Chinese adolescents who were addicted to the Internet suffered from structural changes to the brain, including abnormal white matter fibres, that is also frequently seen in people with substance abuse problems.

But you don't necessarily need to be clinically addicted to the Internet to suffer from overuse. These days, when many children and teenagers are waking up to the alarm clocks from their phone, typing notes at school on their laptops, spending the commute home reading on their iPads, and then going home to watch TV and play video games, it can be hard to distinguish what amount of screen time is normal or healthy.

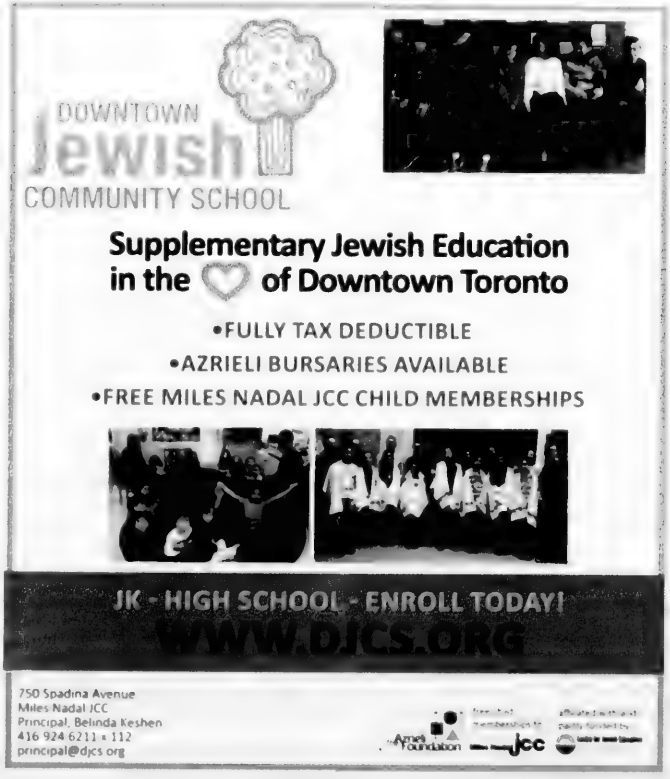
"There's no public healthcare guidelines," he says.

So parents are left to determine themselves what is an appropriate amount of time spent with technology.

"It's more about being able to manage the relationship with their technology. Knowing when to put it down – that's the major issue. Because it's everywhere. Maybe it's not too much, but it's misused. It's affecting them in ways they don't even realize," he says.

Some of the more mild consequences seen in technological overuse are poor dietary habits, poor hygiene and insomnia.

But some of the more insidious consequences can have a wider-reaching effect on our society, depending on the sort of technology one is partaking in. ■



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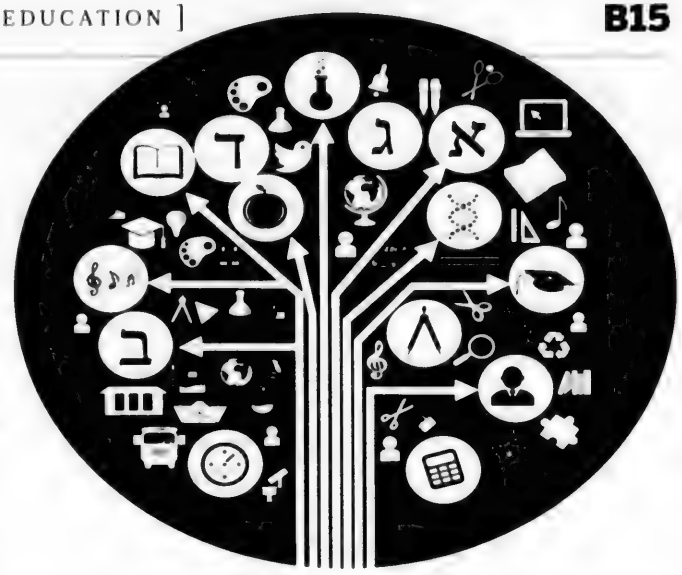
Is Jewish education a right or a privilege?



VICKY TOBIANAH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Is Jewish education a right or a privilege? Is the quality better than public schools? Is the value worth it?

Those are some questions Jewish day school parents grapple with as they determine where to send their children – to a private Jewish day school where costs are on average $15,000-$25,000 per year – or to a public school along with supplementary Jewish education (or none at all).

For parents like Zev Steinfeld, a teacher at Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto who has publicly shared his disappointment and frustrations with the subsidy application process in *The CJN*, the process must change.

"I think the issue of tuition is part of a systemic issue that relates to the sustainability of Jewish education, and the sustainability of the infrastructure of the Jewish community as a whole," said Steinfeld, 34, who has two kids in the day school system.

"Is [Jewish education] a right or a privilege? If it's a privilege, then if you can afford it, great. But if philosophically speaking, Jewish education is a right, then it's imperative for communal organizations to do whatever they can to make it fair and accessible and that's where the problem lies."

Elie Kochman, whose daughter is in Grade 1 at Eitz Chaim, was disappointed and frustrated with the lack of communication he received as a first-time parent to the Jewish day school system.

"There are a lot of gaps in terms of what's communicated to the parents. Even when I tried to get that information – I need to know if I apply for a subsidy, realistically speaking how much I can expect to get – they're evasive and say it's a very complicated calculation," said Kochman, 32. "I don't trust the process because of how secretive it is. It seems arbitrary even if it's not."

Because of the rising cost of tuition, families must decide if the value is worth the price.

"It's a deterrent simply because it's so high. Even people who may value Judaism don't value it enough to spend $25,000 plus depending on how many kids you have," said Steinfeld. "Jewish school was always expensive but there was always the perception that it's better than what I get in a public school. That perception has changed. Public schools have better reputations especially in York Region."

For Elaine Grant, however, who has one son recently starting the Jewish day school system, tuition is a big expense but the value is worth it.

"When you compare what they charge for Jewish day school versus an actual private school, price-wise, it's pretty great," said Grant, 34. "When you look at the grand scheme, it's for the future of your child – how can you really put a price on that if you see the benefits for your child down the road."

The perceived value of Jewish day schools is something The Akiva School, a pluralistic day school in Montreal, recently analyzed through a parent survey last spring.

"Parents want a Jewish day school without compromising academics. They want to be prepared for the future and the world," said Jennifer Fraenkel, head of school. "Our raison d'etre is that we're a Jewish school – it's not just about the curriculum but about chesed, moral development, Jewish life and building a Jewish identity. When parents see how important Jewish identity is and know they're not sacrificing academics, this is the choice for them because they're getting it all."

Fraenkel said tuition is always a topic of discussion but not a barrier to entry. Unlike many other day schools, they use a third-party company to evaluate subsidy applications and post clear guidelines on what parents can expect to pay per child, based on their income bracket, on their website.

That type of transparency is what Kochman is looking for from Toronto Jewish day schools. "There's no feedback. That bothers me more than the actual dollar I'm paying – how did they come up with that number? For the amount of money they're collecting, I don't think it's unreasonable to request to spend five minutes to tell me exactly why I'm paying the amount I am."

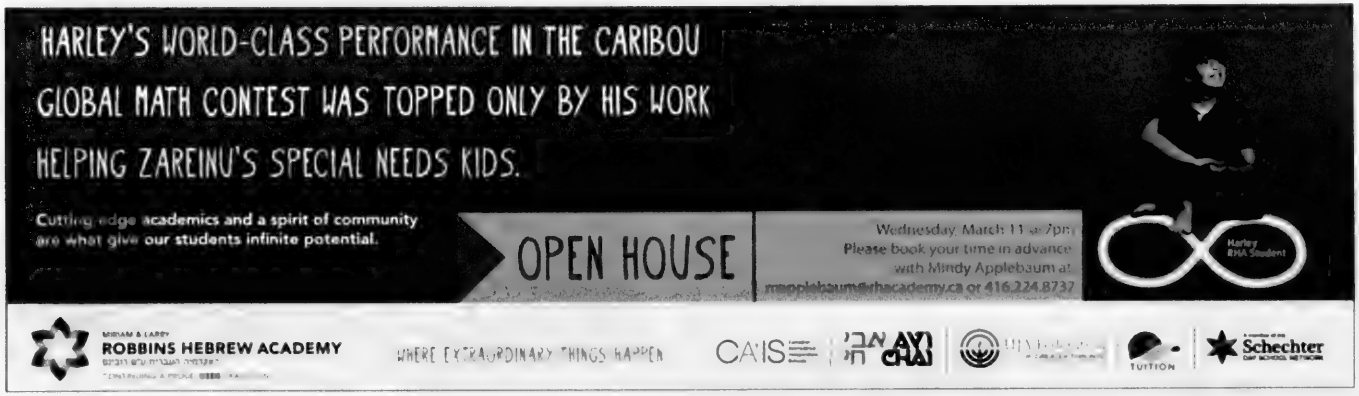
Steinfeld said after publicly sharing his frustrations with the system in a *CJN* article a few months ago, the amount of feedback he's gotten has been astonishing. "Strangers have come to me and said how they literally buried themselves in debt because they didn't want to go through the subsidy process, and found the experience onerous and traumatizing on some level."

He said he'd like to see community organizations make this issue a real priority.

Daniel Held, executive director of the Julia & Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education, said, "we're in the process of updating the process so we can be more transparent, and communicate what the criteria for a subsidy is.

"But it's a big process because there are 14 schools and 2,300 students. We started the process in the fall and we're working to implement it over the next couple of years. My hope is that the pilot with the first round of schools will start for this coming academic year and then roll it out to all of them."

In this process, said Held, "we're looking to do three things: move the system online so it's easier and less cumbersome, and have it administered by a third-party company. We're looking to being able to articulate who is eligible for a subsidy and what the criteria are."■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Joanne's daughter, Elizabeth, was one such student. "We worried about it all the time, we dreaded school reports, we dreaded when the school called. She was doing homework all night, every night with absolutely no gain, and no benefit."

Then Joanne enrolled Elizabeth at the Arrowsmith School in Toronto. The school operates a cognitive program founded on the science of neuroplasticity, which addresses the underlying causes of learning disabilities. The Arrowsmith Program employs a suite of cognitive exercises designed to strengthen the underperforming regions of the brain. These areas of the brain are treated like weak muscles and are intensely stimulated in order to produce strengthened learning capacities, essentially rewiring the brain for better performance.

Reading and understanding relationships and concepts was almost impossible for Elizabeth before starting the Arrowsmith Program, but soon that began to change. "She started the program never actually having completed a book. After two months she picked up her first book. It was about 700 pages long and she read it in a couple of weeks. It was unbelievable," said Joanne.

Joanne is just one of thousands of parents worldwide seeing the benefits of a neuroplastic intervention in their children's education.

"It allows these children to realize their dreams. What these students talk to me about is that at a certain point they stopped daring to dream," says Barbara Arrowsmith Young, founder and director of the Arrowsmith Program and School.

Arrowsmith Young suffered extensively with learning disabilities before developing the Arrowsmith Program, a journey chronicled in her bestselling book *The Woman Who Changed Her Brain*.

"Having a learning disability is not a life sentence. You can change very particular parts of the brain to allow them to function and it's just amazing what happens when you do that. Learning that was a challenge now becomes effortless and pleasurable."

By engaging in the Arrowsmith Program students like Elizabeth are provided with a new capacity to acquire, absorb and retain information, not only allowing them to learn, but also giving them the opportunity to change their outlook on their future.

"I couldn't read, I'd never read a full book at the age of 13. I hated reading," says Elizabeth. "I never thought these doors could be open for me, and now they are wide open and I can do anything." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

CJN

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What colours do you see in this hamantashen?

The CJN investigates a debate that's dividing the Jewish nation. Plus, more Purim fun. **PAGES 6, 8, 15, 19, 23, 27, 42**

Inside

Does Israel speak for all Diaspora Jews?

In the wake of Netanyahu's appearance in Washington, our rabbis weigh in.

Rabbi 2 Rabbi PAGE 4

Anti-Israel LGBTQ group folds up its tent

Queers Against Israeli Apartheid won't be missed, Jewish leaders say. **PAGE 24**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	5:50 p.m.	6:53 p.m.
Montreal	5:29 p.m.	6:34 p.m.
Toronto	5:54 p.m.	6:57 p.m.
Winnipeg	6:00 p.m.	7:09 p.m.
Calgary	6:07 p.m.	7:17 p.m.
Vancouver	5:45 p.m.	6:53 p.m.

New Canadian Haggadah debuts

Trilingual volume is the product of a unique partnership. **PAGE 25**

Quebec politicians condemn attack

Nazi graffiti and death threat spur all-party motion in the National Assembly. **PAGE 26**

Herzl's vision seen in a new light

New book focuses on Zionist leader's intellectual and spiritual odyssey. **PAGE 37**

Trudeau and Harper unite for Purim, and a miracle snack is born...?

Tories, Libs combine as 'Hoser Union'

Inspired by Israeli politics, Canada's two most popular parties plan to run together in the next federal election. The Conservatives and Liberals say they'll combine to form a new party, called "Hoser Union." If the party wins in 2015, its two leaders, Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau, have agreed to share the prime ministership. Under terms of the deal, Harper will serve two years, then Trudeau will take over for two. "If anyone knows how to maintain a stable democracy, it's the Israelis," a senior Hoser Union official said of the surprise move. "What could possibly go wrong?" NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair was invited to join, but declined, saying his party prefers being in opposition.

House passes anti-Semitism motion

The House of Commons last week unanimously passed a motion condemning the rise of global anti-Semitism. The Feb. 24 motion grew out of a four-hour debate on the issue. It cited "an alarming increase in anti-Semitism worldwide," including "the firebombing of synagogues and community centres, the vandalizing of Jewish memorials and cemeteries, incendiary calls for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish People, and anti-Jewish terror." It reaffirmed "the importance of the Ottawa Protocol on Combating anti-Semitism" and urged the government to "continue advancing the combating of anti-Semitism as a domestic and international priority." Defence Minister Jason Kenney and Liberal MP Irwin Cotler initiated the debate.

Maybe this stuff is good for babies.

It's almost like medicine

A three-year study out of King's College London last week said babies and young kids who ate the hugely popular peanut-flavoured Israeli snack Bamba were 81 per cent less likely to develop a peanut allergy than those who didn't consume the crunchy treat, suggesting early exposure to peanuts leads to desensitization. Researchers tested 640 British children from 2006 to 2009. They were trying to explain why Israeli kids had one-tenth the rate of peanut allergies compared to Jewish kids in Britain. So should kids be immunized with Bamba? Discuss. ■

Inside today's edition

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Gematria

70%

The percentage of Americans in a new Gallup poll with a favourable view of Israel.

42%

The percentage of Americans in the same Gallup poll who favour the establishment of a Palestinian state, versus 38 per cent who are opposed and 20 per cent undecided.

Quotable

You want to be an artist? Go paint a picture in your bedroom. No one's stopping you from painting pictures.

— Toronto mom Elaine Adelson on her son's decision to abandon accounting. Story p. 42.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Hockey is on the mind of Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz

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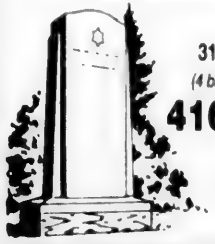

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Letters to the Editor

March of the Living

We appreciate the *CJN* sharing with us the perspective of Holocaust survivor Eli Pfefferkorn after meeting with the students who interviewed him in advance of the March of the Living ("New methods needed to keep memory of Shoah alive," Feb. 26).

Pfefferkorn takes to task the March of the Living for the sample questions the students came prepared with. We would like to point out that these young people are just at the start of their March of the Living experience, which entails about four months of pre-trip education. Tackling a subject as enormous and as complex as the Holocaust would be a daunting task for anyone of any age, especially for those so young.

What Pfefferkorn was trying to convey to the students, the utter cruelty and arbitrary nature of life in the camps, is not a concept all students will grasp right away in a one-time interview, even with someone as eloquent and as insightful as Pfefferkorn.

But after their experience on the March, after spending considerable time in the presence of Holocaust survivors, in Canada, Poland and Israel, we hope the students will have gained the kind of in-depth understanding that Pfefferkorn tried to convey to the students in his initial meeting.

Undoubtedly, some will. Others, even after this experience may still struggle to understand the complete reality of the Holocaust in its totality. But all of them will remember the stories of the Holocaust survivors and, pledge, each in their own way, to keep alive the memory of their experiences, along with the memory of their lost loved ones.

Eli Rubenstein
National Director
March of the Living Canada, Toronto

PLO unveiled in court

The jury in federal court in Manhattan has finally ripped the veil covering the face of evil that is the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority (PA).

No more can the PA claim anything was spontaneous – not the first and second intifadahs, not the attacks by rock-throwing youths who wounded and killed Israeli motorists, not the murderers who plowed vehicles into crowds at tram stops, not the thugs who stabbed unsuspecting civilians in synagogues and in the streets, and certainly not the terrorists who crept into homes at night to slaughter men, women and children.

The PA, the so-called charities that fund them and the countries and banks that facilitate their activities are all guilty of terrorism and deserve the scorn and sanction of the civilized world.

Never again can any Islamists hide behind the facade that terror attacks were unplanned and in response to a cartoon, video or some other perceived offence. Terror attacks in New York, Madrid, London, Benghazi, Paris and Ottawa did not just happen. They were planned. No individual or group would dare take action without the express urging and approval of their tribal rulers. This trial has bared the truth.

Len Bennett
Montreal

Iran's nuclear ambitions

In a letter "Iran is not the threat," (Feb. 12) the letter writer indicates that a previous letter had wrongly assumed that Iran is trying to produce nuclear weapons. Why would Iran, which is a major oil exporter, require 10,000 centrifuges at great cost unless it wished to have nuclear weapons capability?

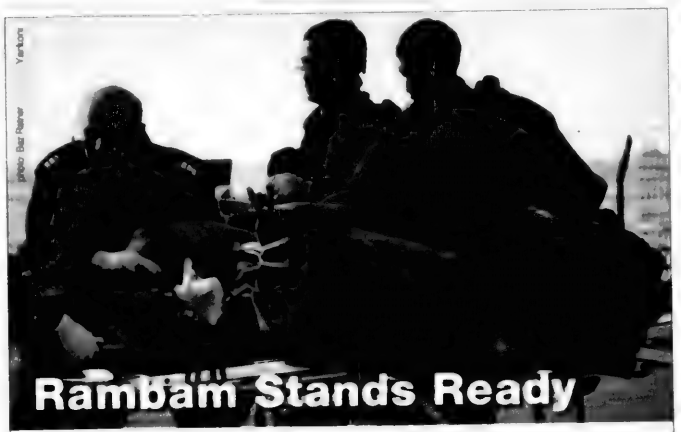
Iranian officials have not stated that they wish to have a nuclear weapons stockpile, for obvious reasons, but all of the evidence before us is clear – there is no reason for the centrifuges except to make nuclear weapons. And the value to Iran, which has clear ambitions to be *the* power in that part of the world, is clear – the leverage associated with having nuclear weapons would provide material support for that objective.

Certainly, the messaging coming out of Iran's Sunni opponents in the Middle East is clear, and once Iran acquires the bomb, we will see Saudi Arabia and perhaps Egypt moving in the same direction. They know what Iran is up to, even if the president of the United States does not.

This is clear: Iran is the world's greatest state sponsor of terror. And given Iran's long-range missiles and its proven ability to wreak havoc around the globe, that would not be something that would make this world a better or a safer place.

Michael Diamond
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*



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RABBI·2·RABBI

Defining the Israel-Diaspora relationship

Can the state and its leaders ever legitimately claim to speak for world Jewry, or is a two-way dialogue a better model to aspire to?

RABBI ARI ISENBERG
SHAAR SHALOM CONGREGATION, HALIFAX

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Isenberg: In response to the recent wave of anti-Semitic attacks in Europe, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly called on the Jews of Europe to make aliyah. The prime minister's rhetoric has triggered a range of responses – from criticism, to ambiguity, to unwavering support.

It strikes me as important to consider what some of the great Jewish leaders of the mid-20th century might have thought of Netanyahu's proposal.

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, believed Jewish communities in the Diaspora were ultimately finite, and Diaspora Jewry would ultimately need Israel as a refuge from an otherwise hostile world. Conversely, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan believed the existence of Israel would infuse Diaspora Jews with self-assuredness and ensure the survival of Diaspora communities.

Both Ben-Gurion and Rabbi Kaplan believed in the integral role of the State of Israel, but for drastically different reasons. It seems Rabbi Kaplan would have been at odds with the current prime minister's declaration, whereas Ben-Gurion would have supported it.

What are some other voices to consider?

Rabbi Cutler: I think it's important to remember the Ben-Gurion Blaustein Agreement of 1950. In the early days of the State of Israel, American Jews were rightly concerned about being accused of dual loyalty if the Israeli political leadership spoke too openly about aliyah and too vociferously as the voice of world Jewry. Israel, meanwhile, had an ongoing need for new olim and the support of the American Jewish community.

Ben-Gurion and Jacob Blaustein, then-president of the American Jewish Committee, agreed not to step on each other's toes. Ben-Gurion affirmed that "the State of Israel spoke only for its own citizens," and "Jews in other countries had no political obligation to the State of Israel."

It strikes me that Netanyahu has increasingly assumed the persona of protector of world Jewry and promoted the idea of Israel not as a home for the Jews, but *the* home for the Jews. That idea goes against western liberal ideas enshrined in early American political writings and the welcoming of Jews as French nationals in the early part of the 19th century.

Rabbi Isenberg: When interacting with Jewish university students and young professionals living in the Diaspora, I sometimes ask them to list five Jewish programs or events in which they've participated in the past year. Invariably, their lists include Birthright trips to Israel, celebrating Israel's Independence Day, and embarking on academic semesters in Israel, donating to Israeli causes. For them, it seems, "Israel" and "Jewish" – once distinct – are now inextricably linked. Singing *Hatikvah* is just as important as chanting *Kol Nidre*.

I welcome the infusion of the modern State of Israel into daily Jewish activity and identity. Surely, Judaism is stronger today as a result. It can even be argued that Israel's elected officials should serve, in part, as representatives for world Jewry.

But here is the key: for Israel's voice to truly represent the entirety of world Jewry, it would need to reflect Judaism's inherent pluralism and breadth of perspectives. In Canada, for instance, a Jew can seek out a brand of Judaism that reflects her or his worldview and understanding of our religion. Ultimately, Israel will need to ensure all Jewish perspectives are included in its voice if it wishes to serve as an effective spokesperson for us all.

Rabbi Cutler: Certainly, the State of Israel can do more to respect and represent the values of North American Jewry – welcoming, if not promoting, Jewish religious pluralism tops the list.

Still, I don't believe the Israeli political leadership will ever be able to speak fully and completely for world Jewry. And that's a good thing. Israel is but one part – albeit a crucial, central part – of Jewish civilization in 2015. Its concerns and desires will never totally align with those of Diaspora communities.

As we continue to build ever-stronger ties between Diaspora communities and our brothers and sisters in Israel, the purpose is not to have both communities grow more alike. Rather, it is to learn from each other – to find our commonalities, but also to note our differences, which are sometimes significant.

I hope those differences continue to flourish. They are ultimately to our benefit. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Balfour celebration

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES – BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

Members of the Jewish community stage a parade in St. Catharines, Ont., in 1917 to celebrate the Balfour Declaration, which stated Britain's support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

SeeJN | Weizmann winners

A team from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy's Kimel Family Education Centre in Vaughan – from left Ben Gahtan, Linnaea Halpert, Alex Bisgould, Arielle Goldman, and Jordan Shapiro – beat four other teams – two from Yeshivat Or Chaim, one from Ulpanat Orot and another from Tanenbaum CHAT's Kimel branch – in Weizmann Canada's annual physics tournament semifinals on Feb. 23. They'll travel to the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel to compete in the 20th annual international tournament on March 24 and 25.

From Yoni's Desk

The launch of CJN TV

It's been nearly one year since we unveiled a dramatic redesign of *The Canadian Jewish News*. During the last 12 months, we've tackled the serious issues facing Jewish communities across Canada, and ruffled a few feathers along the way. At the same time, we've continued to celebrate the tremendous achievements and incredible potential of Canadian Jewry. It's been a wild year.

But the journey has only just begun, and we're not content to rest on our laurels. To be successful, we know we have to keep thinking big – because these days, it's not enough to just put out a great newspaper every week. It's essential that we keep working to grow the *CJN* brand.

And with that in mind, I'm here to tell you about our latest venture: *CJN TV*.

It's a bold step forward for Jewish programming in this country – a 24/7 cable channel beaming the best of *The CJN* into your homes.

Here are a few of the exciting shows you can expect to see on *CJN TV*.

Rabbi vs. Rabbi: Some of our readers have complained that the religious leaders featured in our popular Rabbi2Rabbi column sometimes come off as being a little too friendly with one another. We hear you and promise that definitely won't be the case when rabbis face off on our new prime-time flagship. The gloves are about to come off, and no less than denominational superiority is at stake.

Dry Bones: The popular Jewish cartoon comes to life in this live-action series. Tune in Wednesdays at 9 p.m. as our lovable protagonist presents his unique takes on Israel and Judaism, mostly while talking only to himself. Ezra Levant stars.

The Alter Bocher: Ten single Jewish women vie for the heart of one eligible Jewish bachelor. And let me tell you, this guy is a real catch – a doctor, a lawyer and a rabbi. Think of it as our way of combating intermarriage. Stay tuned – auditions begin soon on *The CJN*'s official JSwipe account.

Wake up with *The CJN*: Beginning at Neitz Hachama, *CJN TV* delivers comprehensive live minyan coverage from across the country. And when you subscribe to our deluxe package, you get access to just about every style of davening imaginable. Plus, our HD feed is so realistic, it'll feel like you're actually in shul.

Shabbat programming: We thought long and hard about how to fill our Saturday airtime. On the one hand, we didn't want to offend anyone who won't turn on a TV on Shabbat. But on the other hand, we can't deny there are Jews who will tune in on the day of rest. With that in mind, here's the compromise we devised: On Shabbat, we're handing the reins over to Jewish federations, who will be in charge of programming in their own local markets. Find out who's donating to federation, and exactly how much, with real-time updates – it's all there on the handy scrolling ticker at the bottom of the screen. Viewer discretion is advised.

Adults only: Once the kids are asleep, check out Rabbi Shmuley Boteach's new show, tentatively titled *Fifty Shades Oy Vey!*

Check your local listings, and Happy Purim! ■ — YONI

FEATURE

In praise of the landsmanschaft

Bill Gladstone

In a series of articles written for this newspaper about four decades ago, the late *CJN* columnist J.B. Salsberg reminisced with great affection about the "Apter Shtibl" in downtown Toronto, which he had frequented in his youth during World War I.

The Apter Society – one of dozens of Jewish landsmanschaft organizations, mutual benefit associations and fraternal orders that would spring up in Toronto – had established itself in a modest old frame cottage on Centre Avenue decorated with some hand-me-down tables and chairs, a pot-bellied stove and a wooden cupboard that served as the Ark for the Torah.

"Most of the newcomers came from Poland, and a lot of them found that the war shattered their plans to bring their families to the new land," Salsberg wrote. "Others, who were planning to return to the 'Old Country,' were, of course, unable to do so. As a result, there were a lot of lonely men in our midst. The shtibl of one's own townsfolk and the fraternal or war-relief society of landsleit helped to fill many voids. It provided a warm, hospitable haven for the lonely and the unacclimatized immigrants in the strange, new land."

Besides fellowship, the landsmanschaft and mutual benefit societies typically helped newly arrived immigrants with immediate needs such as food, shelter and employment. They also met longer-term needs by providing interest-free loans, medical coverage, synagogue affiliation, assistance for widows and orphans, and cemetery privileges.

Today, one of the best places to learn about these organizations is the Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre, where a multitude of

The Apter Centre, where the Apter Society later met, at 216 Beverley St. in Toronto, 1961. ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

minute books, records and jubilee souvenir booklets recall their storied pasts. Commonly in these books, the ancestral shtetlach are recalled with an overlay of nostalgic sweetness despite the hunger, poverty, persecutions and other bitter happenings often associated with these places.

Many societies extended helping hands not only locally but also to relatives and brethren left behind in the shtetl who may have been in dire need of rescue. Nachman Shemen, who wrote a history of the Chenstochover Aid Society for its 50th anniversary booklet in 1964, noted that it was founded by people who wanted to do "both relief work for overseas and mutual assistance here on a fraternal basis."

Established with similar aims, the Beizetchiner, Chmielnicker, Driltzer, Ivansker, Kieltzer, Lagover, Linitzer, Lodzer, Mozirer, Ostrovtzer, Ovruch-Voliner, Ozerover, Radomer, Stopnitzer, Warszawer and Zaglember societies were among those that typically focused on helping their landsleit (fellow townsfolk) from a specific town or district.

Geographically speaking, some organizations took a much wider mandate. The First Roumanian Hebrew Congregation Adath Israel, for example, assisted all immigrants from Romania, while the highly popular Pride of Israel Sick Benefit Society served everyone in the community, no matter where they originated from.

An abundance of souvenir booklets and other materials representing Kielce, Radom, Lagov, Ostrowiec, Opatow (Apt), Driltz (Ilza), Staszow and other central Polish shtetlach attest to a remarkable phenomenon: from the early 1900s onward, Jews from the Kielce-Radom region and vicinity poured into Toronto in astonishing numbers.

Demographers and historians have yet to adequately explain what special magnet drew so many of them here, except to observe that "one usually followed the other." By comparison, it's been observed that a much higher preponderance of Russian and Romanian Jews immigrated to Montreal.

Not even the late great Canadian Jewish Congress demographer Louis Rosenberg could explain this phenomenon in his informative study, *Jewish Mutual Benefit & Friendly Societies in Toronto: The First Fifty Years (1896-1945)*, also available at the OJA.

Over the last half-century, most of Toronto's landsmanschaft and mutual benefit societies have been gradually winding down or have already folded. Having outlived their original purpose, most of them can see the writing on the wall.

In recent years, a dozen local societies have established endowments with the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, collectively worth nearly $1 million. Thus they are perpetuating their charitable deeds for generations to come. Their memories, too, will live on: many of their histories are

Front page from Chenstochover Aid Society pinkus, 1928 ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

illuminated in the Bridge of Hope walkway between the Lipa Green Centre and the Prosserman JCC on north Bathurst Street. ■

Bill Gladstone is a Toronto-based writer and frequent contributor to these pages. This is the third in a series of articles to be published periodically about Toronto's Jewish institutions, funded by the J.B. & Dora Salsberg Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. This series is in partnership with the Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre, and draws on their collections: www.ontariojewisharchives.org

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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European Jews move en masse to Canada

Local communities prepare to welcome the newcomers with Canuck hospitality **BY DAVID LEVINE**

In the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen, and facing both economic instability and resurgent anti-Semitism across the continent, Europe's Jews have made it official: they're moving to Canada.

The choice has come as a surprise to pundits and xenophobes worldwide, and disappointed Jewish communities in Israel and the United States, which had been widely considered the two leading candidate nations.

The decision comes on the heels of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's appeal to European Jewry to emigrate to Israel, and Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt's assertion that her country's Jews "belong in Denmark."

"All this attention has been flattering, really," said Europe's 1.5 million Jews. "Bibi wants us in Israel, Denmark wants us to stay – France, not so much. In the end, we had to make the right decision for us. It's not at all personal. We just hope everyone understands that."

Europe's Jewish community is more than 2,100 years old, predating the reign of Casesar Augustus, when early Jewish immigrants were first welcomed with open arms by all the peoples of Europe, as they would continue to be for centuries. Despite their meagre contributions to European culture and thought, Jewish communities across the continent have been subjected to seemingly endless bouts of equality and social justice, with few notable exceptions.

"It's been one heck of a ride. They will be sorely missed," said the remaining 99.78 per cent of Europe, suppressing a smirk. "We swear."

Observers have cited Canada's multicultural society, depressed dollar and chronic politeness as key factors in the decision, but Europe's Jews see their decision differently.

"Think of it more like retirement. We are a very old community, and we've been through a lot. Why would we want to move anywhere noisy or exciting? At our age, the less excitement the better."

"Nationally speaking, Canada is basically an old-age home: it's quiet. The people are nice. The health care is good. You always feel a little cold. It's far enough out of the way that you don't have to visit all the time, but close enough that you can get there when you need to."

A group of Danish Jews arrive at Pearson Airport. VALESTOCK / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

As for how the decision was reached, Europe's Jews are surprisingly candid: "We were pretty surprised [by the choice of Canada] ourselves. When we took the poll at our secret meeting, [Canada] didn't get a single first place vote, but it was almost everyone's second choice, so…"

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, all of European Jewry has intimated that centuries of immersion in European culture have created an "unconscious but pervasive disdain for Americans," which reinforced Canada as their strongest choice.

"Also," they said, "if anything goes wrong, you guys have Kevin Vickers. That clinched it."

On Israel's behalf, Netanyahu expressed disappointment and a little relief: "Of course you invite your parents to move in with you when they retire, but the nation of Israel respects their decision to move to a quiet place on the other side of the world, too far away to visit, where absolutely nothing is going to happen to them."

With the first official flights set to depart in the coming weeks and some European Jews already arriving in Canada, considerable logistical efforts are underway: Europe's synagogues and community centres are being sold to finance moving costs, and Jewish historical sites are slated for demolition, in order to avoid future desecration. All patrilineal Jews have undergone voluntary conversions and/or circumcisions to prevent "another endless debate about what 'Jewish identity' means." Intermarried couples can choose to convert and move to Canada, or divorce – in which case all children will be subject to shared intercontinental custody and double Air Miles.

And while European Jewry stocks up on sweaters and reads *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, Jewish communities across Canada are preparing to see their numbers increase by 1.5 million to 1.8 million, and rising to the challenge of absorbing their cousins from overseas.

In Toronto, officials moved quickly to demolish community buildings to make space for much larger, more modern and impressive ones, set for completion in 2041. (Update: as of *The CJN*'s deadline, the project is 5 to 9 years behind schedule.)

Montreal's Jewish community is confident that France's Jewish population will acclimate quickly to the "unmistakable air of barely suppressed hatred" they remember so well.

In Ottawa, 13 new synagogues have been built, 11 of which will remain empty, in accordance with local tradition.

Vancouver's Jewish community has ramped up production of marijuana, prayer beads and those shoes that look like feet, while the entire Jewish population of Saskatchewan has offered to share his bachelor apartment with any newcomers looking to get settled.

Winnipeg's Jewish community (motto: "Where ennui meets torpor") had volunteered to absorb the oldest of the immigrants and is producing a short video to introduce newcomers to the city. The film, titled *Like Siberia, But With Cable*, is set for a spring release.

Even at these early stages, the Jewish decision to leave is yielding positive results. The mass resignation of Jews from European industry has resulted in immediate spikes in rates of employment, education and child welfare. Reports are indicating a sudden and complete end to all corruption in political and financial sectors, as well as cleaner drinking water, the discovery of several new antibiotics, the apparent reversal of global warming, and the unambiguous end to all religious and ethnic conflict.

All's well that ends well. ■

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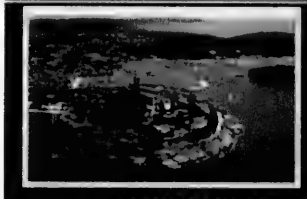

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Apartheid slur driven by hatred and lies

Gil Troy

Every year, with the harsh cold of February comes the harsh rhetoric of the abomination known as "Israeli Apartheid Week." I would not object if the Palestinian national movement devoted a week to celebrating Palestinian nationalism – including envisioning what a Palestinian state could look like. But making the high point of the Palestinian student calendar a week devoted to demonizing, delegitimizing and libelling the Jewish state is offensive, and it explains why the Palestinians have failed to advance their cause in any real way.

As long as Israel-hatred lies at the heart of Palestinian ideology, Israel would be foolish to compromise, concede or even negotiate. The fact that university campuses foster this hatred is tragic. The fact that university campuses foster an inaccurate modern blood libel falsely comparing Israel to South Africa and continuing the "Zionism is racism" canard is criminal.

Zionism, meaning Jewish nationalism, starts with the understanding that Jews are a people, with collective rights to a national homeland in Palestine. Until 1948, the focus of the Jewish national liberation movement was building and establishing a state. Now, the emphasis is on protecting and perfecting it. The fact that Zionism – the idealistic movement to make the state better – is tagged with the racist label shows just how absurd and self-destructive the Palestinian attack is.

The uniqueness of the Jewish experience, whereby Jews believe in a religion, Judaism, and belong to the Jewish People, is something many modern Jews and non-Jews don't understand. This duality is why you can have a Jewish democratic state that is not a theocracy. This duality is why you have secular Jews, atheistic Jews, and Jews who emphasize family, ethnicity, culture, civilization and nationhood, along with religious Jews. In traditional Judaism, the religious and national dimensions are mutually reinforcing. Today, moderns often pick and choose.

Nevertheless, this linkage makes Zionism the *least* racist nationalism of all forms of nationalism. Most nationalists are born into their national group, emphasizing the biological dimension, which leads to racism. Judaism, by contrast, allows anyone to convert into the religion, and thus join the nation, making Zionism the most permeable and least racist form of nationalism. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is national, not racial. There are dark-skinned Israelis and light-skinned Palestinians. There are Israeli Arabs who have served in Israel's army and been killed by Palestinian terrorists. Racism is not the great divide, as it was in South Africa, where people were defined as "coloured," "mixed," etc., depending on skin colour.

The mystery, then, is why was Zionism accused of racism, and why is Israel compared to South Africa? The origins lie in the 1970s, when Soviet propagandists and Palestinian terrorists wanted to demonize Israel. They believed that if the fight for Palestine could be linked to a broader fight against western racism, imperialism and colonialism, they might win.

In fact, all these ideological lies distracted the Palestinians, focusing them on empty victories at the UN and on college campuses, rather than doing the hard work of negotiating, compromising, building a peaceful, democratic civil society, and engaging in other forms of state-building. Now, the Palestinian national movement is defined by a pernicious form of violence, terrorism, and three lies: that Israel is racist, when the fight is national; that Israel is colonialist, when Israelis and Palestinians have conflicting claims to the same land; and that Israel is imperialist, when little Israel, population eight million, is on its own and surrounded by hundreds of millions of Arabs and Muslims.

When outrageous lies become believed as accepted truths, especially in places like college campuses supposedly devoted to truth, we know that we are no longer in the realm of facts and instead are dealing with bigotry. Historically, we know what to call prejudice against Jews. We call it anti-Semitism. ■

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ISIS doesn't threaten Israel today, but it could in the future

Yonah Jeremy Bob

The impact on Israeli security of the civil war in Syria that's been raging since 2011, even with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) involved, has so far been neutral to net-positive.

The carnage in Syria has been horrifying, but from a purely Israeli perspective, the intensity of the civil war has meant that since 2011, both Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces and Hezbollah, which has sent thousands of fighters into the mix on Assad's side, have had their hands full with ISIS.

Practically speaking, this has meant not only that their attention has been diverted from making trouble for Israel, but that even the theoretical ability of Syrian government forces to threaten Israel has been significantly depleted.

For the time being, this has also been true for ISIS and other Syrian rebel groups, who themselves have had their hands full fighting Assad's forces and Hezbollah.

Moreover, as ISIS has experienced success and a growing international following, its first moves to expand beyond Syria and Iraq have been into other Muslim states with vacuums or that are immediately nearby, such as Libya (where it is strongest), Turkey, Jordan and Yemen.

Rocket fire aside, Israel has not faced a serious invasion threat in nearly 40 years, but that could change in the long term because of ISIS, which is already by far the most powerful terrorist entity in history, far exceeding Al Qaeda even in its prime.

As things currently stand, the Al-Nusra front and the Free Syrian Army (FSA), both much smaller and weaker than ISIS, control certain border areas with Israel on the deep southwest Syrian side of the Golan Heights, but ISIS' mostly northern and eastern Syrian territory has no access to the Golan, nor is it even close by.

If ISIS ever regains the upper hand in Syria, it could use the Syrian Golan border to attempt a large-scale invasion of northern Israel, which others have long been incapable of, or have been deterred from attempting, based on rational strategic thinking, which ISIS may lack.

ISIS has also shown tremendous capability to inspire new followers and currently poses real dangers beyond Syria and Iraq in Turkey, Libya (and through Libya, possibly even Italy and portions of southern Europe), the Egyptian Sinai and Jordan.

If ISIS gets an extended foothold in Sinai or parts of Jordan, these currently quiet frontiers could also suddenly become borders with invasion threats.

Then there are the dangers closer to home.

Israel has already disrupted one West Bank cell that claimed to be connected to ISIS, though it's hard to say if it had a real connection or if its members were ISIS-wannabes (though these can be as dangerous.)

Several Israeli Arabs have been arrested and indicted over the last year for signing up with Syrian jihadis, including ISIS.

Israel has not indicted any of them with carrying out or being close to carrying out terror attacks. Their crimes have been related to "contact with a foreign terror group."

But the reason they are being indicted at all stems from the very real concern that the trend of radicalized Israeli Arabs joining ISIS initially to fight Assad and then turning their sights on Israel could balloon out of control.

Since the end of the second intifadah in 2004, despite some spikes (including in recent months), there has been no widespread suicide bombing or other terror threat.

ISIS will probably be pushed back by western and allied Arab airstrikes in the future, as opposed to expanding. And even in the unlikely scenario that it gained a border with Israel, the IDF is a far superior force compared to others ISIS has fought up until now, and it would likely swiftly repel any invasion threat.

Yet even as ISIS' short-term impact has made the northern border quiet, as a long-term threat, it introduces a more dangerous and unpredictable variable than Israel has faced in some time. ■

Yonah Jeremy Bob is a foreign affairs lecturer and correspondent for the Jerusalem Post. www.yonahbobforeignaffairs.wordpress.com

Why Jews were Red Tories

Michael Taube

The federal Conservatives have more Jewish voters and supporters than ever before. There are two Jewish MPs – Finance Minister Joe Oliver and Mark Adler – and two others (Scott Reid and Tony Clement) with Jewish ancestry. Meanwhile, Linda Frum and Irving Gerstein both serve as Tory senators.

Yet, there have always been Canadian Jews involved with right-leaning political parties.

Here are some names that should be familiar to *CJN* readers.

Former senator Hugh Segal, Eddie Goodman, Stanley Hartt and former MP Gerry Weiner were active in the federal PCs. Allan Grossman was an Ontario Progressive Conservative cabinet minister, and his son, Larry, became party leader. Ron Ghitter was an Alberta PC MLA and later a senator. David Rotenberg, Charles Harnick and David Young were ministers in Ontario PC governments. Sidney Spivak was a cabinet minister in several Manitoba PC governments.

There's an interesting difference between today's Jewish Tory politicians and those of yesteryear. In the latter case, most would be classified as left-leaning conservatives, or Red Tories.

What is a Red Tory?

Gad Horowitz, a professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, created the most explicit definition. In his view, Tories and Socialists weren't very different from one another. As he wrote in the left-wing magazine *Canadian Dimension* in 1965, "it can be argued that socialism has more in common with toryism than with liberalism, for liberalism is possessive individualism, while socialism and toryism are variants of collectivism."

Following this train of thought, Red Toryism is a combination of high Tory sensibilities (espoused by philosopher Edmund Burke and former British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, among others) and socialist-type policies. Hence, Canada's Tories and socialists used to share a commitment to "cradle to grave" government intervention, a social safety net and nationalism.

A further layer, democratic toryism, was added by former prime minister John Diefenbaker.

"What distinguishes the democratic tory," wrote Colin Campbell and William Christian in *Parties, Leaders, and Ideologies in Canada*, "is a concern for the well-being of the poor, and a belief that those who enjoy the benefits and privileges of society have a responsibility to care for those who are less well-off." The authors believed democratic toryism was fundamentally different from welfare liberalism and socialism. Adherents of this philosophy "accept progressive taxation to the extent that it reflects the fact that the rich ought to bear a greater burden of responsibility commensurate with their greater wealth, but does not see higher marginal rates for the rich as desirable in themselves."

This type of progressive conservatism (no pun intended) appealed to Jews who didn't support left-leaning parties like the Liberals and CCF/NDP. It helped the Tories become "the instrument of freedom and justice," as Segal wrote in his autobiography *No Surrender*, and included a few dashes of populism to boot.

That's the way the Tories used to be, anyway.

Today's right-leaning conservatives, or Blue Tories, are firmly in control of the party's political and economic agenda. Greater emphasis is placed on the principles of smaller government, lower taxes and increased amounts of personal freedom and liberty.

Modern conservatives care about the well-being of all Canadians and always work toward this important goal. That being said, statist programs dealing with collectivism, social justice and progressive taxation are, I'm pleased to say, no longer part of the Tory diet.

Here's another reason: Red Toryism is dead.

There are still Red Tories in Canada, of course. But, as I've written before, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has rebranded Canadian conservatism. This political phenomenon, which I've called "Harpertism," balances Red Toryism with Blue Toryism. The result is Tory centrism, a middle-of-the-road conservatism that's less ideological and much harder to define and attack.

As the Conservatives have changed, so, too, have Jewish Tory MPs, party members and voters. Their needs are different, their beliefs have changed, and their political philosophy is a different colour. ■

Michael Taube is a Washington Times columnist, and a former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Purim for grownups

Sara Horowitz

What child does not love Purim? It has costumes, pageantry, *nosherei*, merriment, not to mention a story with intrigue, carnivalesque reversals and larger-than-life characters – the buffoon king, the beauty-pageant-worthy Jewish princess, the puffed-up villain, first humbled then defeated. What's not to love?

For adults, however, a darker edge sets in. There's the text itself – a powerful leader led astray by a self-serving adviser governed by hatred, forced induction of young maidens into a large royal harem, a massacre of Jews barely averted, a massacre of enemies of Jews that extended an extra day. Then there's the associated practice of drowning out the name of the villain in our ritual readings of Megillat Esther, linked with the biblical injunction to "blot out" *zecher amalek* – the memory or trace of the Amalekites, or Amalek.

The traditional Purim Megillah reading comes sandwiched between two Torah readings that contain a confusing injunction to forget. It seems to mandate both remembrance and its opposite. On the Shabbat before Purim, we read God's command to the Israelites: "Remember what the Amalekites did to you… you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget" (Deuteronomy 25:17, 19). In the morning Torah reading of Purim, we read: "Inscribe this in a document as a reminder, and read it aloud… 'I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven!'" (Exodus 17:14).

Traditional readings of Megillat Esther offer a concrete example of the paradox of remembering to forget. Listeners use all manner of noisemakers to drown out the name of Haman when the reader chants it. Some people have a custom of writing the name Haman on the soles of their shoes, and wiping it out by walking. Think about it. To wipe out Haman's name, we must first inscribe it. Like Amalek, the entity to be forgotten is called by name, anchored by our sacred texts and our ritual acts. The reader needs to chant the name aloud, and the listeners strain to hear it, so the barrage of noise can be launched at just the right moments.

Rabbinic memory associates Amalek with individuals or peoples who act in gratuitously evil ways toward the Jewish people – seeing in Hitler, for example, a genetic or spiritual inheritor of the biblical prototype. Many rabbinic sources make clear that post-biblically, we're not commanded to literally wipe out Amalek or any later nation we see as their genetic or spiritual inheritors. Over time, the idea of "blotting out" Amalek came to be understood either as an act deferred until the end of days, or else as a metaphor – a command to wipe out one's own evil impulse, one's *yetzer hara*. But the idea of Amalek contains also the whisper of genocide, the trace of trauma, the continued existence of gratuitous evil – in the world, and perhaps in ourselves.

I think of the repeated cycle of naming and blotting out, inscription and erasure, as something akin to Freud's concept of *Fort-Da* – the way a child makes objects disappear and reappear, to conquer the fear of abandonment or non-being. Similarly, on Purim we turn our fears and trauma into a child's game that brings us to face what most chills us. In this way, perhaps, we are not paralyzed by it – nor are we seduced by it.

Many contemporary Jewish thinkers suggest that erasing the trace of Amalek is accomplished by engaging actively with its ethical opposite. Amalek goes after the helpless and defenceless for the sheer pleasure of experiencing its own power. Negating that would entail accepting a special obligation to look out for the defenceless, to protect and assist the helpless.

It seems clear that we are meant, at least at some level, to live with the memory of Amalek, which is also the memory of trauma. What else could we do but turn it into carnival? ■

News

Court orders Palestinian groups to pay $655.5 million to victims

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Only a few days before a U.S. court awarded the victims of Palestinian terrorism $655.5 million in damages (all figures US), Fatah, the main component of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), continued to glorify terrorist attacks that claimed dozens of innocent lives.

Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) reported that Fatah, the party of Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, praised as "heroes" Japanese terrorists who killed 24 in an attack on an Israeli airport in 1972.

Palestinian terrorists who killed eight in an attack on the Hotel Savoy in 1975 were called "heroic self-sacrificing fighters" and a terrorist who planned the 1972 Olympics massacre was dubbed "the Martyr Commander, the Red Prince."

In assigning liability against the PLO and the PA, a jury in Federal District Court in New York dismissed suggestions that the organizations were not linked to six terrorist attacks in Israel from 2002 to 2004 in which Americans were killed. And while the subsequent glorification of terrorist attacks did not prove a liability, payroll records and other documentation did. Evidence submitted in court, some of it provided by PMW, showed that killers were on the PA payroll, that the PA paid the salaries of terrorists in Israeli prisons and made payments to the families of suicide bombers.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs, which included the family of former Toronto native Yechezkel (Chezi) Goldberg, said if the PA and the PLO did not pay the judgment, they would begin the process of seizing PA assets to satisfy the judgment. That could include assets in Canada, said lawyer Aaron Blumenfeld.

The U.S. court decision is "precedent setting. It's huge," said Blumenfeld, a member of the Canadian Coalition Against Terror (CCAT), an advocacy group.

"The main thing is imposing responsibility on the PA. That's been done before. This case is bigger and it involves many more people and events. It shows them for what they are," he said.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said the court decision shows that victims "are able to avail themselves of the courts to assign at least partial responsibility to those entities. It is an important decision and could have large implications going forward."

Fogel said the decision "obliges [the two Palestinian entities] to consider the issue in terms of their own responsibility. That's an important image for Canadians to assimilate."

The decision supports the position that it's not just the perpetrators of terrorism who are culpable, but also those who support and finance it, he said, adding that the award could be taken from large sums that the American government transfers to the PA every year.

Blumenfeld said the decision hits the terrorists where it hurts – their pocketbooks. The PLO and the PA make huge investments abroad and these are now subject to seizure to satisfy the judgment, he said.

The United States and other western democracies remain the heartbeat of the world's financial system and the PLO and the PA may have to look elsewhere to get a return on their money, he said.

Blumenfeld noted that the case circumvented the political echelon entirely.

"The courts can force the responsible parties to pay for their wrongdoing, even when the [U.S.] State Department says no, we want Israel to make peace with these people," he said.

Last week's decision wasn't the first finding against the two groups in a terrorism case. In two other cases, default judgments were registered for more than $100 million, but the organizations reached confidential settlements.

Other court decisions found the government of Iran responsible for terrorist attacks. One such ruling led to the seizure of a building in Manhattan worth $500 million. In addition, a wire transfer of more than $1 billion that went through Wall Street was intercepted and frozen, Blumenfeld said.

Aaron Blumenfeld

PA assets in Canada are liable to be seized to pay the judgment, he added.

One of the plaintiffs was the family of Goldberg, a 41-year-old father of seven who was killed in a Jerusalem bus bombing in 2004. His widow, Karen, a native of Brooklyn, testified about the effect of her husband's death on their children. They suffered from depression, anger issues and trouble in school, the *New York Times* reported.

Their youngest child did not speak until he was three. The first words he uttered were, "Did someone kill my father?" the *New York Times* reported.

The suicide bomber in that attack was a PA police officer from Bethlehem. Responsibility for the attack was claimed by the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a wing of Fatah, Blumenfeld said.

Victims can also launch their own cases in Canada under the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, said Blumenfeld, who lobbied for passage of the act as a member of Canadian Coalition Against Terror. ■

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Vaccination of children called 'the only responsible course'

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Eric Petersiel

Last month, as the number of people infected by the measles virus continued to grow, the Orthodox Union (OU) and the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) issued a statement reminding parents that the vaccination of children can be considered a halachic obligation and "is absolutely the only responsible course of action."

In Toronto, the Vaad Harabonim (council of Orthodox rabbis) has not pronounced on the subject, but Rabbi Dovid Schochet, who serves as the organization's president, said "[children] should get immunized. It's already an old question. They definitely should be immunized."

The question of immunization for childhood diseases has resurfaced this winter as illnesses that were once thought to be conquered have begun to make a comeback. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the number of cases of measles, which can be fatal, was at a 20-year high. A recent outbreak in California, which originated in Disneyland, affected 123 youngsters as of last week. Most were not vaccinated.

A report in U.S.-based *Tablet* magazine said five areas in California had "stratospheric rates of unvaccinated or under-immunized kids." Statewide, the vaccine refusal rate is 2.56 per cent, but in the five problematic areas, rates ran from 5.5 per cent at the low end to 13.5 per cent at the high end.

To achieve "herd immunity," in which enough of the general population is immune to protect the unimmunized, a vaccination rate of around 94 per cent should be achieved. Its survey of Jewish schools found 14 of 68 schools with high rates of non-vaccinated children, many around 12 to 18 per cent.

Opponents of vaccination often refer to a study that links vaccinations to autism, though that study has been debunked and its author stripped of his licence to practise medicine in Britain.

In Canada, Toronto Public Health reported 10 cases of measles in the city. In all, there are 17 cases province-wide. Toronto Public Health reported the city-wide non-vaccination rate at two per cent, but one school, ALPHA Alternative junior school, had an exemption rate of 38.8 per cent.

Bais Chaya Mushka, a Chabad girls school, reported a 13.7 per cent exemption rate for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis immunizations and a 13.1 per cent exemption rate for measles, mumps and rubella.

Bais Brucha Girls school, a Bobov institution, reported exemptions totaling 8.1 per cent – 13 of 154 students.

Rabbi Nochum Sosover, executive director of Bais Chaya Mushka, said the rates reported by Toronto Health are not representative of the real rate of immunization in the school. Only a few families have signed documents asking for an exemption from vaccinations, he said. The other parents have either vaccinated their children but don't have the most up to date documentation or are a little behind in the vaccinations and will have their children immunized.

At any rate, he said, "we are not medical authorities to tell their parents if they should vaccinate their children or not. All we do is follow the reporting process."

At Robbins Hebrew Academy, which has 365 students, "we have one family that is not immunized," said Claire Sumerlus, head of school.

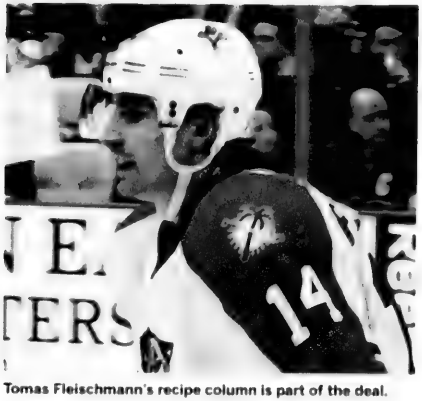
Eric Petersiel, head of school at Leo Baeck Day School, said of the school's 900 students at the north and south branches, only one to two per cent (15 to 20) youngsters, have opted out of immunization.

Last week, Elliott Brodkin, executive director and CFO of Associated Hebrew Schools, sent an email to parents saying the school was co-operating with health authorities in Toronto and York Region "to ensure the health and well-being of students and other members of the school community.

"Immunization is the best defence against measles infection. Two doses of measles-containing vaccine are required for full protection. Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto has high immunization rates amongst its students. We require that all students submit their immunization records upon application to the school and we actively collect immunization records from students once they are admitted."

In their statements on vaccinations, the OU and the RCA noted that it's the responsibility of parents to have their children vaccinated. "As in many communities, a small minority of parents chooses not to do so. The ongoing measles outbreak demonstrates how this could bear very serious consequences, not only for their own children, but others' too, especially those medically unable to be vaccinated." ■

CJN reporter traded to Panthers for new food writer



Tomas Fleischmann's recipe column is part of the deal.

HOWARD COSELL
SOMEWHAT SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In a deadline day trade move that caught television analysts completely by surprise, the Florida Panthers announced they had acquired the NHL rights to slick forward Paul Lungen.

"Though he's been out of hockey for 20 years, and never played anything beyond intra-mural hockey, Lungen brings the franchise immediate credibility," said longtime Panthers managing general Dale "The Dealmaker" Taloon. "His math hockey knowledge alone makes the team 0.036 per cent better."

Contacted at his mid-Toronto home, where he was shovelling his driveway for the 432nd time this winter, Lungen, a longtime *CJN* reporter, said he saw the move coming.

"I was in Florida recently," he said, "and I believe one of the team's scouts lived in the same Del Boca Vista complex where I was staying. He saw me power walking in the community and must have been impressed with my stride and speed. Also that I knew what Corsi and Fenwick meant."

"My last experience in the rink came during Game 5 of the 2011 Stanley Cup playoffs in Vancouver. The Canucks' Tanner Glass whiffed on a shot into an open net and my friend immediately said, 'Even you could have scored that goal.'

"Before that, I famously heckled a coach from behind the bench, telling him I had my skates in the car and I could be suited up for the next period if he needed me."

"I played more often when I was younger," said the middle-aged, out-of-shape Lungen. "Once in high school I was at a community centre skipping school and I signed autographs for a bunch of five- and six-year-olds who thought I was Gordie Howe. I told them I was Mr. Hooky and they must have thought I said Mr. Hockey. I later saw one of the autographs sell for $400 on eBay."

To complete the deal, the Panthers are sending Tomas Fleischmann to *The CJN*. Fleischmann is expected to bring his recipe for margarine to the newspaper, as well as write a weekly recipe column. ■

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Sephardi delegation heads to Ottawa to meet PM

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

For the first time in Canadian history, an official delegation of Sephardi community leaders, activists, philanthropists and spiritual leaders from across the country visited Parliament Hill and met with the prime minister, ambassadors and other dignitaries.

Organized by B'nai Brith Canada and the Sephardic Legacy Institute, the trip took about 30 Sephardi leaders to Ottawa on Feb. 26 to educate Canada's political leaders about the Sephardi community and testify before the parliamentary committee on human rights regarding the threat posed by the current Iranian regime.

Speaking with *The CJN* in advance of the trip, Yehuda Azoulay, founder of the Sephardic Legacy Institute, whose goal is to preserve Sephardi heritage, explained that he, as well as David Matas, a human rights lawyer based in Winnipeg, will testify before the Foreign Affairs subcommitee on human rights about Iran's aim to wipe Israel off the map and to obtain nuclear weapons.

"People are coming from Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Montreal and Winnipeg representing Canadian Sephardi Jewry for the first time," Azoulay said, adding that the itinerary also includes meetings with the national Defence Minister Jason Kenney and Liberal MP Irwin Cotler.

"We want to create a relationship between the government of Canada and Sephardi communities across Canada," Azoulay said.

"There are 380,000 Jews in Canada, 50,000 to 60,000 of whom are Sephardi, so therefore, we carry a lot of weight and we could influence many different things."

He said seven members of the delegation – B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn, B'nai Brith president Henry Schnurbach, Toronto-based financial industry consultant Eric Benchetrit, Montreal-based entrepreneur Steve Maman, Communauté Juive Marocaine de Toronto president Simon Keslassy and Rabbi Ilan Acoca, spiritual leader of Vancouver's Beit Hamidrash Synagogue – were granted a private, half-hour meeting with Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The community leaders pose for a picture in Centre Block.

"We'll be discussing securities for the Jewish community in general, and the Sephardi community," Azoulay said

Rabbi Acoca said one of the issues to be discussed throughout the visit to Parliament Hill is the fact that Sephardi Jews, many of whom were forced to emigrate from Muslim countries, should be considered refugees.

"History has shown that Sephardi Jews have been forgotten," said Rabbi Acoca, who serves about 100 families at his Vancouver shul.

"Just recently in Israel the government decided there is going to be a memorial day for Jews from Muslim countries on Nov. 30. It will recognize that Sephardi Jews contributed to the Jewish world and society in general, but more than that, we are refugees as well," he said.

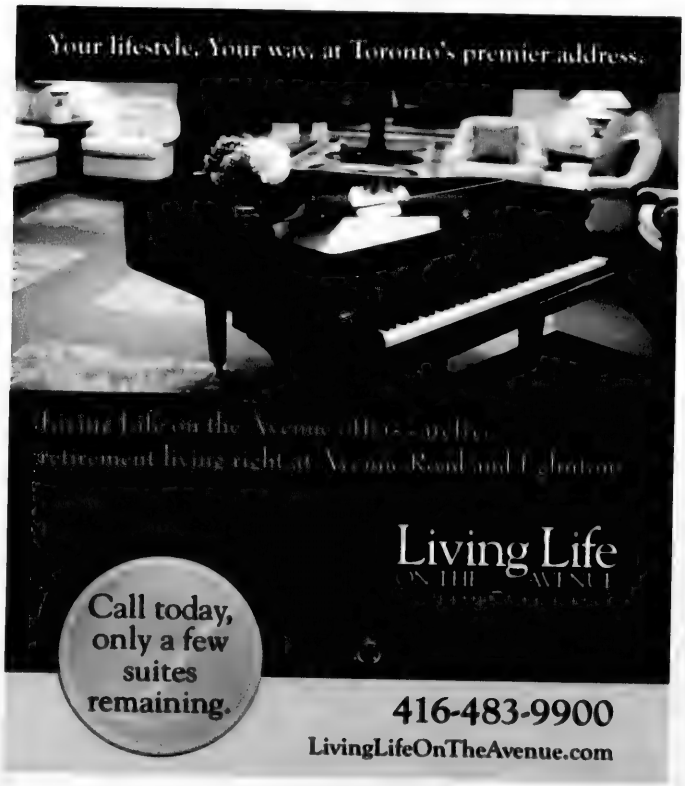
"It is important for people to know... that as the [Sephardi community] is getting older, they are not being forgotten, so this trip is going to be done in their honour and in the memory of the people who fled from Muslim countries because they were forced to."

Rabbi Acoca said that having served the only Sephardi congregation west of Toronto for the past 15 years, he understands how important it is to keep the Sephardi tradition alive in Western Canada and the rest of the world.

"I'm also looking forward to meeting dignitaries and ministers and to let them know that this is who we are. We are Sephardi Jews, we are part of the Jewish world, we are here, we are alive and existing, and they should be educated about it," said Rabbi Acoca, who is also the head of the Rabbinical Council of America's Sephardic Affinity Group.

In addition to being part of a delegation that is working to build a partnership with the Canadian government, Rabbi Acoca said he's also looking forward to connecting with other Jewish leaders across the country.

"I'm honoured to be part of this delegation. It's a historical moment for Canada." ■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Young professionals network for a cause

Brian Hefter, left, Lauren Jacob, centre, and Jamie Grundman JEN K HAY PHOTOGRAPHY

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There's no telling to where introductions can lead.

Providing a professional networking platform and building social exchange, 37 mentors, trendsetters and industry leaders mingled with some 280 young professionals at the fifth annual Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) Revolving Tables event, held Feb. 25 at the Four Seasons Hotel. More than $135,000 was raised for the cause.

"Mentorship is a two-way street. We are just setting the participants up to make the first move. Having a mentor to guide you along in your career can make all the difference," said event co-chair Jamie Grundman.

"One hundred per cent of the funds raised tonight go to every major hospital and scientific research institution in Israel," said ICRF Toronto president Norman Shiner.

This year, ICRF is marking its 40th year of investing in scientific research in Israel.

"We have seen incredible advances in cancer research by our scientists, some of whom have received judicious awards, including the Nobel Prize," said Kyle Lichtman, past Revolving Tables co-chair and an ICRF Toronto board member.

Youthful exuberance, big questions, business cards, and shared industry stories were exchanged in anticipation of sitting down with event mentors over a three-course dinner.

After each course, participants switched to a new table with a new mentor, asking questions about work/life balance, staying inspired and unlocking one's potential.

Participant Debra Fabian, a teacher at Associated Hebrew Schools, came to the event with an open mind.

"I like to listen to people's stories and hear how they got to where they are and learn about their pathways, as a lot of times, those are unconventional. I think it's inspiring to hear of people who had an idea and who were somehow able to make it happen," she said.

When asked why the Revolving Tables event is important, Grundman said, "Young professionals are a crucial demographic for charities. These are the donors of tomorrow. Opening them up to the cause of the ICRF, and showing both them and the CEOs in attendance what a big impact a small organization such as the ICRF can have is very important.

"People come to the event because the chance to network with the likes of Heather Reisman [founder, chair and CEO of Indigo], Jordan Banks [global head of vertical strategy and managing director, Facebook Canada] or Ellis Jacob, [president and CEO, Cineplex Entertainment], is very attractive. But, I also think the event is a testament to the impact a young person can have on an organization. If even one person leaves wanting to involve himself or herself in a charity, it has been a success."

Young professionals from last year's event expressed a deep interest in speaking with other young entrepreneurs with proven business success stories.

"This year, we were more active in recruiting young entrepreneurs such as Leerom Segal, co-founder and CEO of Klick Health and *New York Times* best-selling author, and Josh Singer, president of Kognitive Marketing," said Jacob.

Some of the other moderators and mentors included Joseph Mapa, president and CEO, Mount Sinai Hospital; Elise Kalles, of Harvey Kalles Real Estate; Ken Tanenbaum, vice-chairman, Kilmer Van Nostrand Co. Ltd.; Gabe Gonda, head of features and weekend, the *Globe and Mail*; and Natasha Koifman, president, NKPR Inc.

TV personality and fashion writer Jeanne Beker shared her pearls of wisdom with a table of eager young professionals:

"If you think you have arrived, it's time to go. You really need to keep on going, and make yourself relevant, and present yourself with new challenges."

Asked if there was a defining moment in her career where she had to make a choice that led her to her present path, Beker replied, "I think everyday choices come into your life. If you are really out there living a big life, your antennae are out and your mind is open to possibilities, they come fast and furious." ■

Crowe Soberman

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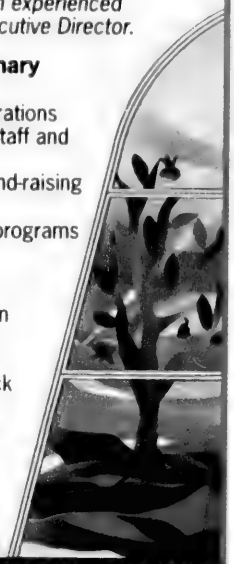

Candidates should submit applications **no later than March 31, 2015** to search@adathisrael.com. Information should include:
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Limmud Toronto targets young adults with diverse speakers list

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Limmud, an international Jewish learning festival that promotes Judaism's rich history, culture and heritage, will present 85 rabbis, professors and community leaders who will speak about issues relevant to Toronto's young professionals.

Limmud Toronto, which was founded in 2007 by a British-born volunteer named Peter Sevitt and modelled after Britain's 30-year-old Limmud educators' conference attended by about 2,500 people annually, will be held March 8 at the Alliance Francaise Toronto.

"This is a very diverse program with an emphasis on young adults, on speakers that would attract young adults," said Sara Dobner, Limmud Toronto's programming co-chair, adding that this is the first Limmud event in Toronto since 2009.

"It's a grassroots, non-profit organization, which is dedicated to connecting Jews of all ages and affiliations through volunteerism and cross-communal learning."

Dobner said there will be nine concurrent sessions running each hour, in nine different categories.

Topics will include art, music, the Bible and Talmud, Israel, health, Jewish history, Jewish identity and education, Jewish values and philosophy, social activism and politics, and literature.

"So each hour, if one wants to attend sessions about Israel only, or Jewish culture, they can go along with one category throughout the day. Everyone can find whatever they're interested in," she said.

Dobner also praised her programming co-chair, Rebecca Ihilchik, with whom she worked very closely to bring a diversity of subject matter to the event.

"Each one of us brought a different perspective to the program. I brought a lot of Israeli-related programs... Rebecca brought a lot of speakers to promote inclusion and feminism, so she put panels together on these issues," she said.

"That's why were able to put together such a diverse program that would be inclusive and everyone will be able to find something in it."

Some of the sessions offered include "Inside *The CJN*" with *CJN* editor Yoni Goldstein; "Is Religion Killing Judaism?" presented by Jews for Judaism's director of education Rabbi Michael Skobac; and "What Does Judaism Say About the Afterlife?" with Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, spiritual leader of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto.

Sara Dobner

"One session is with DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general, and it's an open discussion. It's everything you want to ask," Dobner said.

There will also be panel discussions, such as "Judaism and Feminism – Challenges, Triumphs, and the Future;" and "Special Needs Inclusion in the Jewish Community."

Dobner will be moderating a panel discussion called "When Tel Aviv Meets Toronto: Complementing or Clashing Cultures?"

"This will be a session in Hebrew, and it will bring different people, all Israeli, to talk about different aspects of their experience about the different cultures and how they interact," she said.

"I think this event is very unique because it is one day where people can take the time and devote the day to learning... It's a great way to meet people and mingle and to learn from each other."

The presenters themselves are among the 500 participants that are expected to attend.

Organizers of the day-long conference will also accommodate young families by offering programming for kids between four and 12 years old.

Dobner said she hopes Limmud Toronto will become an annual event. ■

For more information and to register, visit www.limmud.ca.

Local rabbi admits to digging 'tunnel' near York University

SOL TEDOLSKY
EXTRA SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rabbi Herschel Herschenhorn

An elderly Toronto rabbi has admitted to digging the recently discovered tunnel near York University, saying he took it upon himself to start rebuilding the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre because he got fed up waiting for construction to begin.

The tunnel, which is actually more of a seven-metre-long, three-metre-deep bunker, was discovered in January by a conservation worker.

It took three years to dig out "literally with my own two hands," said Rabbi Herschel Herschenhorn, 95, rabbi emeritus of Beth Aaron Bais Chaim Hebrew Men of Oshawa.

"I'm in pretty good shape for a man my age, but it was a big job, and none of my former congregants wanted to help," he said.

"Just wait until they ask me to officiate at their grandkids' bar mitzvahs, just because they don't like the new guy and how he keeps sermonizing about shmittah and the laws of family purity. I can tell you right now what my answer will be."

The 50-year-old BJCC was torn down in 2009 and was originally scheduled to have been replaced by 2011 with a $150-million facility, but the start date has been repeatedly delayed after community officials failed to raise the funds needed to break ground on the project.

Only the first phase of the new centre has been completed, leaving what Rabbi Herschenhorn calls a "forlorn, seemingly endless patch of green grass" covering most of the land where the BJCC once stood. "It's like the empty shmittah fields my successor keeps yapping about."

The rabbi said he purposely chose the wooded area near York University and the Rexall Tennis Centre because it physically resembles the West Don Valley floodplain where the old BJCC was located, and not because he was confused or suffering from dementia (though he conceded that he does get lost in Earl Bales Park from time to time).

He also denied choosing the location because he was planning to disrupt competition at the nearby tennis venue for this summer's Pan Am Games, but said his choice of location was oddly appropriate for reasons other than geography.

"Tennis is about the only thing in the Pan Am Games that even remotely interests me," he said, noting that he tries to play two or three times a week, and that before becoming a ba'al tshuvah and entering the rabbinate in the early 1960s, he once barnstormed Europe with Bobby Riggs as half of a tennis hustling team that specialized in swindling female members of European royal families out of their inheritances.

When asked how he had managed to excavate such a large hole without being detected, Rabbi Herschenhorn said he carried the dirt away from the site using his tallis bag, so as not to arouse suspicion among nearby residents or the small army of security personnel readying the Rexall site for the Games.

"They [the security people] didn't seem like the sharpest knives in the drawer. I certainly wouldn't have believed my story about holy dirt," Rabbi Hirschenhorn said.

"After speaking to those shmoes, I've lost all confidence in the security for the Games. I told my grandkids to stay away from the popular events like tennis and basketball, and stick to the velodrome or Ping-Pong if they absolutely feel the need to go see something."

He said he has since written to Games organizers suggesting they use the Jewish Defence League for security.

"Those guys have real dirt in their tallis bags, if you know what I mean," he said cryptically.

Rabbi Herschenhorn said he hadn't abandoned the effort when he stopped digging in late December, only that he was taking a rest. "Give me a break. I just turned 95. And like I said, my former congregants are lazy."

He figures that at the rate he was going, he could rebuild the entire BJCC before he turns 105, which, he emphasized, is still sooner than the latest official projected completion date of June 2030.

Toronto Police and CSIS refused to comment on the rabbi's admission, saying the investigation is ongoing, while a spokesperson in the prime minister's office said it was too early to rule out Islamic extremism.

The York Federation of Students responded with a statement blaming Israel, because, it said, Israel is responsible for everything. ■

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ENTERTAINMENT BY
MARC SALEM

Hebrew U professor says Israeli vote too close to call

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

With only a few weeks left until Israelis head to the polls, security remains the dominant electoral issue, though they remain divided on how to best tackle the problem, says a renowned political science professor in Jerusalem.

Prof. Reuven Hazan, head of the political science department at Hebrew University and a respected adviser to the Israeli government, said the March 17 election is neck and neck between "the hawks and the doves." Both sides see security as key, he said, but have different approaches to making Israelis feel safe.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hawkish Likud party has released buzzed-about campaign videos that suggest voters who do not side with Likud could play into the hands of Israel's enemies.

"[Likud] says in the bluntest terms that the Arab world doesn't want the State of Israel to exist," Hazan said in a Skype address to a gathering of around 50 people Feb. 21 at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

"[The party says] we need to send out a message to the countries surrounding us... If they attack us again, they will lose more land, like they did in 1967."

On the other side of Israel's political spectrum is the Labor-Hatnua alliance, led by Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni, who are campaigning on their willingness to tackle economic reform, as well as deliver peace talks with the Palestinians.

"The doves are those parties who say that Israel cannot live by the sword forever," Hazan said.

Unlike Canada's electoral process, the proportion of the votes each party receives in Israeli elections determines the number of seats it gets in the Knesset.

With Likud and Labor-Hatnua polling at about 20 per cent each, it will be up to their leaders to negotiate with other parties to form a coalition. The goal is to get at least 61 of the Knesset's 120 seats.

Hazan said he expects a larger turnout for Israel's Arab population, which comprises 20 per cent of the country's population.

"They are a sect within Israel society that usually doesn't poll well," Hazan noted. Israeli Arab parties currently have 11 MKs, less than 10 per cent of the total seats.

In this election, Israeli Arab parties are running as a unified bloc, which should ensure they become better represented, and more support for this minority could benefit the more left-wing Labor-Hatnua, he said.

Reuven Hazan

Another rising group to keep an eye on is a new party, Kulanu, led by former Likud minister Moshe Kahlon. Even with security demands, the centre-right party also wants to focus on the economy.

Although security is the defining issue of this election, it's not the only thing Israelis are worried about, Hazan said. Israel's economy remains very important for the middle class.

"Housing prices have skyrocketed [in Israel] and the cost of living has increased dramatically," Hazan said. "Kahlon [wants to] focus on a domestic economic agenda, on alleviating the burden of the middle class."

As these economy-focused parties rise in popularity, others are losing some of their influence, Hazan said.

These include Yair Lapid's centrist Yesh Atid Party, which won second place in the 2013 Israeli election. Meanwhile, Shas, an ultra-Orthodox party, is also projected to get fewer seats this time.

Netanyahu's hardline stance still attracts a lot of support, although since the end of the conflict with Hamas in Gaza last summer, his approval rating has fallen, Hazan noted.

The political divide in Israel has only deepened since Netanyahu decided to address the U.S. Congress on March 3 to discuss Iran's nuclear program. Hazan said Netanyahu's address to the U.S. Congress could turn Israel into a partisan issue in the United States.

"I do not think [Netanyahu's address] is good for the long-term relations between Israel and the United States," Hazan said. "Netanyahu is, in my mind, overly playing the role of Israeli politics in American politics." ■

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Ninth of Adar revived as day of constructive conflict

JODIE SHUPAC
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For most Jews, the ninth of Adar is a Hebrew calendar date like any other.

However, on that day some 2,000 years ago, the houses of Hillel and Shammai, then leading sages who founded opposing schools of Jewish thought, erupted in bloody conflict, and a disagreement between the two houses over 18 pivotal Jewish legal matters led to the violent deaths of 3,000 students.

Though initially declared a fast day, mainstream Jewry has long since discarded the practice.

But a burgeoning movement, initiated three years ago by Rabbi Daniel Roth of Jerusalem's Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution and lately taken up by several young Toronto Jews, is pushing to re-appropriate the ninth of Adar as a Jewish day of constructive conflict.

On Feb. 28, several organizers, along with representatives from downtown organizations such as Makom: Creative Downtown Judaism, the study group BASE – Beit Midrash Downtown Toronto and The Orchard: Intentional Jewish Communal House – hosted an evening of study and discussion about ways to transform the historical day of destructive conflict into one that nurtures healthy disagreement.

Toronto's 9 Adar event was spearheaded by Evelyn Tauben, 36, a producer and curator who primarily works with Jewish artists.

After taking a class with Rabbi Roth at Pardes several years ago, she was inspired to bring the event to Toronto.

"I reached out to different people," Tauben said, "like fellow organizer Samahra Zatzman, who has also studied with Rabbi Roth, as well as Rabbi Aaron Levy and people from The Orchard, who I know are open to doing different things, and this unexpected team of us came together saying, 'There's a global ninth Adar initiative. Toronto should be a part of it.'"

She added: "The basic message [of the day] is that conflict exists, and we don't want to pretend there aren't disagreements in relationships. The day is not just about how we can speak more productively about Israel and Palestine, though that's part of it, but also how we, in our daily lives, our homes and families – in the Jewish and wider communities – use Jewish texts to learn how to work through conflict more productively."

Roth's message is that disagreements managed constructively ensure healthy and dynamic relationships and communities, and that Israel and the Jewish People, particularly given current challenges, can benefit from learning to better navigate conflict.

His challenge to do this is being taken up by Jewish groups across Israel and North America, including Israeli students, organizations that facilitate constructive dialogue about Israel such as the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the Israel Talks and Encounter, and in Jewish day schools across the United States, some of which are taking part in the Pardes Rodef Shalom school program.

The Toronto 9 Adar event, held at The Orchard, near Bathurst and Dupont streets, was attended by about a dozen people, mostly in their 20s and 30s, and kicked off with a musical Havdalah service.

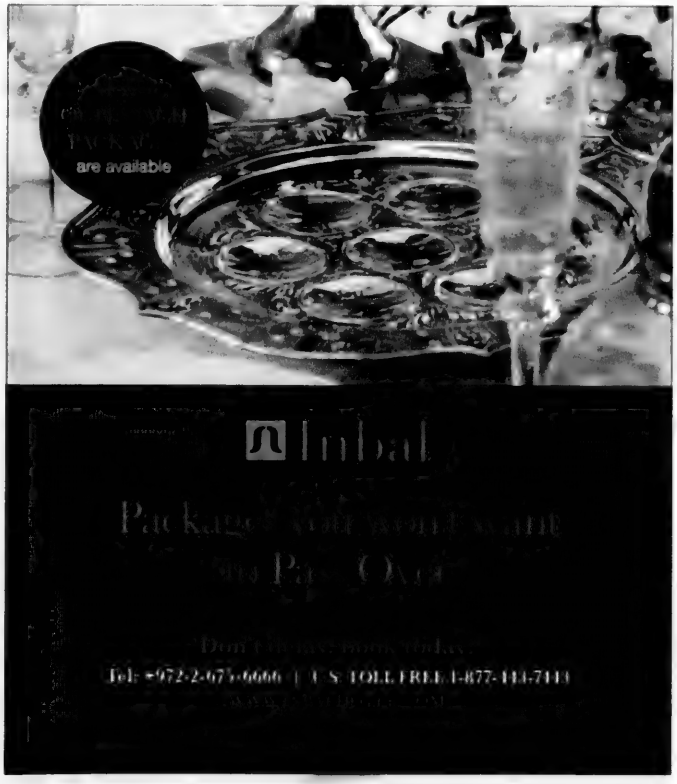
Participants then verbally agreed to a "Rodef shalom (pursuers of peace) Communication Agreement," compiled by Rabbi Roth, which contained passages about respectful communication from various Jewish texts.

One read: "I will feel free to continue to express, and allow for others to express, different viewpoints in the spirit of *machloket leshem shamayim* (disputes for the sake of heaven) as the Mishnah (Ethics of Our Fathers, 5:17) describes the dispute between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel."

Standing, from left, are Yaacov Lefcoe, Marc Levy, Rabbi Aaron Levy, Evelyn Tauben, Aaron Rotenberg, Joshua Schwartz, and Neil Hirsch. On the floor is Samahra Zatzman.

The group then broke into chevrutah-style pairs to study an assortment of Jewish texts on disputes and conflict resolution before engaging in a group discussion led by Rabbi Aaron Levy of Makom.

That conversation included an exploration of what constitutes an "argument for the sake of heaven," which, Tauben said, "is elevating, or productive." ■



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CRAFTING NEW LEGISLATION TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE SUPREME COURT DECISION

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

Recently the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the criminal law in Canada forbidding assisted suicide was unconstitutional and gave the Federal government one year to develop a new law to replace it. By contrast, Jewish law traditionally forbids assisted suicide and calls it murder, although there is one halachic authority in commentaries to the *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law) for not *hindering* death. We will not debate the merits of this ruling. Irrespective of such differences and the merits of the ruling, Mr. Harper now has a big problem. His Government will now be obliged to worry about many of the same considerations that family and estate lawyers often consider when assessing a client's mental capacity when interviewing him concerning his instructions before signing a legal document, such as a Will or Release. So here are a few questions Mr. Harper needs to consider:

1. When a patient makes such a request, just who will be qualified to assess his consent, what are the qualifications of such a person beyond having a medical degree, and what are the conditions by which that consent is to be judged? Even if it's to be two doctors should at least one be a psychiatrist with training in capacity assessments? In Ontario, if I have any doubt about someone's mental capacity, I turn to a specified list of licensed "capacity assessors"; some are psychologists, some are psychiatrists -- others social workers. But the key fact here is that they are all licensed by the Ontario government and trained for such a role.

2. Will the people who are potentially influencing the patient be considered when such a request is made by a disabled person who may be partially medicated or in a weaker state of mind by reason of the pain they are experiencing? I have had people come to me for assistance who have been badly abused or in distress but my efforts are sometimes frustrated by friends or relatives with their own agendas and not always for monetary gain, such as a future inheritance. So some clients will resist my advice because of such outside influences. Family law lawyers call these people 'cheerleaders' who give advice without knowing all the facts or the law, often subtly or sometimes forcefully. They may be well-meaning or distracted by misplaced empathy or they cannot tolerate the pain in which a friend or relative suffers. Such people will often want the client to take disastrous "shortcuts." By analogy, how will the new Legislation deal with such cheerleaders and protect the weak from making an irreversible decision?

3. Just who will be doing the killing? Which doctors or nurses will be qualified? And how will such a professional be properly insured and be legally protected if some relative or spouse later claims that his or her loved one never gave proper consent because they were not in their right mind or were improperly influenced? And who will legally protect the "killer" from accusations that he or she didn't apply the "correct" legislative or regulatory standards?

I think we should all pray for Mr. Harper as the new law will need a great deal of very careful thought. Someone's innocent life depends on it.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit

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End-of-life, palliative care discussed by expert panel

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dr. Daphna Grossman and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner on the legal, medical and ethical perspectives on end of life matters.

People's wishes for end-of-life care are more likely to be honoured if they make clear plans for their deaths and share them, according to a panel of experts who recently addressed legal, medical and ethical questions associated with the final stages of life.

An information session with Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, palliative care specialist Dr. Daphna Grossman and lawyer Brendan Donovan, was held Feb. 24 at North York Memorial Community Hall and attended by more than 100 people. Criminal lawyer Edward Prutschi moderated the town-hall-style meeting, which was sponsored by UJA Health Professionals, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus.

In dealing with legal matters pertaining to end-of-life planning, Donovan, an estates and trusts litigator at Wagner Sidlofsky LLP, stressed the importance of a detailed written plan for one's end of life wishes. He said writing something such as "no heroic measures" is an ambiguous instruction that could be open to interpretation, which is why detailed instructions are necessary.

Another legal matter is the determination of an individual's competency in making a treatment decision and understanding the consequences. He said competency is of particular importance, given the recent Supreme Court ruling that struck down the ban on physician-assisted death.

Donovan recommended assigning a power of attorney for personal care, which he likened to a living will. A designated person becomes the substitute decision-maker (SDM), a trusted person who can follow through on an individual's health-care or end-of-life wishes if he or she becomes mentally incapacitated.

Grossman, deputy head of palliative care at Baycrest Health Sciences, dispelled the misconception that palliative care hastens death. Dying is a natural part of life, she said, explaining that palliative care helps a cancer patient "be more comfortable and less anxious" when no more treatment can be offered. "Palliative care helps the patient to live with dignity through the trajectory of the illness and to die with dignity."

She said a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed that palliative care does not hasten death.

Grossman noted that morphine, a drug common used in palliative care, alleviates shortness of breath, pain and anxiety.

Palliative care is also provided to people with non-terminal illnesses such as chronic lung and heart disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), she said.

"There was a time when people died quickly and at young ages from these illnesses. Medical care and procedures has helped people live longer."

Palliative care may be necessary for dementia patients in the last six months of their lives, when their level of consciousness decreases and they have increasing difficulty swallowing.

She said that people who ask to die are often socially isolated and/or have undiagnosed depression. "Some people rescind this request once their [psychological] needs are met."

Rabbi Torczyner, rosh kollel of Toronto's Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov, noted there is a diversity of Jewish opinions on dealing with death, so he advised people to speak to their rabbis.

He said in Judaism, there's a requirement to save life and mitigate pain. He acknowledged that death from medication is an acceptable risk, if the goal is pain alleviation, but he made it clear that euthanasia, the administration of medication to deliberately end life, is a violation of Halachah.

The rabbi said people have the right to refuse treatment if the pain of a terminal illness can't be abated or if there are low odds of success for a particular treatment. He also said it's not necessary to prolong a life of pain caused by a terminal disease by treating a secondary condition such as a respiratory infection. "We don't extend a life of pain."

When it comes to end-of-life care, Rabbi Torczyner noted that there could be a "set of competing values" between what families want and what medical staff deem necessary. "Doctors are asked to represent the system. They are the guardians of resources in the health care system, which could be a conflict of interest."

However, he added that families and patients who view physicians with suspicion must also appreciate the fact that physicians are in the business of providing health care. "Doctors do not go into this field to end life." ■

Media control not crucial for Jewish millennials

SHLOIMI MANDELBAUM
NOT SO SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jewish community leaders are concerned that young professionals of the millennial generation are not as committed to maintaining their grip on the worldwide media as the generations before them.

"Jewish youth are much too focused on their careers, relationships, and promoting social justice issues, and simply don't make media control a priority," said Deborah Livshitz, founder of Jewish Media Group.

Livshitz explained that Jewish media control peaked in 1996 when 90 per cent of media outlets were run by power hungry *machers*, but the rate has been on a downward spiral ever since.

"These days, the number is at, like, 72 per cent, at best."

According to a UIA report that polled nearly 1,500 Canadian Jews between the ages of 20 and 40, only 32 per cent of Jews felt that promoting the narrative of the Zionist entity and Jewish Lobby was "of great importance."

However, Livshitz said she was encouraged that 87 per cent of those surveyed agreed that Jewish control over the banks and Hollywood is essential to Jewish continuity.

The decline in Jewish influence of the media can be evidenced by BBC's decision in January to ask a panel if it is time to "lay the Holocaust to rest," during a debate segment called *The Big Questions*.

"In my time, the Jews would never have let that happen," said Moshe Dickstein, a concerned parent to two "good, Jewish boys" in their 20s.

"My father, and my father's father understood the importance of Jewish media control, and those lessons were passed down to me. If my children don't learn the skills necessary to influence the public perception via the media, who will continue to make the goyim feel guilty about the Holocaust myth? Did I say, myth? I meant Holocaust exaggeration."

Today, CBS is owned by Sumner Murray Rothstein, a rich Jew. NBC is owned by Brian Roberts, another rich Jew.

CNN, along with *Time* and *People Magazine*, which are under the umbrella of Time-Warner, is partially owned by a very rich Israeli named Aviv Nevo.

"Don't get me wrong, Jews still hold most of the positions of power in the media. They're just not a die-hard Zionist-y as I'd like them to be," Livshitz said.

"I mean, we still have Rupert Murdoch – the CEO of FOX and owner of the *New York Post* – on our side, but he's not even a Jew! So, I don't know anymore."

Rabbi Courtney Fleishman, "the Reform rabbi to the stars," said the fact that young Jews aren't as interested in world domination as their parents were is a worrisome trend.

"I believe that we are now at one of those critical, pivotal moments in our history. It's sneaking up on us. What is happening is an upheaval that threatens our cohesive fabric," she said.

Dickstein's 28-year-old son, Howard, said although it's a nice idea to have the next generation of Jews as invested in media control as the generations that have passed, Jewish youth have bigger problems.

"At this point I'm just trying to figure out how to afford a $600,000 mortgage, working 60 hours a week for a $37,000 salary, and still find time to binge watch *Game of Thrones*," he said.

"Millennials, who in time will come to be the leaders of the Jewish community, do not at present buy into the importance of running the media and Hollywood as their parents did. I don't know about you, but I have not had my fill of Holocaust movies," Rabbi Fleishman said.

She said the best shot at capturing the imagination of the next generation is to acknowledge them as individuals and approach them one by one.

"Make them understand the value of world domination and how it will benefit them and their children." ■

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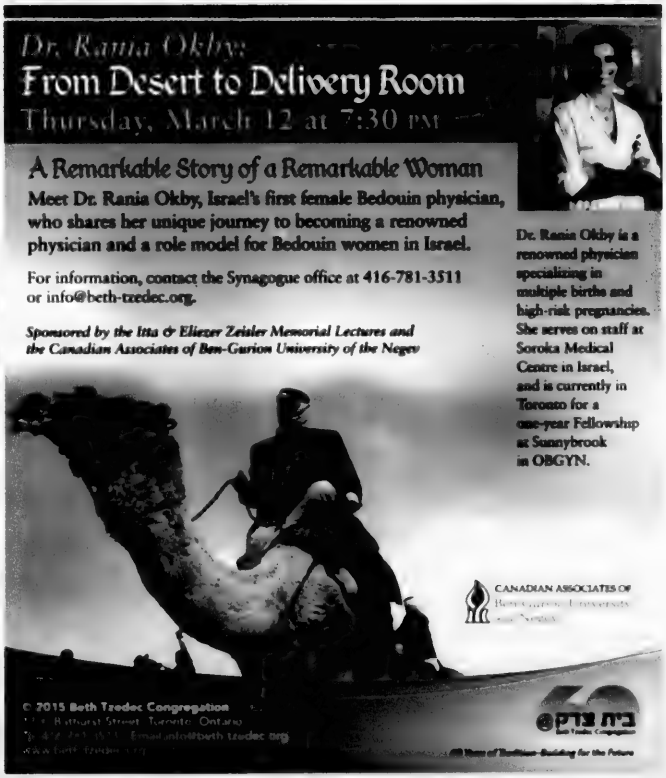
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Anti-Israel QuAIA 'will not be missed': Jewish leaders

JODIE SHUPAC
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Kulanu Toronto marchers at the 2012 Toronto Pride Parade. CJN FILE PHOTO

Jewish community leaders reacted with both triumph and relief at the news the pro-Palestinian group Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) has decided to disband after seven years in operation.

In a statement posted on the activist group's website Feb. 26, QuAIA, which has for years been enmeshed in controversy for its participation in the annual Toronto Pride Parade, announced that it will "officially retire at the end of the month."

It said that QuAIA's resources have been "stretched" as most of its original members are currently working "within a variety of fields and organizations within Toronto and internationally" and that, "over the past year... the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, Canada's involvement in attempts to suppress the movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel... have pulled activist energies in many directions."

Representatives from Jewish organizations, as well as Jewish Toronto city councillor James Pasternak, responded to the news by reiterating their condemnation of QuAIA and its presence at the annual city-funded Pride Parade.

"We are not at all surprised they decided to disband. We have always maintained there is no room in the Pride Parade for QuAIA's discriminatory messages," said Justine Apple, who, as executive director of the Jewish LGBTQ group Kulanu Toronto, has vocally opposed QuAIA's participation in Pride for several years.

"QuAIA's demise is not just a win for the Jewish community, but for every rational human being who understands how little support or merit this fringe group had," Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, said in a statement.

"With ISIS beheading every minority in their path, massacres in Syria and Iran executing gay people, QuAIA's obscene obsession with Israel could not hope to win widespread support... Its presence will not be missed."

Len Rudner, director of community relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) said that, "QuAIA's decision to disband reaffirms what most people have known all along. Their sole purpose was to spew anti-Israel rhetoric and create an atmosphere of hostility. Their message never resonated with the broader community, most of whom fully understand that Israel is in fact the beacon of hope and protection for the LGBTQ community in [the Middle East]."

Pasternak, the councillor for Ward 10, who has spoken out against QuAIA for years and in 2012 pushed for the term "Israeli apartheid" to be condemned by city council, expressed "cautious relief" at reports the group is breaking up.

"Over the past several years," he said, "QuAIA has caused great pain to many communities in our city through their discrimination, bullying and demonization. Their attempts to march in Toronto's Pride Parade have been... a shameful mark on our city's reputation."

QuAIA has been a divisive force at Pride ever since the group formed during Israeli Apartheid Week at the University of Toronto in 2008.

It was established, it says on its website, in response to "Israel's use of gay rights to divert international attention away from the state's violation of Palestinian rights."

In 2010, pro-Israel groups fought to have the city de-fund Pride Toronto if Pride allowed QuAIA to march in the parade, and, as a result, the group was initially banned.

But Pride Toronto reversed its decision after a backlash from the local queer community.

In 2011, the non-partisan Toronto city manager Joe Pennachetti released a report concluding that the phrase "Israeli apartheid" does not amount to a hate crime, nor does it violate the city's anti-discrimination policy or the Ontario human rights code. City council voted to accept the report.

QuAIA, however, decided not to take part in the parade that year so as not to endanger Pride's funding from the city, though it did take part in the event over the next three years.

Last year, city council approved $160,500 in funding for Pride Toronto, an increase of $20,540 over the previous year. However, the budget passed with an amendment introduced by Pasternak requiring that groups receiving cultural funding understand that the failure to comply with the city's anti-discrimination policy could result in the forfeiture of current and future money.

It also asked council to "affirm its view that Toronto remain a destination of respect, tolerance and safety, and that the importation of world conflict zones is contrary to these ideals."

In 2013, in response to the controversy around QuAIA, City Council voted to amend its anti-discrimination policy to prohibit groups from receiving funds from the city if they tolerate hate speech or discriminatory behaviour.

A Pride Toronto spokesperson told *The CJN* that Pride is declining to comment on QuAIA's demise at this time.

In its statement, QuAIA said its accomplishments have included "educating Canadians about the conditions of occupation and apartheid policies in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories" and building " connections and coalitions with other movements for social justice (feminists, anti-tar sands activists, First Nations, etc.)."

Group member Tim McCaskell wrote that retiring QuAIA "allows us all to develop new strategies for supporting the Palestine solidarity movement and make new links across oppressions in our communities."

Requests for an interview with QuAIA representatives were not answered. ■

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A proudly Canadian Haggadah designed for all Jews

JANICE ARNOLD
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A new Haggadah in Hebrew, English and French has been created by Canadians for Canadians and celebrates the Jewish experience in this country.

The *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne*, compiled and edited by Rabbi Adam Scheier and Richard Marceau, has been published by Montreal's Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. The authors of this Passover text describe it as the first of its kind, and one overdue for a Jewish community that is not only one of the largest in the world, but has a distinct identity.

All text is equally reproduced in the three languages, but what really makes this book stand out are dozens of historic photos of Canadian Jewish life from the early 20th century culled from the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives and other community archives, including those of *The CJN*.

The book also includes commentaries from 20 rabbis (and one maharat, the title for ordained female clergy in modern Orthodoxy) from across the country and the denominational spectrum.

The text is traditional, said Rabbi Scheier, but it's one he believes is familiar to almost everyone and may be used in full or abbreviated. The language is close to gender neutral.

One small addition is a prayer for Canada, alongside one for the State of Israel: "May the Merciful One bless Canada and its government, and grant fellowship and freedom to all of its inhabitants."

Marceau and Rabbi Scheier, who are friends and colleagues in community work, laboured on the Haggadah for about five years, in their spare time away from busy professional and family lives.

They both enjoy having diverse guests at their seder tables – anglophones and francophones – and felt the lack of a bilingual Haggadah. Extemporaneous translation or using two versions proved to be awkward.

The cover of the *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne* features a photo of the 1948 opening of the B. Manischewitz Co. matzah plant in Longueuil, Que. CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS CHARITIES COMMITTEE NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO

They may seem like an odd pair to produce such a proudly Canadian work. Rabbi Scheier, the Shaar Hashomayim's spiritual leader, is a Rochester, N.Y., native, a fourth-generation American, who came to Canada 11 years ago.

Marceau is general counsel and senior government adviser to the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, based in Ottawa. He is a convert to Judaism, a francophone from Quebec City who was a Bloc Québécois MP from 1997 to 2006. He recounted his journey to Judaism in the 2011 memoir *Juif: Une histoire québécoise*, which was later translated into English.

"When I came to Montreal, I was struck by the sense of pride Jews had in this country and their history in it," said Rabbi Scheier, who notes his wife, Abby, is Canadian and that they have "produced four Canadian citizens," to whom he dedicates the Haggadah.

The completion of the project is bittersweet for Marceau. He dedicates the book to his late wife, Lori Beckerman, who passed away without seeing it published, and their two children.

Marceau attended his first seder in 1992 with Toronto native Beckerman's family and friends. It was his introduction to a Jewish ritual, which was totally strange to him, but it was made even more baffling because his English was not strong at the time.

"It was quite a culture shock," he recalled.

They were married two years later, and Marceau converted in 2004. "Lori was very supportive of the [Haggadah] project. Although she was an anglophone from Toronto, she became fully bilingual, worked in French as a lawyer in Ottawa, and loved the duality of our home and the friends we invited around our table," he said.

Both editors emphasize that the project would not have been possible without the help of many people, be it with research, proofreading, donations or advice.

"From the outset, we only encountered excitement about this project," Rabbi Scheier said. "People really responded to the idea."

That input helped them find and select an eclectic mix of pictures, some familiar, but many rarely seen today.

Some examples are the first religious service held by a Jewish farming colony in Lipton, Sask., in 1906; Philip Adelberg, the first justice of the peace in British Columbia's Peace River district, taken in 1915; the Cornerbrook, Nfld., synagogue in the 1940s; the founding of Ecole Maïmonide in Montreal in the 1960s by the Sephardi community, the first French-language Jewish school in Montreal; and demonstrations for Soviet Jewry in the 1970s.

Marceau said he and Rabbi Scheier felt it was important to highlight the relationship between Canada and Israel over the years. There are shots of visiting Israeli leaders from David Ben-Gurion to Shimon Peres in 2012, as well as then-prime ministers Menachem Begin and Pierre Trudeau together in 1978.

The relationship is represented in the other direction as well, such as an Inuit delegation's visit to the Jewish state.

The *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne*, which weighs in at 168 pages, is tablet size in order to make it easy to use at the seder table. "It's not supposed to be a coffee table book," said Marceau.

It is being sold on Amazon.ca and at synagogues and Jewish bookstores for $20. Any proceeds will go to charity – split 50-50 between Rabbi Scheier's and Marceau's choices.

The book launch is on March 12 at the Shaar Hashomayim, with local launches in Toronto on March 18 and Ottawa on March 19. ■

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National Assembly condemns hate crimes

JANICE ARNOLD
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Quebec's National Assembly unanimously condemned what police are treating as a hate crime: Nazi graffiti and a death threat left at an apartment building in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce on Feb. 23.

An all-party motion was brought forward in the legislature Feb. 25 denouncing the crime, which saw the hoods of four vehicles parked in the interior garage of the building on Côte St. Luc Road at the corner of Hampton Avenue each spray painted with red swastikas.

Envelopes were found under the windshield wipers on some cars, with at least one containing a threatening note and a bullet. The windshield of one car was also smashed and a pickaxe left in front of it.

The motion condemned "the hateful acts perpetrated... against the Jewish population," and "denounced vigorously and without nuance any manifestation of intolerance based on ethnic origin or religious beliefs."

In passing the motion, Premier Philippe Couillard made an eloquent speech warning against intolerance in Quebec and for recognition of what the Jewish community has given to the province.

"[T]hese men, these women who live among us are not Jews living in Quebec, they are Québécois of the Jewish faith."

He concluded in English: "We can only denounce these acts of vandalism which reflect prejudice and intolerance. I wish to reassure the public that we will not tolerate that Quebecers are subject to threats because of their origins or their religious beliefs. These cowardly acts remind us of how important it is to continue to combat intolerant gestures that target the Jewish community and all ethnocultural minorities in Quebec."

Interim official opposition leader Stéphane Bédard, as well as Coalition Avenir Québec leader François Legault and Québec Solidaire leader Françoise David struck a similar theme in their statements.

Although it has not been confirmed who the damaged vehicles' owners are, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) views this crime as motivated by anti-Semitism.

"While the intent of the perpetrator cannot be absolutely determined at this time, given what is happening globally, the fact that swastikas are involved, that there were threatening notes and this is a Jewish area, leads one to understand that this was not just an act of simple vandalism but a crime targeting the Jewish community," said Rabbi Reuben Poupko, who chairs CIJA's security committee, after touring the site with police on Feb. 24.

After the National Assembly motion, CIJA Quebec chair Eric Maldoff said: "While the recent terrorist attacks on journalists and Jews in Europe are cause for concern for our community, we must not give in to fear because we know that we do not stand alone against the scourge of anti-Semitism.The Montreal police have made it a top priority to investigate [this] anti-Semitic vandalism... which they have boldly declared to be a hate crime and are making major efforts to ensure the security of our community."

One of the cars that was vandalized.
CHARLES CONTANT/CBC PHOTO

He expressed appreciation for the provincial parliamentarians' firm stance, as well as that of Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre.

The mayor stated earlier: "I was staggered to see that such acts could be committed toward the Jewish community. Montreal is a welcoming city, where all religions must be able to live together harmoniously. Montrealers must denounce any such acts, whatever community is targeted. As for me, I say it loud and strong: not in my city!"

The crime was denounced by the Ottawa-based National Council of Canadian Muslims, which called it "a craven act" whose perpetrators should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law "to send a strong message against hate crimes and intolerance." It urged community leaders to report suspicious behaviour to authorities.

The vandalism was discovered after 10 p.m. on Feb. 23 when the smoke alarm sounded. There was no fire.

Rabbi Poupko said police are not releasing full details, but from what he understands the notes "said something to the effect that 'this bullet is for you.'"

Police had no suspects, and the garage has no surveillance cameras.

Rabbi Poupko said CIJA is satisfied the police are dedicating all the resources necessary to investigate this crime and appreciate that they have been questioning Jewish institutions in the area as to whether they noticed any suspicious activity of late.

A 15-year resident of the building, who withheld her name, told the media she'd never seen anything like this before in the building. Other residents said the garage's security had been an issue.

Police are asking anyone with information to call 514-393-1133. ■

Parenting Corner: put the little darlings to work

EIN LIGNER
VERY SPECIAL TO THE CJN

(The following article represents the views of the writer and not that of The CJN or any other normal human being.)

Kids. You can't live without them, you can't make them sleep in the garage. I know, because I've tried, and they don't like it.

It seems to me it wasn't that long ago that I, too, was a rebellious youngster with a mind of his own who didn't particularly like to hear what his parents had to say. Now, at the other end of the parenting spectrum, I don't particularly like what the kids have to say, all sass and brass and back talk.

Was I ever that big a brat?

Nah, never.

Well, maybe once. But those records are sealed, never to be seen again.

Parenting, it's been said, is the hardest thing you'll ever do, and whoever said that was right. But it's right only because of our precious #$@%&$ little children – whom we all love and cherish, by the way. Let me put that on the record right now.

So how does one get through the difficult years, the ones after they're toilet trained, but not yet living on their own.

Well, you can try to get the orthodontist to wire their mouths shut, but despite the most persuasive arguments and the offer of a free car wash for a year, that hasn't worked yet.

Or you can try to find them a job. That would get them out of the house for a time, and when they got back, they'd probably be too tired for their normal stress-inducing behaviours. Hey, it's more cost effective than registering them for expensive extra-curricular activities, but there are those damned child-friendly labour laws to consider.

And pampered as they are, they'd probably ask for a ride to work.

When I was a youngster, even at age nine, my friends and I would take the bus downtown and were away the entire day without parental supervision. If our kids did that today, we'd probably have children's services on our tails, ready to put us in jail for neglect.

Come to think of it, our parents' entire generation could have been investigated and ended up with lengthy stays in the crowbar hotel. In fact, all the parental generations throughout history would have criminal records if they were around today.

OK, so a parent needs something that will keep the kids busy and be legal at the same time. How about a job as doorman at an exotic dancer peeler bar?

It is a bit of a grey area, admittedly. But it would take place after school, so those damned intrusive truancy people would be kept at bay.

The shift at the afternoon jamboree might work, but not the evening one. If we get them there right after school and child labour codes are respected, the delightful, hard-working little tykes – did I mention how much we cherish them? – could put in a good day's work and be back home in time for milk and cookies.

Update: my wife – she who must be obeyed – has kinda' nixed the peeler bar idea. I guess all that's left is to put them in front of the computer and turn them into Minecraft zombies, for whom the world begins and ends at a computer screen.

A lot of parents are doing that right now. It's a social, bonding, keep-them-in-the-loop kind of thing, don't you know. I guess we're going to climb aboard that parenting bandwagon.

There's another one-one vote that I lost.

Still, I like the make-'em-work approach. They can take up the computer when they're older and wiser – well, at least when they're older. Except then, they might have kids of their own and... That's it. Let them get a taste of their own medicine with their own kids, the little darlings.

What comes around, goes around. It will be poetic justice.

In the meantime, I'm going to take a nap – in the garage. ■

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Honey Cake
Chocolate Brownies
Seder Plate
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MENU #5
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish
Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls
Roast Chicken
Roast Brisket of Beef
Chicken Fingers
Green Beans Almondine
Lockshen Pudding
Chocolate Brownies
Seder Plate
Charoses
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MENU #6
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Sweet & Sour Meatballs
Poached Salmon
Pan Roasted Potatoes
Green Beans Almondine
Lockshen Pudding
Chocolate Brownies
Seder Plate
Charoses
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Cornish Hens
Chopped Liver
Cabbage Rolls
Veal Roast
Flanken in Borscht
Roast Duck
Lemon Chicken Breast
BBQ Chicken Wings
Honey Garlic Wings
Chicken Fingers
Knishes - Potato or Beef
Kishke
Meat Kreplach

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Stir Fry Vegetables
Grilled Vegetables
Apple Farfel Pudding
Farfel & Mushrooms
Potato Latkes
Green Beans Almondine
Broccoli & Mushrooms
Handmade Egg Noodles
Seder Plates
Charoses

SALADS
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Pickled Beets
Tossed Salad
Cucumber Salad

FISH
Poached Salmon
Sweet Gefilte Fish
Salt & Pepper Gefilte Fish

DESSERTS
Apple Flan
Chocolate Cake
Chocolate Brownies
Chocolate Lemon Roll
Fresh Fruit Salad
Honey Cake
Macaroons
Mandlebrot
Mocca Cake
Passover Cookies

CHAG SAME'ACH from YITZ'S

INTERNATIONAL

Canadian woman says she can't leave Israel

Parents given temporary custody of her two sons after obtaining a 'no exit' order against her

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

Pregnant single mom Hana Gan is trying to get her kids back and return to Canada after being barred from leaving Israel last month and seeing authorities give temporary custody of her two sons to her parents.

According to her supporters, she sought to leave because her parents wanted her to be more religiously observant, while her parents contend she can't care for her kids because she isn't responsible with money.

Gan, who has been advised by her supporters not to speak with the media, moved to Israel last December seeking a better life for her children, but almost immediately realized it was a mistake. Living with her parents at the time, she decided to return to Canada.

Earlier in February, according to spokesperson Moti Leybel of the Israeli organization Bereaved Parents with Living Children, Gan filed complaints with Israeli police alleging that her father was beating her. Then, saying her father had destroyed the children's Canadian passports, she reached out for help to Leybel's organization.

Leybel said situations such as Gan's are common in Israel and that his organization represents "hundreds and hundreds of parents" whose children have been removed without cause by social services.

Leybel took Gan to the airport on Feb. 19, after she had obtained emergency passports for her children. He waited outside in case there was trouble. "I got this phone call, and she was crying, screaming and shouting. They tried to get her kids away. She told me, 'I'm holding them tight, I don't want them to take them.'"

She wasn't allowed to leave Israel because her parents had obtained a "no exit" order against her. She managed to leave the airport, and Leybel took her and her sons, ages 5 and 6-1/2, to a friend's apartment. However, on Feb. 22, police tracked them down.

Leybel said the police reaction was disproportionate. "They acted like she was a serial killer. At one point, there were 15 cops in the apartment, in the stairway."

When police took Gan in for questioning, social workers handed her children over to her parents, Eli and Drora Gan, with whom they were to remain while awaiting a March 3 custody hearing.

Leybel said that with an emergency warrant, children can be removed from their parents' home for up to seven days without a judge's signature.

The social services department of the Mateh Yehudah Regional Council in Gan's parents' city of Beit Shemesh released a short statement reading, in part: "This is a complex matter which is now being held behind closed doors in court... we hope, of course, for a speedy resolution for the benefit of all those involved."

According to her lawyer, Benny Dekel, Gan decided to leave Israel when her parents demanded "that she lead a life the way they see it, as frum Jews... She felt a little bit stressed and uncomfortable, so she decided to leave."

Dekel said the parents obtained a "no exit" order with almost no documentation. "Whenever there's even a small, minimal risk to kids, the courts give this order right away." He said he's working on cancelling the no exit order as well as restoring her guardianship of the children.

Gan's mother, Drora, told *The CJN* the children would be in danger if they left Israel.

She said she and and her husband have tried for years to help Gan live independently with her children and only stepped in now because they saw no choice. "She has gambling and money problems. She used to spend all the rent money. There were always problems."

Gan lived with them for four years in Canada, where they had returned for business reasons just after Gan's divorce, Drora said, and she depended on them financially, despite receiving social assistance.

In a blog post from 2013, Gan admitted, "I don't know if I'm ready to quit the gamble [sic], or stop shopping." In that post, she called the timing of her parents' return to Toronto just after her divorce "miraculous."

Although Gan was born in Israel, she qualified as a new immigrant and received financial aid on arrival. Drora said Gan spent the money shopping, leaving her penniless again.

Hana Gan FACEBOOK PHOTO

"As soon as she arrives in Canada, the children would be on the street. She has no house, no driving license. She lost it when she didn't pay her parking tickets. She doesn't have any credit cards because of all her credit problems. She couldn't rent a place because nobody would rent to her."

Gan's supporters sent *The CJN* letters from three Toronto families offering her a home. One, Rebecca Sorokin, met Gan and her children in 2014. She said she's disgusted with any system that separates mothers from children without due process. "I am half-Israeli, but I'm... [also] a social worker, and I'm a mom. We shouldn't support [Israel] no matter what, if there's flaws in the system.

"This is just a loving mom, trying to cope and take care of her kids. She just wants to get back home where she felt safe."

Drora rejected allegations that Gan isn't safe in Israel or that her father, Eli, abused Gan during her current pregnancy.

"People think my husband beat her in the tummy, put her on the floor. What is he, an SS man? She can make up stories," Drora said. "You should see how her children love my husband, their grandfather. They tell him, 'Saba, you are the best in the world.'"

She also says Gan's non-Jewish ex-husband in Canada has sent a letter supporting their custody claim, saying he wants his children raised as Jews.

Though she and her husband Eli are religious, Drora insisted, "We never fought over religion... We never fought with her to come here [to Israel]. She wanted to come, she said, 'My children will have a better life.'"

Attempts to reach the Canadian Embassy for comment on the case were unsuccessful. ■

OPINION

Schabas keeps demonizing Israel, despite ethics violations

Gerald Steinberg

When Canadian law professor William Schabas was exposed as having omitted a blatant conflict of interest in applying for a UN position, he abruptly resigned as head of the latest commission investigating Israeli "war crimes." However, he did not slink away quietly in embarrassment, or apologize and ask for forgiveness.

Instead, as a political warrior, his strategy has been to counterattack and spin the discussion in a way that his image is changed from attacker to victim. Schabas is an intense ideologue, dedicated to radical causes in which hostility toward Israel is at the top of the agenda. For many years, he has used his status as a professor of international law to advance this form of warfare, including serving as a PLO adviser. (This was the "minor point" he omitted in a UN application form.) His appointment as head of a high-profile UN investigation was a major achievement, and his removal a greater defeat.

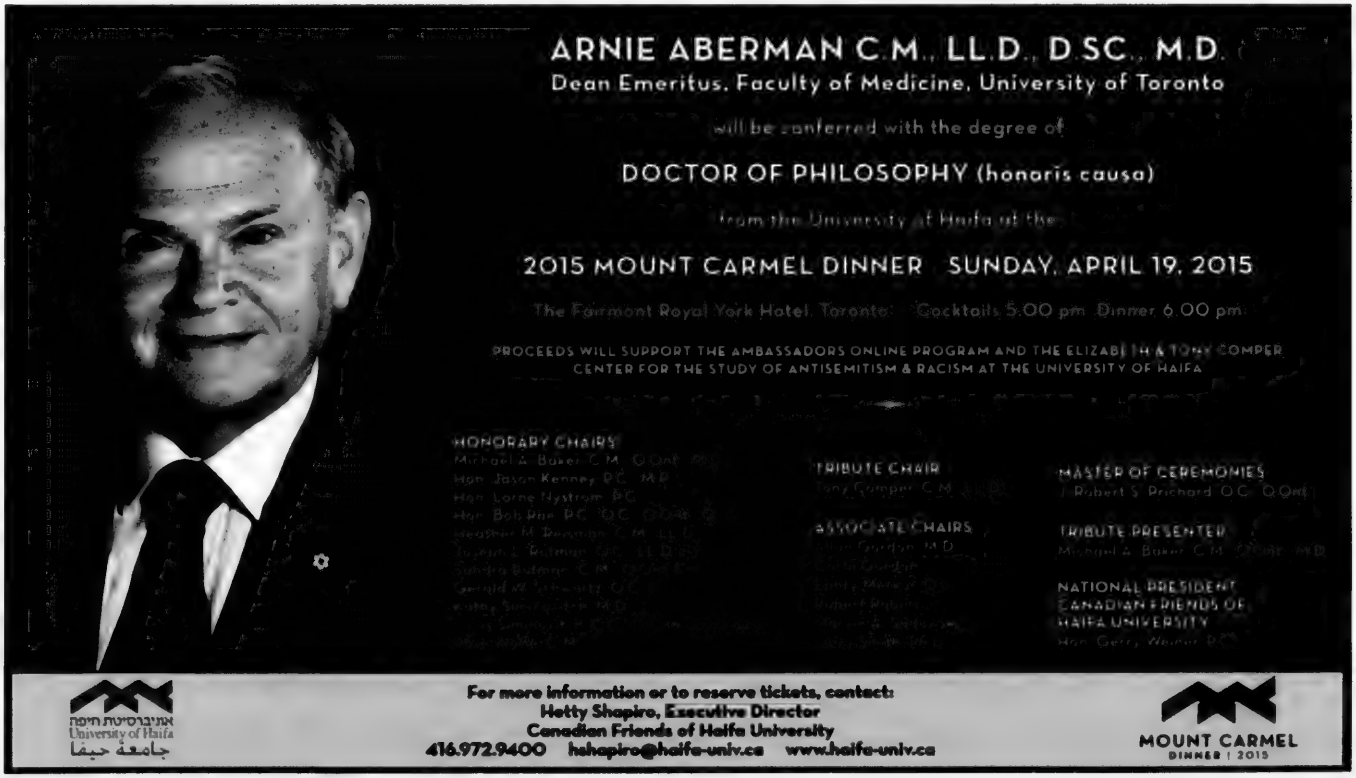
To divert attention from his ethical violations, Schabas' primary response is to dress himself in the clothes of the victim of an Israeli-led conspiracy. In a sympathetic article published in the *New York Times*, he complained of being targeted in "a stream of vulgar and violent emails and several death threats."

Schabas has also tried to use his Canadian link to present his spin. In an interview last month with *The CJN*, he made the Pinocchio-like claim that there was "no evidence I'm biased against Israel." But the article provided plenty of evidence. For example, the interviewer (reporter Paul Lungen) asked about a 2011 public declaration that Netanyahu "should be in the dock of an international court." Schabas awkwardly sidestepped the specifics, instead presenting a convoluted attempt to redefine bias.

Similarly, a *New York Times* interview was headlined to reflect his spin: "Former Head of Inquiry Into Gaza War Says He Faced Pressure and Threats." Again avoiding any recognition of his own ethical violations, Schabas claimed to be the victim of a vast Israeli conspiracy. Schabas then shamelessly exploited his partial Jewish background and the Holocaust, referring to himself as "a descendant of eastern European Jews on his father's side, some of whom had died in the Holocaust, and that he was proud of his Jewish heritage." This statement contrasts sharply with Schabas' policy of otherwise omitting any such references. (In 2004, when Ken Roth, the powerful head of Human Rights Watch, was criticized for crusading against Israel, he also pulled out his Jewish roots and his father's experience in Germany in the 1930s.)

The most revealing counterattack was made in close co-operation with Richard Falk, a leading anti-Israel warrior and official in the UN Human Rights Council until recently. (Full disclosure: I have debated and exposed Falk for many years, including his own abuse of the term "as a Jew," and he recently denounced me as a "hasbarah specialist," among other labels.) In fact, it was in his application to replace Falk at the UNHRC that Schabas lied about his conflicts of interest. With Falk's encouragement, Schabas makes the absurd accusation that the "charges of bias against me were nothing more than a witch-hunt, something reminiscent of McCarthyism."

Schabas would do well to take a lesson from Judge Richard Goldstone, who preceded him as the UN's chief accuser versus Israel. Goldstone did not lie on applications or hide conflicts of interest. His failure was due to naiveté and the ease with which the anti-Israel NGO network exploited his Jewish connections for promoting false accusations and modern blood libels. But to Goldstone's credit, when he belatedly realized this, he renounced the report and has kept silent on these issues ever since. Schabas is far from naïve, but having been caught in the act, he would be well advised to keep quiet and begin to atone for his sins – as a "descendant of Jews," he has seven months until Yom Kippur. ■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White House plugs Obama's pro-Israeli stance

REBECCA SHIMONI STOIL
WASHINGTON

As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu landed in the United States, and thousands of pro-Israel activists in town readied to go to bat for greater congressional oversight on any Iran deal, the White House went on the attack, publishing a blog post plugging President Barack Obama's positive record on the Jewish State.

A blog post titled "five key facts you need to know about the U.S.-Israel relationship under President [Barack] Obama" sent around by the White House Sunday evening touted Obama's credentials as a supporter of Israel, and also emphasized that the United States has had a long history of support for Israel.

The post comes after a week of intense back-and-forth between Israel and Washington over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's planned March 3 speech before both houses of Congress, and as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's annual policy conference got under way.

"Under President Obama's leadership, American engagement with Israel has grown and strengthened to an unprecedented degree," the fact sheet read. "From meeting frequently with Israeli leaders to ensuring that Israel remains the largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, the president is deeply committed to helping Israel maintain its strength and security."

The blog post highlighted that "the first country to recognize Israel, the United States, has forged a deep and unshakable bond with Israel through a multifaceted relationship that reflects the depth and breadth of the ties between our people and the values that we share."

Last month, a Netanyahu campaign commercial compared the current prime minister to founding father David Ben-Gurion, noting that then-U.S. secretary of state George Marshall opposed the creation of the State of Israel.

Describing Obama as "a strong defender," the post noted that "President Obama has strengthened Israel's defence in concrete and unprecedented ways." It cited numerous budgetary benefits that Israel has received since 2009 as evidence, as well as the continued regularly scheduled joint military exercises between the nations' armies.

It went on to emphasize Obama's role in "leading global efforts to defend Israel's legitimacy on the world stage," as well as describing him as an "economic partner."

While many of the bullet points emphasized policies that were carried out through the administration and legislative initiatives, the blog highlighted Obama's personal role as "a proponent of peace."

"The president has strongly supported Israel in its quest for peace with its neighbours," the fact sheet read, emphasizing that "President Obama has repeatedly stood up for a two-state solution that ensures the peace and security of Israelis and Palestinians."

It also ascribed a high level of presidential involvement in the failed attempts to broker a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority that ultimately collapsed last spring.

"Under the president's direction, Secretary [John] Kerry initiated an intensive, collaborative effort to facilitate negotiations for a comprehensive peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians," the blog asserted. "The president prioritized Israel's security by asking one of our foremost military experts to help develop security arrangements that ensure a two-state solution leaves Israelis more secure, not less."

The fifth point of the blog noted that "under President Obama, the U.S. has invested millions in helping Israeli immigrants." It continued that "in the last six years, U.S. humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants travelling to Israel totalled $140 million."

The funds, the blog said, are "used to help transport eligible migrants to Israel, [and for] transitional shelter, intensive Hebrew-language programs that focus on newly arriving immigrants, or youth programming in Israel."

The blog concluded with a curt instruction to "share this information with everyone who needs to know." ■

With files from JTA
Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the U.S. Congress

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U.S. groups slam Boteach ad

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach FILE PHOTO

JTA
WASHINGTON

An array of American Jewish groups condemned an ad by a foundation associated with Rabbi Shmuley Boteach accusing U.S. National Security Adviser Susan Rice of turning a blind eye to genocide.

"Susan Rice has a blind spot: Genocide," said the advertisement appearing in the Feb. 28 *New York Times*, touting a talk on Iran this week in Washington hosted by Rabbi Boteach, the New Jersey-based author and pro-Israel advocate.

As soon as the Sabbath ended, Jewish groups rushed to condemn the ad by This World: The Values Network.

The American Jewish Committee called it "revolting," the Anti-Defamation League called it "spurious and perverse," the Jewish Federations of North America called it "outrageous" and Josh Block, the president of the Israel Project, said it was "entirely inappropriate."

Marshall Wittmann, spokesperson for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which was to host Rice on at its annual conference this week, said, "Ad hominem attacks should have no place in our discourse."

On March 1, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations issued a statement blasting the ad.

Other condemnations came from the Orthodox Union, J Street, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative movement. In a combined statement, the leaders of the Union for Reform Judaism and Reform's Religious Action Center called the ad "grotesque," "abhorrent" and a "sinister slur."

The ad notes Rice's recent complaints about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress on March 3, which was organized without consulting the White House. Netanyahu was to speak against the nuclear talks between Iran and the major powers, which U.S. President Barack Obama backs. Rice said last week that the way the speech was organized was "destructive" to the U.S.-Israel relationship.

The ad also notes a controversy from the 1990s, when Rice was on president Bill Clinton's National Security Council staff and reportedly advised against describing the mass killings in Rwanda as "genocide."

"Ms. Rice may be blind to the issue of genocide, but should treat our ally with at least as much diplomatic courtesy as she does the committed enemy of both our nations," it said.

In an interview, Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, who directs the Rabbinical Assembly, said Rice deserved an apology from Rabbi Boteach. The ad "is completely inconsistent with the record of friendship and loyalty this public official has shown Israel and the Jewish People," Rabbi Schonfeld said.

Rice grew close to pro-Israel and Jewish groups during her stint as U.S. envoy to the United Nations, in Obama's first term.

"It is not up to Shmuley Boteach to make it appear this is the way the Jewish community treats our friends," Rabbi Schonfeld said.

Rabbi Boteach in an interview said he stood behind the ad. "The stakes could not be higher, and our ad rightly points out that Susan Rice has gone beyond any mandate in condemning the prime minister for simply speaking out," he said. "Condemnation should be directed not at those who seek to give Israel a voice, but to those who seek to deny it."

Rabbi Boteach, whose talk on March 1 was to take place in a Senate office building and was to include Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust memoirist, as well as Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), appealed to AIPAC activists to attend.

Sherman condemned the ad on Twitter, but did not say if he was still intending to take part in the event it was promoting. "This ad is outrageous and harms the U.S.-Israel alliance," he said. "It should be denounced in every forum."

AIPAC, like many of the groups that condemned the ad, is skeptical of the Iran nuclear talks.

Nathan Diament, the Washington director of the Orthodox Union, a group that has been very skeptical of the talks, on Twitter described the ad as an "inappropriate ad hominem attack" that "doesn't advance discourse on key issue of Iran."

Rabbi Steve Gutow, who heads the JCPA, the public policy umbrella for the Jewish community, said the ad was a blow against bipartisan support for Israel. "It's a sad moment for the Jewish community to have this ad appear," he said in an interview. ■

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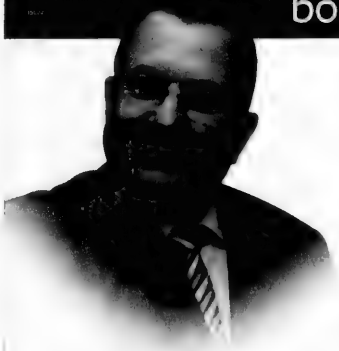

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Murder risks plunging Russia into civil war

JTA
NEW YORK

The murder of former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov risks plunging Russia into civil war, Russian dissident Mikhail Khodorkovsky said.

An unidentified shooter gunned down Nemtsov on March 28, a leading opposition politician in Russia. Nemtsov was a Christian, but had a Jewish mother.

Khodorkovsky, a Russian Jew who left for Switzerland in 2013, made the warning in a statement posted on his website. The dissident, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison following graft trials that critics alleged were designed to eliminate his political ambitions and criticisms of human rights abuses by Russian President Vladimir Putin, noted that Nemtsov was murdered "100 metres from the Kremlin."

"I know that for many people, Boris' death will become so much of a Rubicon that the entire country may become different," Khodorkovsky wrote on his website. "Will we find ourselves standing even closer to the precipice of all-out war of everybody against everybody? Or will we find within ourselves the strength to understand that political differences are not a reason to stop acting like human beings?"

An unidentified attacker in a car shot Nemtsov four times in the back as he crossed a bridge in view of the Kremlin, police said. Putin condemned the murder and said he has was closely monitoring the investigation amid widespread speculation that Nemtsov was eliminated by the Kremlin, as were other dissidents before him.

Leonid Bershidsky, a Russian Jewish journalist, in an opinion piece published on *bloombergview.com*, wrote that the death validated Nemtsov's criticism of Putin "in the most terrible way."

Bershidsky also criticized Putin's government for what he said amounted to incitement against Nemtsov, writing that Nemtsov's name was "on every list of traitors published on the Internet and aired on state TV."

"It did not help that he was Jewish," he wrote. "There was a strong undercurrent of anti-Semitism in the smear campaign." ■

Nimoy rediscovered his Jewish roots in early 1990s

JTA

Leonard Nimoy's Spock has proven to be one of the most famous television characters of the 20th century. Nimoy said that he based the character's split-finger salute, now a pop culture fixture, on a Kohanic blessing that involves a manual approximation of the Hebrew letter shin.

Nimoy died at his home in Los Angeles on Feb. 27 of chronic pulmonary disease. He was 83.

Nimoy was born in Boston's West End neighbourhood in 1931 to Yiddish-speaking, Orthodox Jewish immigrant parents from then Soviet Ukraine.

Nimoy rediscovered his Jewish roots. In 1991, he produced and starred in *Never Forget*, a TV movie based on the story of a Holocaust survivor who sues a group of neo-Nazi Holocaust deniers, and four years later he hosted an NPR series in which Jewish celebrities read aloud Jewish short stories.

In 2002, he published *Shekhina*, a book of photographs of semi-nude Jewish women, which angered Orthodox leaders. And in 2009, he narrated a documentary about the Beth Sholom Synagogue in Elkins Park, Pa., which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

After teaching method acting in his own studio and making several minor film and television appearances in the 1950s and early 1960s, Nimoy was cast in the original *Star Trek* TV series as Spock, a pragmatic alien with trademark pointed ears, in 1965. *Star Trek* became a cult classic show in the 1970s and eventually spawned five subsequent TV series and 12 films.

Nimoy played Spock for more than four decades and sustained a successful Broadway theatre career. His other notable acting roles include Paris in the spy series *Mission Impossible* and the psychiatrist David Kibner in a 1978 remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

Nimoy showcased his ambivalence about being closely identified with the Spock role through the titles of his two autobiographies, which are titled *I Am Not Spock* and *I Am Spock*. ■

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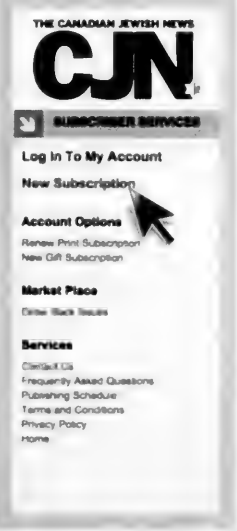
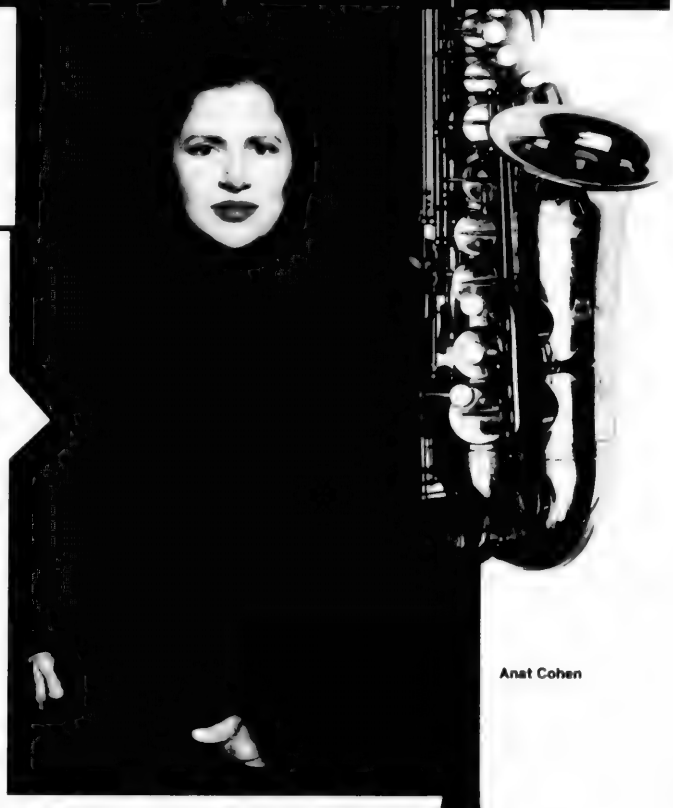


Jewish Life

Concert showcases Israeli jazz musicians



Anat Cohen

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

For the past two decades, the Holy Land has produced a bounty of outstanding jazz musicians who pulled up their roots and replanted themselves in the New World, especially in New York, where a strong Israeli contingent thrives.

Notable jazz musicians of Israeli origin will be showcased at the Rex Jazz and Blues Bar in Toronto on March 18. Two New York-based artists, clarinet and saxophone player Anat Cohen and pianist Guy Mintus, with their bands, are featured on a bill along with Toronto bassist Kobi Hass. A former Tel Aviv resident, Hass will be leading a quartet of local musicians.

The evening's headliner is Cohen, an internationally acclaimed artist who has topped critics and readers polls in the clarinet category in *DownBeat* magazine every year since 2011.

Cohen, 39, said when she began studying clarinet at the age of 12 while attending the Jaffa conservatory, she never imagined that "she would become a professional musician and that the clarinet would take her around the world." She added that at the time, the clarinet "was out of fashion" because it was associated with old-style swing and folk music.

At 16, Cohen joined the conservatory's big band and learned to play saxophone, out of necessity. "There was no clarinet chair in the big band, so the conductor said, 'Why don't you go to the storage room and pick up a tenor sax,'" she said. *DownBeat* has named Cohen a rising star in the soprano and tenor saxophone categories several times.

Cohen has two brothers who are also accomplished jazz musicians – the trumpeter, Avishai, and the saxophonist, Yuval. She records with her brothers under the band name 3 Cohens.

She said playing with her brothers is amazing because they know one another well and meshing musically comes naturally. "It takes years to develop this kind of intimacy with musicians," she said.

In 1996, Cohen left Israel to study at Berklee College of Music in Boston, where she was introduced to New Orleans-style jazz, African grooves and Brazilian music by her classmates, styles she learned by immersing herself in the music. At the Rex with her quartet, Cohen will play selections from her latest recording *Luminosa*, which features several Brazilian numbers and original material.

Opening the Rex's jazz showcase is upright and electric bass player Kobi Hass. He's worked in bands that have backed up some well-known Israeli pop rock singers, among them Leah Shabat, Gali Atarai, Bridget Habib and Riki Gal. Hass picked up his first electric bass by chance, while he was studying choir conducting at Tel Aviv University.

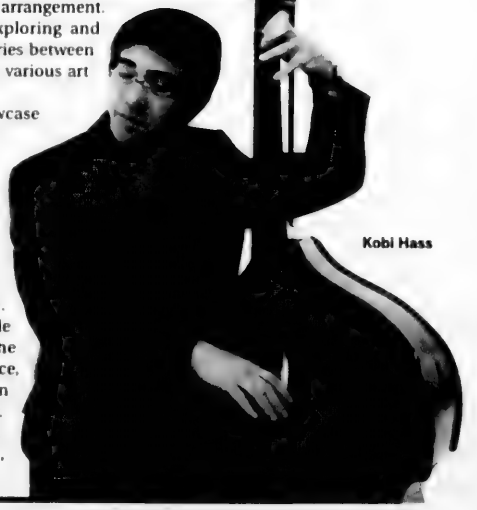
"I ran into someone who wanted to sell a bass," he said. "I realized I could make a good living playing the bass." He was already an established bass player when he spent four years studying jazz at Berklee College of Music.

Hass, 59, who moved to Toronto with his family in 2010, has been playing at the city's clubs, backing up singers, subbing for the bassist in the group Jaffa Road and getting into jazz seriously.

He said that he and three other local musicians, pianist Barry Livingstone, drummer Paul Fitterer and Ernie Tollar on saxophone and flute, have been meeting at his house to play jazz just for fun. "Slowly we got our own sound," Hass said.

At the Rex, the quartet, with Hass on upright bass, will perform some of his original compositions, as well as Livingstone's.

To round out the program at the Rex, pianist Guy Mintus, 23, leads a trio of America-Israel Cultural Foundation scholarship winners. Mintus is a recipient of the Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Award by ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) and of two *DownBeat* student awards for outstanding jazz performance and arrangement. He is dedicated to exploring and stretching the boundaries between musical traditions and various art disciplines.



Kobi Hass

The Israeli Jazz Showcase is presented by the Toronto Jazz Festival and the Israel Consulate General, Toronto and Western Canada, and is part of the Spotlight on Israeli Culture showcase (www.spotlightonisraeliculture.ca). Tickets are available at the Rex only on the night of the performance, March 18. Admission is $20. Cash sales only. Showtime is 6:30 p.m. For more information, call 416-598-2475. ■

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

SPOTLIGHT ON ISRAELI CULTURE CONTINUES WITH JAZZ CONCERTS AND MORE

The Canada Israel Cultural Foundation's second annual Spotlight on Israeli Culture continues through March with a variety of arts events, including the jazz concerts described below. For the full schedule, please visit www.spotlightonisraeliculture.com

The **Ehud Ettun Trio** performs an evening of world music, original arrangements and jazz standards. The trio is led by double-bassist **Ehud Ettun** and features **Daniel Schwarzwald** on piano and **Nathan Blankett** on drums. $9. The Rex Jazz and Blues Bar, 194 Queen St. W., Tuesday, March 10, 9:30 p.m.

Also at the Rex, the Israeli Jazz Showcase presents an evening of Israeli jazz featuring three bands: the **Kobi Hass Quartet** at 6:30 p.m., the **Guy Mintus Trio** at 8:15 p.m. and **Anat Cohen Quartet** at 10 p.m. Wednesday, March 18; admission $20 for all three. www.torontojazz.com

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Names in the News

Ottawa professor-writer **Seymour Mayne**'s 2012 short-story collection *The Old Blue Couch and Other Stories* has been translated into French as *Le vieux canape bleu et autres recits*. The new edition appeared in Quebec recently and is being released in France this month. The publisher is Memoire Dencrier.

Seymour Mayne

• • •

Arts in Brief

• The **WEL Group Players** present hilarious impersonations of **Liza Minnelli**, **Carmen Miranda** and more in a Purim musical variety show, with kosher refreshments and prizes for costumes. $8. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, March 5, 1:30 to 3 p.m. (Doors open 1 p.m.)

• Opera educator **Iain Scott** continues his four-part series on "Opera and Shakespeare." Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays, March 9, 23 and 30, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Drop-in, $18.

• The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Tinghir-Jerusalem: Echoes From the Mellah*, directed by **Kamal Hachkar** with guest speaker **Yigal S. Nizri**. The film follows Hachkar's personal journey as he explores the history of Jewish Berbers in Morocco. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, March 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

• Toronto musician **Charles Heller** is planning to record a CD of his songs based on the Yiddish poetry of **Shimen Nepom**, who managed to publish several volumes of poems as he worked as a Toronto streetcar conductor in the 1930s. Heller's online Kickstarter campaign may be found via the search-phrase "Tramvay Lider."

• • •

At the Galleries

• Toronto artist **Harry Enchin** takes archival photographs of urban street scenes from long ago and, using Photoshop or a similar program, blends them into photographs of the modern street, taken from precisely the same angle. His extraordinary photographic juxtapositions are on view in a new exhibition, *Urban Transformations*, on view in the Carrier Villa Gallery, Columbus Centre, 901 Lawrence Ave. W., March 5 to April 6. Opening reception, Thursday, March 5, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. www.carriergallery.com

• Artist **Romi Samuels** was born in South Africa and immigrated to Canada in 2000. Her canvases reflect the colourful and poignant images of post-apartheid South Africa. Peter Mackendrick Gallery, The Barns, 601 Christie St. Opens Saturday, March 7, 8 p.m.; also on view Sunday, March 8, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• The Miles Nadal JCC Gallery presents its 10th Anniversary Exhibition featuring works by **Rob Croxford**, **Bernice Eisenstein**, **Roman Elinson**, **Aaron Vincent Elkaim**, **Harry Enchin**, **Irit Epstein**, **Mark Loren Freedman**, **Rafael Goldchain**, **Shelly Grimson**, **Myriam Nafte**, **Sheree Rasmussen**, **Jason Schwartz**, **Esther Simmonds-MacAdam**, **Judy Singer**, **Harry Tiefenbach** and **David Trautrimas**. Opening reception, March 12, 7 to 9 p.m.; continues to April 6.

• The Paris art auction house Ader Nordmann presents a sale of rare antique Jewish ritual objects from the collection of **Norman P. Schenker** (born 1912), a medical doctor, film producer, ardent Zionist and honorary fellow of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Scheduled for April 22, the sale is pegged to take in an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 euros (about $280,000 to $423,000 Cdn). www.ader-paris.fr

• • •

Out of Town

Neruda Arts presents cantorial artist **Aviva Chernick**, lead singer of the group **Jaffa Road**, performing work from *When I Arrived You Were Already There*, her project of original devotional songs. $25, $20, $15, $10. The Jazz Room, Huether Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo, Ont. March 19, 8 p.m. www.nerudaarts.ca/ events/aviva ■

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The Board of Directors and the staff of Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University deeply mourn the passing of

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Dov served as the Executive Vice President and CEO of CFBIU for 12 years. His dedication and passion to Bar-Ilan University, the State of Israel, and the Jewish people will always be remembered.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to his wife, Elana, his children, Neal and Jillian, and his entire family.

May his memory be for a *blessing*.

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The Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation and Shaare Zedek Medical Center mourns the passing of our dear friend, **DOV ALTMAN** ז"ל.

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Female comics address stigma with period podcast

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Toronto comedians Natalie Norman, left, and Jess Beaulieu co-host a weekly podcast on periods.
JEN GRANTHAM PHOTO

When Natalie Norman, 28, first started doing stand-up four years ago, another female comedian gave her what was meant to be well-intentioned advice: don't talk about your period on stage.

Norman, a Toronto native and veteran of the Young Judaea summer camp system, said she found the remark "extremely offensive."

Soon after, she befriended Jess Beaulieu, another female comic, also 28, who Norman said she knew to be "a very political, opinionated, feminist woman."

They got to talking about the constraints of operating in what many female comics hold is a "man's game" and the pervasive myth that female comedians only make jokes about their periods.

"It's this ongoing theory held by dudes [in the comedy scene]," Beaulieu said, one that causes many female comedians to avoid the subject outright, fearful of fueling the stereotype.

"It isn't true at all," she noted, "but if it were, there would be no problem with that... Women being told we aren't permitted to touch certain subjects, especially in relation to our bodies, so as not to offend men. That's oppression."

She stressed that the falsehood stems from "a place of disgust toward the female anatomy," adding, "Not all women menstruate, but a lot do, and it's a pretty big life experience."

In 2013, Norman decided to address the stigma head on.

"I was like, fuck this, I'm going to do a comedy show that's *all about* periods," she said.

She teamed up with another comic to produce a live show featuring female comedians sharing jokes and stories about their periods.

Called *Stories from the Red Tent*, its stated purpose was to defy the cultural silence surrounding menstruation.

"People really seemed to connect with the jokes," Beaulieu, who performed in it, said.

Emboldened by the positive reception, Norman and Beaulieu decided to develop a weekly podcast devoted exclusively to the subject of menstruation.

And so, *The Crimson Wave*, a 45-minute podcast, available on iTunes, was born.

Running for a little more than a year now, each episode features Beaulieu and Norman interviewing a guest, generally another female comedian, about her experience of menstruation.

They ask about things like first periods, familial advice, regularity and consistency of flow, birth control, whether the guest uses tampons, pads or a menstrual cup, cramps, pre-menstrual syndrome, childbirth and whether the guest engages in sexual activity during her period.

They often veer into broader discussions of feminism, female sexuality, health care access, mental health and women's experiences of their bodies within a patriarchal society.

Norman and Beaulieu are frank and funny, bantering and laughing easily with their guests, but they're also highly compassionate.

"Guests often tell us stories they've never told anyone else," Norman said.

In one episode, a comedian recounts the trauma of getting her first period in a school classroom. Another talks about the discomfort of getting her period four years after her twin sister, and another recalls contending with menstruation as an adolescent in an all-male household.

Guests frequently express how liberating – cathartic, even – it is to discuss something so culturally suppressed. Some have gone on to write period jokes into their comedy acts.

Feedback for *The Crimson Wave* has been largely positive, the women say, but last fall, they entered a CBC competition called Comedy Coup, to develop a television pilot (they made it to the second round), and a video they posted online, featuring them discussing ways to use menstrual blood around the house, garnered criticism.

"People called us gross, said they wanted to throw up," Norman said. "I think it's strange that when it's menstrual blood, people are grossed out, but if it's a body being chopped up and dragged across the screen, like in so many movies, everyone's fine with that."

Beaulieu emphasized the double-edged sword of publicly addressing menstruation, both within comedy and generally. When a woman acknowledges her period, she said, she's regarded by patriarchal society as weak or hyper-emotional, while pretending it doesn't exist reinforces the notion it's shameful.

"It's ridiculous that women are looked upon as weak for feeling the effects of something biological, which has existed since the dawn of time," she said.

Norman and Beaulieu are determined to continue challenging the menstruation taboo, and say they've begun to see some change.

"I think women in general, and specifically comedians, are becoming more comfortable sharing stories about their bodies and expressing opinions in relation to menstruation," Beaulieu said. "We are pushing back against the patriarchy, and I couldn't be happier." ■

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NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at 750 Spadina Avenue in Room 318, on the 30th day of March at 8:00 o'clock in the evening to:

a) Accept as Members of the Corporation those Members listed in good standing tabled and delivered by the Secretary of the Corporation.
b) Elect its Directors.
c) Approve the Financial Statements for the Corporation for the year ended August 31, 2014.
d) Appoint auditors and authorize the Directors to fix their remuneration.
e) Ratify and approve all the acts, proceedings, transactions, commitments, contracts entered into, and undertakings given by or on behalf of the Corporation by the Board of Directors from the date of the last Annual General Meeting to the date hereof.
f) Transact such further and other business as may be properly brought before the meeting or any adjournments thereof.

Members of the Corporation may be nominated by written petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) persons, who are members and eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. The petitions must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee and must be received by the Chairman of the Nominations Committee at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Annual Meeting, after which time no further nominations shall be accepted.

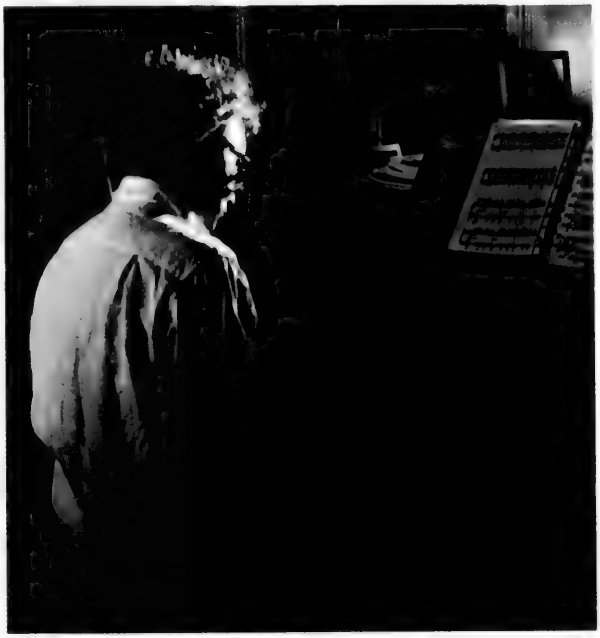
Proxy forms for those unable to attend the meeting may be obtained from the Business Office of the Corporation during business hours.

DATED the 28th day of February, 2015
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Jodi Shanoff, *Secretary*

UJA Federation
United Way

Acclaimed songwriter talks about growing up with dyslexia

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN



Marc Jordan at the piano. KATHERINE HOLLAND PHOTO

Songwriter Marc Jordan, who has penned songs for Rod Stewart, Joe Cocker, Diana Ross, Cher and Josh Groban, had a childhood secret that was a source of shame and pain for him when he was growing up and into adulthood.

A bright kid, he had trouble reading and writing and didn't know why. Jordan, now 67, was in the school system before awareness of dyslexia was widespread. It's an inherited condition that makes it difficult to recognize and comprehend written words.

"I didn't know what it was. Nobody knew," he said on the phone from Los Angeles, where he was writing songs for Stewart's new album.

Jordan said he was frustrated in school and grew to dislike it. "I always sat at the back of the class and never put my hand up. My teachers got the message I didn't want to work."

He spent hours doing homework and still failed his tests. Luckily, his parents believed in him. "They knew I was smart," Jordan said.

He was acting out and getting into trouble in his last couple of years at Jarvis Collegiate in Toronto, when his parents sent him to the Hincks Institute, a children's mental health centre, for testing.

"They gave me a number of tests where I scored high when they were conceptual and visual," Jordan said. "Then I knew something was wrong with how I was processing information."

In the end, though, Jordan said his dyslexia was a kind of blessing. Raised in a musical family – his father was the singer Charles Jordan, a part-time cantor at Holy Blossom Temple – he was enrolled for piano lessons. The lessons were a struggle for him because when he tried to read music, the notes swam around on the page in front of him. But he figured out how to do his homework, to learn a piece for the next lesson, without reading music.

"I had a trick," Jordan recalled. He explained that he would ask his teacher to play the piece at the end of the lesson. "I would run home and try to remember it. So I developed a good ear for music."

Inspired by Bob Dylan and music he heard on the radio – "that was my school," Jordan said – he gravitated to popular music, where playing by ear is commonplace.

Jordan's dyslexia remained undiagnosed for many years, though, until about 15 years ago. Tests given to his daughter, Zoe, then eight or nine years old, determined that she had dyslexia. And then Jordan realized he had it, too.

"Kids with dyslexia learn in a different way and have to be allowed to learn in a different way," he said.

Jordan wants to help young people with dyslexia learn, and is looking to partner with an organization. He now takes the view that dyslexia isn't a learning disability, but rather a "different way of processing information. It's not a deficit or handicap," he said. In fact, people with dyslexia, like Jordan, are often creative, perhaps because of the unique way they process information, thinking mainly in pictures instead of in words.

Jordan, who is based in Toronto, has released 14 albums of his own, many of them critically acclaimed, and he's written 200 songs for a long list of singers, including international and Canadian stars. His songs have been featured on some 35 million records.

Jordan said that lately people have been asking him to perform songs from his archive. Why hasn't he done it before? "It never came to me," he said modestly.

So he decided to embark on his Narcissist's Guide to Songwriting Tour 2015-16. His sets will include *Rhythm of My Heart*, a No. 1 hit for Stewart; *Soul on Soul*, recorded by Stewart and Jordan's wife, Amy Sky; *Pieces of Ice*, which was first covered by Diana Ross; *Fall From Grace*, a big hit for Amanda Marshall, and *Marina Del Rey*, one of Jordan's most popular songs. He'll be sharing stories about some of the artists he's worked with, too. ■

Jordan's tour stops at the Aeolian Hall, in London, Ont., on March 12; LIVEact Theatre, in Whitby, Ont., March 13; The Neat, Burnstown (near Ottawa), March 14, and the Jazz Bistro, Toronto, March 27 and 28. He'll be backed by Dave Restivo on piano, Mark Lalama on keyboards, Russ Boswell on bass and Kevan McKenzie on drums. For more information, visit www.marcjordan.com.

Shining a clearer light on Herzl

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Some historians provide such sharp perspective and clear insight, the reader feels as if he has seen the world from a high mountain through haze-free light and cloudless sky. Ideas and new notions fill the foreground. Crisp details come alive despite the distance of time. Such is the skill of Shlomo Avineri of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. And such is the feeling he imparts to his readers in *Herzl's Vision* (BlueBridge 2014).

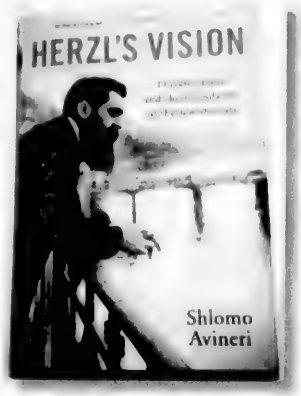
Theodor Herzl is perhaps the pre-eminent, iconic figure of modern, political Zionism. The story of his life has been well chronicled. And yet, Avineri has found a new way to deepen our understanding of modern Zionism's most famous advocate.

In *Herzl's Vision*, Avineri writes about the evolution of Herzl's thinking, primarily during the nine-year period when the young, Vienna-based journalist stepped emphatically, seemingly from nowhere, onto centre stage of world diplomacy. How did he get there? Avineri tells us.

The aim of his book, Avineri writes, is to "transform the canonical image of the larger-than-life person into a real, living human being." The book "tries to focus mainly on Herzl's intellectual and spiritual odyssey and to bring out his own doubts, false starts and wrong turns as well as his evident achievements. It is this route that turned Herzl from a private and marginal individual into a Jewish political leader and transformed Zionism from an esoteric, if not cranky idea, into a player on the international scene. For Herzl, this was also a process of self-discovery and self-education."

Avineri's vast experience as a historian, teacher, political scientist and high-level public servant are in full evidence throughout the work. He has mined the rich vein of some 1,500 pages of Herzl's hand-written diary, along with Herzl's published works, to uncover new insights about the man.

Writing deftly and concisely, Avineri dives into the deep end of Herzl's churning mind and stirring Jewish heart. Herzl was appalled at the level of violence of parliamentary life in France, at the racially based theories of anti-Semitism being passed off as science in enlightened Austria and Hungary, at the ubiquitous scapegoating of the Jew throughout Europe and of the sheer physical peril faced by many Jews of eastern Europe at the turn of the last century.



Herzl's Vision: Theodor Herzl and the Foundation of the Jewish State
Shlomo Avineri, translated by Haim Watzman
BlueBridge (2014)

The plight of the Jews of Europe worried Herzl constantly. He describes this worry in his diary: "As the years went on, the question bored into me and gnawed at me, tormented me... In fact, I kept coming back to it whenever my own personal experience – joys and sorrows – permitted me to rise to broader considerations... The Jewish question naturally lurked for me around every turn and corner."

It was not – as is commonly thought – the trial of Alfred Dreyfus that crystallized for Herzl the driving obsession to safeguard the Jewish People. Rather, as Avineri points out, it was "Herzl's long analysis of the failure of emancipation and the rise of German and Austrian anti-Semitism, that led him to his radical conclusions."

Avineri goes into great detail explaining Herzl's two seminal works, *The Jewish State*, published in 1895, and *Altneuland*, in 1902. These works had a profoundly transformative impact upon the Jewish world. Avineri excerpts liberally from both works, provides a full précis of their key messages, and discusses their substantive and literary failings and strengths. More importantly, he assesses the works based upon their reach into a far-off, still imaginary Jewish future.

It was especially the appearance of *The Jewish State* that galvanized hopes among Jews in eastern and western Europe and in North Africa. A new sovereign era for Jews, they believed, was dawning over the next horizon.

Avineri painstakingly describes Herzl's exhausting activism on behalf of the establishment of a Jewish state. He founded the World Zionist Organization, convened the famous annual conferences, lobbied Jewish philanthropists, met with industrialists and businessmen, and petitioned European government officials, heads of state, emperors and even the Pope.

He represented no government, and yet every leader with whom he met, treated him as the spokesperson for the Jewish People. By virtue of the tirelessness and unwavering focus of his effort, Herzl became a "world-historical figure." Singlehandedly, he placed the Zionist cause on the agenda of European diplomatic discourse.

According to Avineri, Herzl never lost hope in his cause, despite the many setbacks. For example, after a discouraging session with Baron de Hirsch of Paris, "another, more realistic man would have given up. Another man, less determined, might have despaired. But Herzl responded differently." After the disastrous decision to place the Uganda option on the agenda of the Sixth Zionist Conference in 1903, the resultant rift with the delegates from Russia and the meek attempts to patch up their differences, Herzl "did not give up. He set out in January 1904 for a meeting in Rome with the king of Italy. During this trip, he also obtained an unplanned audience with the Pope."

But Herzl's remorselessly gruelling schedule took its toll. He died on July 3, 1904, at the age of 44. Tens of thousands attended his funeral in Vienna. Tens of thousands more mourned him throughout the Jewish world.

Early on in his campaign for a Jewish homeland, Herzl described his hope of a national home for the Jewish People as a "work of infinite grandeur." Indeed it was. Indeed it still is.

Though the world is reluctant to admit this fact, we can see its truth in the full light of the more than 100 years that have elapsed since the publication of *The Jewish State* in 1895.

To be sure, the State of Israel, as Herzl had foreseen, is flawed and imperfect. It strives to be better, but its attention and resources have been diverted from the very first moment of its national life.

But, like Theodor Herzl, the people of Israel do not give up. They have not yet lost their hope that they will succeed in securing and improving their country for the sake of all its inhabitants. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 5, 2015

Ready for a lifestyle change?

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Natural foods chef Carolyn Cohen and certified holistic nutritionist Krissy Smith are among Toronto's busiest experts in the culinary world.

Cohen has owned and operated Delicious Dish Cooking School for the past 14 years. Smith has over half a decade of experience working with Dr. Joey Shulman of the Shulman Clinic and in her own practice, Eat, Play, Live Nutrition.

Both women have brought their long-standing passion for health, wellness and tasty food together and created a new venture: Delicious Nutrition, a holistic nutrition cooking school.

"Food should energize and enhance your life. We are all about helping you find that balance. Our mission is to educate and help you learn the how-why-when-and-what to eat, to keep you healthy for life," said Smith.

"Life is changing. We need to focus on cooking differently, and the best way to do that is to offer our clients healthy recipes and holistically based nutrition geared for the entire family," said Cohen.

Delicious Nutrition offers seasonal programs for people who want to improve their health without sacrificing tasty food in the process.

Recently, students came out to Delicious Nutrition's two-day Eating Clean Workshop held at Nella Cucina Kitchen Studio.

Participants learned about nutritionally sound, balanced and easy-to-follow meal planning, experienced live cooking demos, and were given tips and tastings.

"People [went] home armed with the better part of 50 recipes on which they can live," said Cohen.

Delicious Nutrition provided this recipe that was featured in the Eating Clean Workshop.

Muffin Tin Frittata

Why your body will love this: the complete protein found in eggs combined with detoxifying cauliflower and fibre-rich navy beans makes this a super filling meal. Basil, chives and parsley offer green vitamin goodness and tons of flavour.

- ❑ 8 oz. or 2 cups of cauliflower florets
- ❑ 1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- ❑ 1 onion, sliced thinly
- ❑ 2 cups frozen greens – spinach, kale, rapini
- ❑ 1/2 cup canned white beans, rinsed and drained
- ❑ 2 tbsp. chopped sun-dried tomatoes, packed in oil, drained and patted dry (about 2-3 tomato pieces)
- ❑ 1/2 cup parsley leaves, finely chopped
- ❑ 20 chives, finely chopped
- ❑ 10 basil leaves, finely chopped
- ❑ 8 large eggs
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- ❑ cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350. Heat a small pot of water and bring it to a boil. Add cauliflower and cook until soft, about 5-7 minutes, drain and set aside.

In the meantime, in a large fry pan, heat the olive oil. Cook onion until soft, add the frozen kale and cooked cauliflower, stir to coat and cook until the kale has defrosted. Turn heat off.

Add the white bean, the chopped sun-dried tomatoes and all the herbs and toss to coat. Let cool.

Spray a 12-cup muffin tin well with non-stick spray.

Mix together the 8 eggs, add a couple of tbsp. of water and salt, whisk until frothy. Add cooked vegetable mixture to the eggs and mix well. Pour the mixture evenly into the 12-cup muffin cups – they will overflow a little. Alternatively, you can evenly distribute the veggies in each muffin cup and pour the eggs over the veggies. Cook for 30-35 minutes.

Remove from oven, let sit for about 10 minutes and, using a knife, loosen the frittata cups and remove to cool on a rack. Makes 12 frittata cups, 2 per serving. They will last 2-3 days in the fridge or they freeze well. ■

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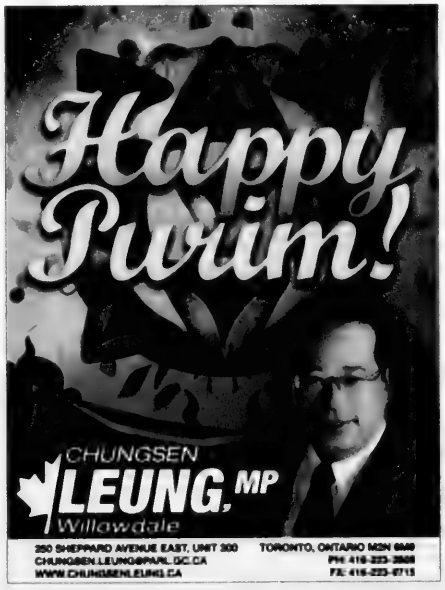

IN MEMORIAM

Dov Altman ז"ל

The Officers, Board and staff of the American Friends of Bar-Ilan University (AFBIU) note with profound sadness the passing of Dov Altman, the beloved Executive Vice President of the Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University.

All of us who were privileged to know Dov were inspired by his tremendous commitment to the State of Israel, its people and institutions. We will always remember his wonderful sense of humor, compassionate personality and deep devotion to his family, friends and colleagues.

We extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Elana, children Neal and Jillian, and the entire family.

May Dov's memory be for a blessing.

Alan Zekelman, Chairman
Ronnie Stern, President

American Friends of Bar-Ilan University

Painting of Abraham and Isaac restored at MMFA

CJN STAFF

The valuable 17th-century painting *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* is now on public display by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) after 500 hours of painstaking restoration.

The masterpiece by the French Old Master Valentin de Boulogne, dated 1630-31, a treasure that had been hidden for decades in the MMFA's collections, has been brought back to its original glory with funding from Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

Abraham Sacrificing Isaac is on view in the MMFA's Galleries of European Art. The large-scale work will be permanently and prominently displayed at the Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavilion for Peace, now under construction and slated to open late next year.

Rendered in a rich chiaroscuro and painted in Rome, *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* depicts the biblical Isaac as a boy passively accepting his fate at the hands of his father Abraham just as a descending angel intervenes.

Because of its deteriorated condition, the painting has not appeared in temporary or travelling exhibitions for 40 years, the MMFA said. It was a gift from Lord Strathcona and his family. The peer, born Donald Alexander Smith, made his fortune building railroads across Canada in the 19th century. He is best known for driving the last spike in the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The Bank of America Merrill Lynch's Art Conservation Project provides grants to museums around the world to conserve historically or culturally significant works of art.

Restoration was urgently needed to save the painting, an oil on canvas measuring about 150 by 185 centimetres (about 5 by 6 feet).

The project was led by Richard Gagnier, head of the MMFA's conservation department, over 11 months.

It included scientific analysis to determine whether the work was left unfinished or was severely abraded in certain areas. This was performed at the Canadian Conservation Institute using the latest X-ray and other technology.

The restoration not only reveals the painting's original splendour, but provides insight into the artist's technique and late career.

These significant discoveries will be the subject of a scholarly article being done by Hilliard Goldfarb, the MMFA's associate chief curator and curator of Old Masters.

A Valentin microsite on the MMFA's website shows the major steps in the restoration process, as well as including a documentary about the painting's 400-year history. www.mbam.qc.ca/en/ ■

***Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* by the 17th-century master Valentin de Boulogne has been restored and is on view at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.**

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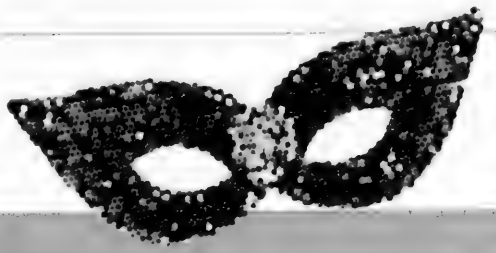
What's New

MARCH 5 - MARCH 12



by Lila Sarick

Thursday, March 5

PURIM FUN
Jewish Russian Community Centre holds a Megillah reading at 4:30 p.m., banquet at 5:30 p.m., Sephardic Kehila Centre, 7026 Bathurst St. For tickets, 416-222-7105.

THE SONGS OF PESACH
Learn the songs of Pesach, March 5, 12 and 26, 7:15 p.m. at Pride of Israel Synagogue.

Friday, March 6

MEGILLAH FOR ADULTS
Rabbi Denise Handlarski discusses "Sex and violence in the Megillah," with the Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, 7:30 p.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Rd. 416-385-3910.

CELEBRATING OUR OWN
A special evening featuring music composed by choir director **Judy Adelman Gershon**, **Cantor Charles Osborne**, composer-in-residence **Ben Steinberg** will be held at 8 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. 416-449-3880.

Saturday, March 7

CAMP SOLELIM'S 50th
Canadian Young Judaea celebrates the 50th anniversary of Camp Solelim at the Warehouse. For tickets, www.campsolelim.ca

TRIVIA AND AUCTION
Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a trivia and silent auction night, 8 p.m. For tickets, trivia@shaarshalom.ca

JAZZ HAVDALAH & ART EXHIBIT
Steve Koven, David Wall and **Marilyn Lerner** perform at Beth Torah Congregation's jazz Havdalah and art exhibit, 7 p.m. $45/$54. For tickets, 416-782-4495.

TORAH STUDY
Allen Cooper leads the Torah study at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of March 19 is March 9. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Special people, big and little

At Associated Hebrew Schools Kamin campus, Grade 1 students celebrated the 100th day of school by displaying their poster of 100 special people in their lives.

Sunday, March 8

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
- Na'amat Canada, with the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims and Women's Intercultural Network, celebrate women, 1:30 p.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. $10/$15. 416-636-5425.
- United Jewish People's Order marks International Women's Day with a concert featuring Gathering Time, a folk harmony trio, 7 p.m., Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. $15/$20. For tickets, 416-789-5502.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH
Deborah Staiman presents the "Life and music of Molly Picon," 2 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP **Sandy**, 416-458-1440 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca

LIMMUD TORONTO
Enjoy a full day of Jewish learning with over 85 presenters at Limmud Toronto, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Alliance Francaise, 24 Spadina Rd. Free programming for kids 4-12. Register at www.limmud.ca

VENDORS MARKET & RAFFLE
Vendors market, silent auction will be held 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 15 Hove St. Funds raised go to B'nai Brith Canada and Uptown Chabad. Free admission.

PURIM FUN
Temple Har Zion holds a Purim carnival, 10 a.m.-noon.

Beth Emeth Synagogue presents *Les Miz Gilla, according to Judge Judy*, 1:30 p.m., followed by a Purim carnival. For tickets, 416-633-3838.

Monday, March 9

MENDEL BEILIS
Mordechai Ben-Dat discusses "Thinking about Mendel Beilis," 8 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

CRYPTO-JEWS
Rabbi Stephen Leon discusses "Crypto Jewish history, the current story," 7:15 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam.

Tuesday, March 10

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY
Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows *Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy*, with introduction by **Larry Anklewicz**, 2 p.m., 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433. $5.

ISRAELI STAMP CLUB
Israeli Stamp Club discusses "Medicine and health through Israel philately," 7 p.m., Antibes Community Centre, 140 Antibes Dr. 416-226-2050.

MODERN VISION FOR HEALTH CARE
Dr. Reuben Devlin and **Dr. John Hagen** discuss Humber River Hospital, "North America's first fully digitalized hospital," 7 p.m. at Temple Sinai.

Wed., March 11

ISRAEL, THE MIDDLE EAST, THE WEST
Pulitzer-prize winner **Bret Stephens** discusses "Israel, the Middle East and the West," 7:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue.

Thursday, March 12

ETHICS IN A TIME OF TERRORISM
Rabbi Moshe Meirovich presents a 3-part lecture series on "Jewish legal ethics in a time of terrorism," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PEACE THROUGH MUSIC
The Diwan Saz Interfaith Ensemble performs as part of the Spotlight on Israeli Culture, 8 p.m., Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr. $25/$30. For tickets, 416-646-4677.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
- Reena is looking for a male volunteer to participate in social activities with a young adult male. Call **Millie Chadwick,** 905-889-2690, ext. 2112.
- Circle of Care needs volunteers to deliver meals to Holocaust survivors. **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext. 496.
- Baycrest is looking for volunteers (over 13) to assist with palliative care, meals and special events. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

KOSHER COOKING DEMO
Atzmaut chapter of Hadassah WIZO holds a kosher cooking demonstration and wine tasting, with chef **Gadi Braudi,** March 15, 1-4 p.m., Kehillat Shaarei Torah Synagogue. $36. 416-446-1977.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com
- Let's Be Blunt: An evening forum for parents on teens and drug use, March 24, 7:30 p.m.
- Looking Ahead: A 6-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals, starts March 26, 7 p.m.
- Widow/Widower under 65: A 6-session group for people under 65 who have recently lost a spouse, starts March 31, 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800 and ask for intake.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526, or colinb@mnjcc.org
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Purim Party and Shpiel with the WEL Group Players, March 5, 1 p.m. $8. **Donald Stuss** discusses "The amazing plastic brain," March 12, 1:30 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, March 18; Spa day, facials, manicures, barber, hairdresser, March 12, 10 a.m.
- **Circle of Care.** Free 5-week stress management workshop, starting March 5, 1-2:30 p.m. Call **Revital Shuster** 416-635-2900, ext. 463.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. March 9, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Great Jewish painters of the 20th century," 1 p.m.; March 10, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Jewish stars of the Ballet Russes," 10 a.m.; March 11, Post-Purim Persian party, 1-2:30 p.m.; March 12 lecture on "Arthritis and feet," 1:30 p.m.
- **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. March 11, **Dr. Mortimer Mamelak** discusses "How to get a good night's sleep," 1:30 p.m.; March 25, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.
- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com
- Gourmet hamantashen workshop for children over 2 with an adult, March 8, 11 a.m.
- Illustrate the Haggadah, a workshop for children 5-12 years with a parent, March 29, 1-4 p.m. Ext. 4235.
- **Galya Sarna** presents "My Israeli-style favourite dishes with a French twist," March 19, 6:30 p.m.
- Ceramics classes start the week of April 12.
- Portrait sculpture with **Kathryn Chelin,** April 13-June 15, 7-9 p.m.
- Acrylic painting with **Leon Soriano,** April 14-June 16, 1:45 p.m.
- Moving meditation, March 12-April 23, 10:30 a.m.
- Dance and yoga for young adults with an intellectual disability, April 14-June 16, 6:15 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org
- Spring registration for programs opened for members March 4, opens for non-members March 11.
- *Creating Futures: threads of hope for African grandmothers* is in the gallery until March 9.
- **Iain Scott** teaches a course on "Opera and Shakespeare," March 9, 23, 30, 1:30 p.m.
- **Annie Matan** explores Purim with improv games and storytelling, ages 18+, March 5, 11 a.m.
- Voices of power, grandmothers creating the future: **Michele Landsberg** is among the speakers honouring Canadian and African grandmothers committed to social justice. March 8, 2 p.m. Al Green Theatre. www.algreentheatre.ca. $20.
- **Shelly Christensen** discusses inclusion, for community agencies, synagogue professionals and volunteers, 8:30 a.m.-noon, March 11. RSVP sdennis@ujafed.org
- Invitation to Dance: film, panel and mixed abilities dance event, March 22. Film 2-4 p.m.; dance 4-6 p.m.
- Shabbat family party (ages 0-4 with an adult), Fridays at 11:15 a.m. Shabbat club (ages 3-5), Fridays 12:30 p.m. Ext. 388.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in community-building and entrepreneurship. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.
- Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs presents "How to talk to our children about issues facing Israel and the Jews," March 24, 7 p.m.
- Diwan Saz Interfaith Ensemble holds a master class workshop, March 11, 6 p.m., panel discussion 8 p.m. Email jeff@ashkenaz.ca
- Watch *Hearts of Tango*, about the Toronto tango scene, March 28, 7:30 p.m.
- Single and over 50? Enjoy an evening of live entertainment March 14, 7:30 p.m.
- **Dr. Joey Shulman** discusses "Balance hormones, boost energy and burn fat naturally," April 16, 7 p.m.
- Paint your family history, April 17-June 19, 1-4 p.m.
- Learn to produce large floral artworks, April 14-June 16, 1-4 p.m.
- Fundamentals of drawing and painting, April 15- June 17, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.
- Learn to play bridge or mah-jong, classes start the week of April 12. ■

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

Jewish mother says she'll accept son's new career path

DOREEN KUGEL
NOT SO SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A Jewish mother of three adult children says she will probably be OK, at some point, with her youngest son's decision to pursue a career in the arts.

Toronto resident Elaine Adelson, 56, told *The CJN* she was "blown away" when her son Joshua, 31, informed the family at a dinner last month that he had decided to leave his full-time job at an accounting firm and follow his "life-long dream" of working as a set designer on small-scale theatre productions.

"I just couldn't understand it," said Adelson, who also has a 35-year-old son – a pediatrician – and a 33-year-old daughter – a corporate lawyer at a "very respectable firm."

"Why would you leave a good, stable job to run away and try to be an artist?" Adelson asked. "You want to be an artist? Go paint a picture in your bedroom. No one's stopping you from painting pictures."

Joshua, who clarified that he is not embarking on a career as a painter, explained by phone that he has long been unhappy working as an accountant.

"I'm 31. If I don't make a change now, I'm going to wake up and be, like, 50."

Having worked as a volunteer set designer for years for his university theatre society, summer camp and, more recently, for a local community theatre company, he says he's ready to make set design a full-time occupation and has already started to network in the field.

His savings should last him at least a year, he figures, and after that, if he hasn't landed a steady gig as a set designer, he's willing to work in retail, at least for a little while.

"Maybe don't mention that part to my mother?" he added, after a moment's pause.

"His father and I sent him to all the best schools," Adelson said. "This is how he thanks us? His brother and sister never did anything like this."

Upon his wife's insistence that he "Say something," Joshua's father Herb, 59, a dermatologist, remarked, "When I was his age, I had three kids, a wife and a mortgage."

He then lapsed into a disgruntled silence and referred all subsequent questions to his wife.

> *Why would you leave a good stable job to run away and try to be an artist?*

Joshua's older brother, Zachary, who Adelson emphasized is married to another doctor, with whom he has two "gorgeous" boys, said that he was, upon hearing Joshua's news, somewhat, but not totally, surprised.

"I guess Josh has always been into artsy stuff," Zachary said reflectively.

"He used to make us go see the plays he worked on and they were intense, man."

Joshua and Zachary's sister, Leora, said she is grateful to her younger brother for "taking the heat off of [her], for a bit."

"I'm over 30, and I'm still single," she told *The CJN* on a recent visit to her parents' home. "It's nice to hear people talking about something other than my eggs, for once."

"I just don't see why she can't try JDate," shouted her mother, who had been surreptitiously listening from the other room.

In a subsequent interview, Adelson conceded that she thinks she will, eventually, get used to the idea of her son leaving accounting for a job that's "not lucrative, secure or esteemed – Is it even a job?" and continued: "Am I happy? I'm not happy. It's not my choice, but what can I do? Does anybody ask me what I think?"

She also noted that Joshua has recently started dating a "nice Jewish girl – very pretty. Good family," adding that "hopefully, she won't leave him over this."

Joshua – whose volunteer theatre experience has included work on the set of an amateur adaptation of Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* and an avant-garde reimagining of Chaim Potok's *The Chosen* – said he hopes his family will eventually come to understand his decision, or at the very least leave him alone.

"Honestly, I just want everyone to get off my back." ■

Family Moments

Chloe & Daniel are engaged! Parents: Debbie Kiez & Gil Gross, Orit & Elks Ortan. Grandparents: Miriam Steindler, Miriam & Imre Grosz, Leona & Ned Kiez.

Mazel tov Mark & Esther Goldenberg on your 65th wedding anniversary! With love, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Samara Pisarek announces the birth of her brother Nathan Avram, Jan. 22. Parents, David & Rosalee, grandparents, Irving & Hilda Pisarek, Anna Korolnek, Rabbi Selig Korolnek.

Happy 95th birthday Rebeca Luika from your son Eduardo and his wife, daughters and grandchildren, the governor general, prime minister and many more dignitaries.

Odette & Norman Fox of Montreal and Necha & Sol Jakubowicz of Toronto are thrilled to announce the engagement of their children Valerie & Allan.

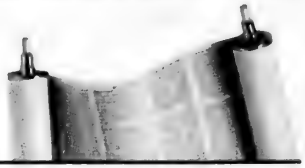
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Ki Tisa | Exodus 30:11 - 34:35



Rabbi Aaron Katchen says mishloach manot offer a chance at connection
Rabbi Michal Shekel warns against confusing information with intimacy
Rabbi Howard Morrison compares and contrast Purim and Yom Kippur

Aaron Katchen

"As the days when the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month that was reversed for them from grief to joy and from mourning to a festive day; to make them days of feasting and joy, and sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:22).

What do veal, wine, dates, fine flour, spicy peppers and ginger have in common? Besides the start of a luxurious meal, they are the items passed around as part of mishloach manot (sending portions to one another) in the Talmud, which is highlighted in three stories. In those stories, we have the communal leader giving haute cuisine to an impoverished scholar, we have the rosh yeshiva giving sweet gifts based on his humble beginnings, and we have the recipient sending back spicy food as a "sharp" reply. The last instance concerns two poor people who share their Purim meal as their exchange. From these examples, what does the Talmud wish to illuminate regarding this mitzvah?

The 19th-century chassidic master, the Sefat Emet, explains that the purpose of mishloach manot is to bring one to *ohev yisrael*, a love of fellow Jews, and to build a sense of unity and community. Gift exchanges will often miss the mark when given in the abstract. They risk ego on one side ("Look at how wonderful a gift I am giving.") or anonymity on the other (if everyone gets an orange and a grape juice). Taking these two ideas in tandem, I am given the opportunity every year to consider using mishloach manot to connect/reconnect with someone who matters to me by offering a personalized gift, and to dedicate my gift giving to establish a new relationship and use it as a way to build my community bigger and stronger.

Wishing everyone a Chag Purim Samayach! ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Michal Shekel

Concealment is at the heart of Purim. We cite Deuteronomy 31:18 to explain why God's name is absent from the Megillah: "I will keep My countenance hidden on that day" (*haster astir*), the Hebrew also serving as a pun on "Esther." Our lesson from this verse is that the Divine presence is hidden, not absent.

God's hidden face is also a crucial factor in Ki Tisa. The Golden Calf was created because the people needed some representation of the Divine: it is difficult to relate to the unseen. After this tragic incident Moses, too, has a crisis of faith and asks to see God's face. He is told that God's goodness will pass before him but it is impossible for a human to see the Divine countenance and live.

Still, Moses' encounters with God are described as *panim el panim*, face to face (Exodus 33:11). The desire for an intimate, close encounter of the Divine kind pervades *Ki Tisa*. The word *panim* (face) occurs more than a dozen times in the parshah. Interestingly, at the end of the parshah, after relaying God's teaching to Israel, Moses dons a veil which he only removes when he speaks with God.

Panim el panim runs counter to what we learn in secular society where intimacy means that everything is revealed. While we still crave that face-to-face encounter, social media, reality TV and the like have created an environment of false intimacy and "TMI," too much information. We mistake information for knowledge and confuse it with intimacy, wrongly assuming that the more we know about someone the greater the intimacy.

Ki Tisa teaches that respecting boundaries is essential for intimate encounters. We cannot know, nor do we need to know, everything about the other – human or Divine. Truly intimate knowledge is a bond created through shared understanding and experience. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis.

Howard Morrison

Purim has many levels of meaning. The letters that comprise the Hebrew word Purim stand for "Pesach, V'Sukkot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Ha'Kippurim, Matan Torah," summarizing the major seasons of the calendar. It's been noted that the fast day, "Yom Ha'Kippurim" (the Day of Atonement) also sounds like "a day like Purim." As a result, many comparisons and contrasts have been offered about the two days. For example, on Yom Kippur, we refrain from such pleasures as eating and drinking. On Purim, we eat and drink during the festive Purim meal. On the eve of Yom Kippur, we eat and drink, then fast on the following day. On the eve of Purim, we fast, then eat and drink on the following day. On Yom Kippur, we remove our masks and display our inner selves before God. On Purim, we don masks and hide our true identities.

While these comparisons are cute and succinct, there is deeper meaning to Purim. For example, in terms of concealment, as exemplified by wearing costumes and even by the absence of God's name in the Megillah, that which is hidden actually becomes revealed. Esther ultimately removes the mask hiding her Jewish identity and reveals her Jewishness to the king, leading to the liberation of our people. Also, while the name of God is absent from the Megillah, we see the role of God between the lines. No wonder we call the text Megillat Esther, which not only means the scroll of Esther, but also, literally, the revealing of that which is hidden.

Yom Kippur and Purim point to contrasts in Jewish behaviour on two days of the year. Ultimately, the rest of the year is found in a lifestyle of moderation between the extremes. Purim also teaches that while we may try to mask our Jewishness and even try to hide from the presence of God, ultimately, we're best served by removing the masks that conceal our Jewishness and accepting the challenges and responsibilities of revealing our true Jewish selves to God and the world around us. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison, mara d'atra, senior rabbi, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue.

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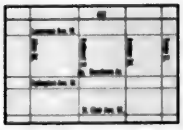

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 5, 2015

Jacob Steinberg: Amazon Jews have rich history

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Toronto-based, Israeli-born Jacob Steinberg, who works in project finance, is the go-to guy for the tiny and isolated Jewish community of Suriname. A small, mostly jungle nation on the northeast shoulder of South America, the former Dutch Guiana is home to no more than 200 Jews whose history traces to the 1630s, when descendants of Jews fled the Spanish Inquisition and came from Holland, Portugal and Italy via Brazil. Steinberg, 65, discovered the oldest continuously existing Jewish community in the Americas, with a rich history and a desire to connect to the outside world. *The CJN* interviewed him prior to his recent talk at Toronto's Lodzer Synagogue.

How did you discover the Jews of Suriname?

About eight years ago, I was working as a financial consultant for a gold mining company in Toronto, and they asked me to go for two weeks to Suriname. I was more interested to go to northern Mali and the mines there, to Timbuktu and this area. But because I speak Dutch, they asked me to go to Suriname. I wasn't keen. I had very low expectations. I came on a Saturday night and walked around the downtown. It blew my mind. It's a UNESCO Heritage city. I had no idea. And it's all old colonial wooden houses, just beautiful. I saw this magnificent building with Hebrew letters. I didn't know that in this hole-in-the-Amazon basin, there were Jews. I came back and saw a lady painting the building. I introduced myself. She said her name is Lilly [Duym] and she's the vice-president of the community. She started telling me the story. It was like a fairy tale. I came to learn about the community that is now 375 years old. But the story started [during] the Inquisition… the whole journey, how they started during the 1600s searching for a better life. I stayed for two weeks and became part of the community. The two weeks turned into 2-1/2 years, on and off. I just really love the place, and the company asked me to go again and again. They are totally isolated from the Jewish world. They have no access to anything. They bake their own challahs. They have to import everything including matzah and wine for Passover from New York. It costs a fortune. For me, it was a fascinating story.

What is the Jewish population?

It's maybe 200, but with assimilation and intermarriage, about 130 consider themselves practising Jews.

Do they identify as Sephardi or Ashkenazi?

The community was started by Portuguese Jews. But later on, Ashkenazi Jews joined when they became very successful with plantations. Lots of Jews heard about new wealth in the New World and many moved to Suriname. However, they were forbidden from owning plantations. Only the Portuguese Jews could have plantations. So the Ashkenazi Jews started to live in Paramaribo, the new capital, and they established a community there as traders and merchants. Today, there are two groups, Ashkenazi and Sephardi. Up until 20 years ago, each had its own synagogue and they were not intermarrying. It was a totally segregated community. However, the numbers dwindled to a level that neither could have a minyan for Shabbat. So they merged, and they agreed they would worship according to the Portuguese minhag (tradition). But they continue to practise in what used to be the Ashkenazi synagogue, but with the Portuguese *nusach* [style of service]. They understood that if they kept it Orthodox, they would never have a minyan. So they became liberal. Today, it is egalitarian. But the women still sit on one side, the men on the other.

Jacob Steinberg

Are they in danger of disappearing?

I think so. All the Caribbean Jewish communities are living on borrowed time. The number of Suriname's Jews has never been high. At the peak, around 1737, it was about 1,500 to 2,000 people combined, in Paramaribo and the 17th-century autonomous Jewish colony Jodensavanne. Of them, 800 were in the Jodensavanne. Over the years, the numbers declined, because when Suriname got independence in 1975 from Holland, there was no economic base. There were 500 Jews after independence. Lots of them left – to Holland, Israel, wherever they could go. From 1986 to 1992, there was a civil war. It destroyed everything. So more people left. Over the years, the old have been dying and the young are emigrating or assimilating.

Is there anti-Semitism?

No. The Jews are very well respected. They have always been the backbone of the economy. But over the years, there were so many intermarriages. If a Jewish man married a non-Jew, the wife never converted. So lots of the people in Suriname have Jewish heritage. There is a saying there: "If you shake your family tree, a few Jews will fall." There are lots of streets with Jewish names.

What about relations with Israel?

I was surprised. [Suriname] is one of two countries in the Association of Caribbean States where if you have an Israeli passport, you don't need a visa to visit. Americans and Canadians need visas. Israelis don't. There's also an honorary consul who takes care of consular affairs.

You're the Kulanu co-ordinator for the community. What does that mean?

Kulanu is a U.S.-based organization that tries to help isolated and emerging Jewish communities around the world. When I left Suriname the first time, I said, "I have to do something to help them." I felt there were so many assets they had to maintain: two synagogues, three cemeteries, the Jodensavanne, etc. So I thought of starting a "chai membership." For $18 and up, you could become a member of the synagogue. With friends and people who cared, I put up a website [surinamejewishcommunity.com] that tells the story of the community. So people donated from $18, to $180 for a lifetime membership.

What does the community want from the outside world?

I connected them to other Jewish communities. But nobody else helps, to be honest with you. In New York, there's an Israeli ambassador to the region who comes once in a while to visit. They are totally disconnected from the Jewish world. We decided to make a Taglit-Birthright trip to Israel. It took us three years to arrange, and in 2010 14 kids went to Israel.

Does a rabbi visit?

A rabbi visited around 2000 from the United States. He stayed for about three months and made the first Jewish wedding in 50 years. The community is too small to afford a rabbi, and the rabbis who offer to come are often desperadoes or characters. We are very careful to find out why they're so interested in coming to the Amazon. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
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Where did you put your contribution this year?

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Beware the Mossad's vulture spies

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

After *AFP*'s "news" showed images of Gaza flooding and alleged in a headline that "Gaza village floods after Israel opens dam gates," Britain's *Daily Mail* embellished the yarn by declaring that "Hundreds of Palestinians were left homeless after Israel opens river dam and floods houses... hours before Jewish state's electric company cuts off power in Gaza's major West Bank cities."

Rivers and dams in southern Israel? Gaza's major West Bank cities?

Well, they must be thinking of the lush, verdant oasis containing thousands of rivers and Niagara-like waterfalls pouring into mega hydro dams just next to the Gaza border.

We read all sorts of stories in Arab media about Israeli "atrocities," including widely reported *bubbe mayses* about the effectiveness of the Mossad's animal agents including rats of Judah, high-altitude reconnaissance vultures, dark-op squirrels, strangely kosher pigs, GPS-guided killer sharks and, of course, Stuka-inspired dive pigeons with invisible strings.

Now, close your eyes and imagine this: Mossad vulture spies flying in formation with their vintage aviator trapper caps and goggles over enemy territory, snooping around. Now imagine that one of them is caught and interrogated.

You think I'm pulling your leg? Well, it happened!

"R-65," according Saudi authorities, was a suspicious vulture circling drone-like over the residence of a prominent sheikh near the city of Hayel. Saudi counter-espionage special-ops air services intercepted and arrested the Israeli vulture. Lo and behold, they found a GPS device and a leg tag with the words "Tel Aviv University."

Aha! The Mossad cover story fooled no one. Yeah, right. Tel Aviv University indeed. But to his credit, Prince Bandar released the Prisoner of Zion in January 2011. The story was reported in the Saudi paper *Al-Wee*. At the time, the "Free R-65 Movement" was credited for the liberation of our bird.

But the *Daily Mail*?

Would you trust this vulture?

Let us not be surprised if the *Daily Mail* concocts a new story about white and blue mini piranhas that Israel is alleged to have released into the man-made floods inundating cities in Gaza, "such as Jenin and Nablus." These killer Mini-Me fish designed by none other than Dr. Evil toiling in the hidden zombie labs of Central Zion Control (a.k.a. CZC) apparently have been programmed to go after only Gaza children residing – where else? – in Nablus and Jenin.

However, the best example of anthropomorphism on steroids is the story where a goat was accused of violent vehicle theft. No, I'm not making this up.

In Nigeria in 2009, a goat was apprehended for armed robbery. Yes a goat! Police detained the goat after it was claimed the creature was in fact an armed robber who had used black magic to transform himself into an animal after stealing a Mazda. And despite all efforts, inducements and blandishments to secure the goat's metamorphosis back into the person behind the crime, the robber preferred to stay as a goat and take his chances.

Bring on George Clooney and the *Men Who Stare at Goats*!

But, in the case of Israel, millions around the world will believe such stories, further cementing the nation's image as a pariah state. Yet many would say, "How on earth could anyone possibly believe such things in this day and age?"

Alice in Wonderland thought the same!

"Alice laughed: "There's no use trying," she said. "One can't believe impossible things."

"I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was younger, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Thanks to the *Daily Mail*, we're getting all the practice we need! ■

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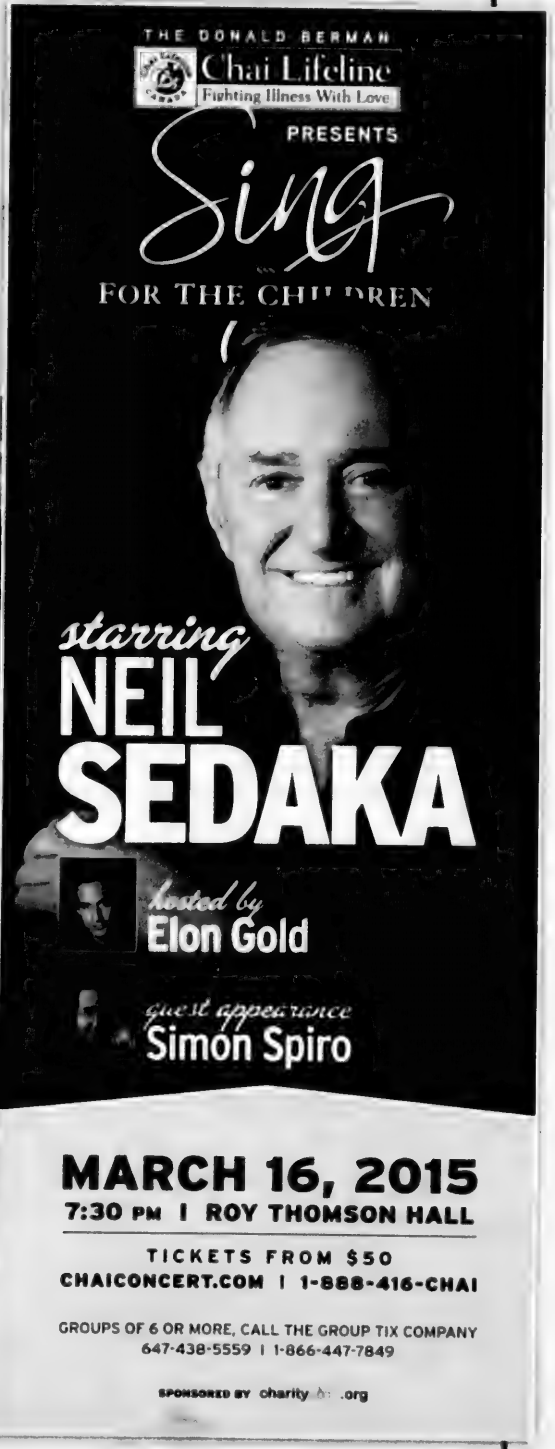

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Who will be the next prime minister?

Can Benjamin Netanyahu hold on to power, or will someone else assume the mantle? What will happen when Israelis go to the polls March 17? We've got 16 predictions. **PAGES 8, 30-31**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	6:59 p.m.	8:03 p.m.
Montreal	6:39 p.m.	7:43 p.m.
Toronto	7:03 p.m.	8:05 p.m.
Winnipeg	7:12 p.m.	8:20 p.m.
Calgary	7:19 p.m.	8:29 p.m.
Vancouver	6:56 p.m.	8:04 p.m.

Stay up to date with the latest election coverage and analysis at cjnews.com

Nimoy tribute goes viral, and there's only one way to get to Jerusalem

'Spocking' goes global

Leonard Nimoy died last month, but his famed alter-ego, Spock, is living on in more than just old *Star Trek* episodes and movies. As a tribute to the Jewish actor, Canadian fans have long taken to "Spocking" pictures of former prime minister Wilfrid Laurier on five-dollar bills by drawing pointy ears and eyebrows on Canada's seventh prime minister. The practice gained new attention on social media after Nimoy's death, leading a Bank of Canada spokesperson to say last week that while it's not illegal, defacing bank notes is "inappropriate."

Living long and prospering on a fiver.

Portugal lays out path to citizenship

The government of Portugal has published its procedure for handling applications for citizenship based on the country's law of return for descendants of Sephardi Jews. The new procedure is based on legislation passed in 2013 and establishes the entitlement of descendants of Sephardi Jews to Portuguese nationality that was deprived of them due to religious and racist persecution as of 1492, the year widely accepted as the beginning of the Inquisition, which forced hundreds of thousands of Jews to emigrate under duress. The new regulation stipulates that applicants must present a document issued by a Portugal-based Portuguese community attesting as to their Portuguese Sephardi ancestry. Spain has initiated similar legislation for similar reasons but its Congress has not yet voted on any bill.

Israeli tourism ad called misleading

Britain's advertising watchdog banned an official Israeli tourism ad for showing the Old City of Jerusalem. The ad, inserted in British newspapers, showed a view of the Old City with the words "Israel has it all" on it. The Advertising Standards Authority ruled March 4 the ad is misleading since it implies the Old City is part of Israel. The agency was responding to an official complaint. The international community doesn't recognize Israel's claim over eastern Jerusalem. Israel said it wasn't trying to make a political statement, noting that the Old City can only be visited by travelling to Israel. ■

Gematria

3,000

The number of Israeli women who formed a circle around the Knesset March 4 calling for an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord.

3

The number of times Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif claims his country has saved Jews: twice in biblical times in the Purim story and in the reign of Cyrus the Great – and once during World War II.

Quotable

We have to use the same language as the rabbis

— Modern Orthodox feminist Hannah Kehat on her advocacy work in Israel. More on p. 54.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

The lighter side of Passover with Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

How many hamantashen?

What colour is "this hamantashen?" And on the front page, too? (March 5) Please repeat after me: one hamantash, two hamatashen.

Saul Ticktin
Pointe Claire, Que.

Memories of Emerson Mahon

I knew Emerson Swift Mahon ("Emerson Swift Mahon: Canada's first black Jew," Feb. 26). He rented accommodation from my grandparents in Winnipeg while he worked as a sleeping car porter. We lived next door. Every time he saw us he would stop to talk and impressed us with his stories and knowledge of Yiddishkeit.

He was always learning and studying, and I recall many a time he and my grandfather would sit and discuss and argue about the Torah. It always bothered me that such a knowledgeable man was relegated to work as a sleeping car porter.

David Guttman
Thornhill, Ont.

Awe and fear

Rabbi Yael Splansky translates the Hebrew word *yira* as fear (of God) ("Be not afraid, for God is with you," Feb. 12). It can also be interpreted as awe.

Just like the Hebrew words *ruach* and *davar* can be translated, respectively, as wind or spirit and thing or word, in the material and immaterial senses, so can *yira* have negative and positive interpretations. In the modern age, it is easier to speak of being in awe of God and His creation rather than fearing God.

Jacob Mendlovic
Toronto

Jewish values are Canadian

In an interview with *The CJN*, Jonathan Kay concludes with the statement that he was born Jewish and acknowledges that he is a Jew, but is primarily Canadian ("*Walrus* editor discusses the media and Judaism," Feb. 19).

Kay says he doesn't "like practices that go against Canadian values." Inherent in these remarks is the idea that some Jewish behaviour clashes with Canadian values.

He makes reference to the bigoted remarks he hears about Muslims in the synagogues that he frequents, reads in comment sections of newspapers or emails that he receives with Jewish names. He is also bothered by the ultra-Orthodox Jews who live in Outremont and the lifestyles they follow.

Kay then goes a little further. He likens the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community to what went on with Catholic priests and the coverups by the Catholic church.

Finally, Kay believes that ultra-Orthodox Jews are, on an existential level, a threat to the Jewish People.

Jews of all stripes should recognize that along with the Canadian values which we all cherish, we can also take pride in our Jewish values, which are human values.

Sam Mitnick
Cote St. Luc, Quebec

York U and anti-Semitism

For years, I have failed to understand how insidious anti-Semitism continues to run rampant at a university with a high percentage of Jewish students and professors, specifically York University. The article, "University free speech can be unsettling," (Feb. 5) reveals the reasons this "unsettling" trend continues.

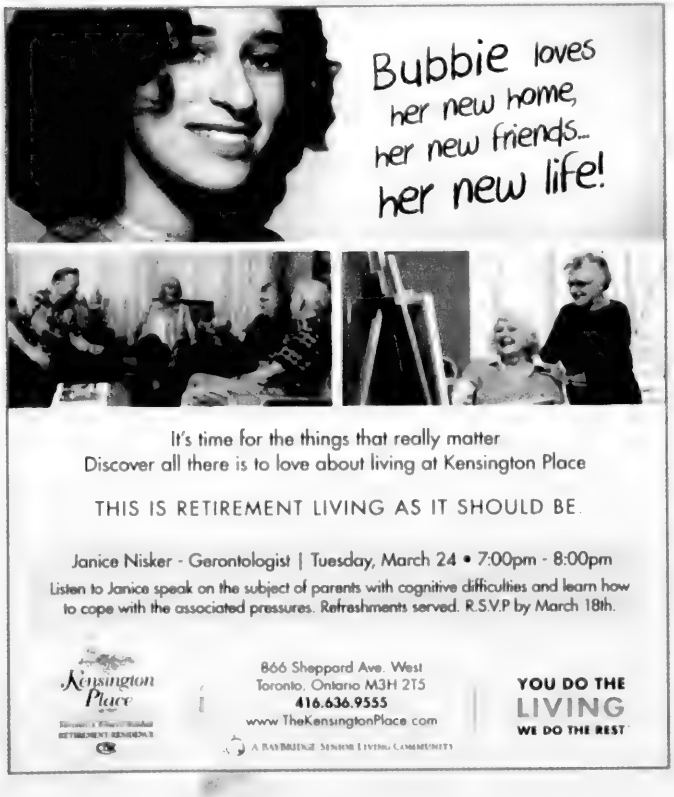
Now it is abundantly clear why Israeli Apartheid Week found fertile ground at York and why it festers throughout the year. Under the guise of free speech these academics justify ongoing anti-Semitism. As a result, the most heinous lies against Israel are continuously ignored, even if it compromises the safety of Jewish students.

The authors also believe that ongoing anti-Semitic harassment, which often borders on dangerous intimidation, is in fact, a good thing, because it can sharpen a student's power of verbal sparring! This appalling dismissal of ongoing anti-Semitism is not what patrons, parents and students expect from any university.

We all must help universities reclaim their rightful place as reputable institutions of higher education. We all must help prevent universities from being used as havens for anti-Semites and leftists to freely ply their wares. But first, we all must demand that these academics immediately stop making excuses for ongoing anti-Semitic activities and start being part of the solution. ■

Elisabeth Gelb
Duncan, B.C.

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*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RABBI·2·RABBI

The art and skill of giving rebuke

Criticism is hard to receive and hard to give, but effective critique of ethical lapses can keep societies, families and congregations from collapsing

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Fishman: "Reprove a wise person, and they will love you" (Proverbs 9:8). Have you ever found yourself on the receiving end of someone else's rebuke? I'm not sure what thoughts go through your mind at that moment, but occasionally I think to myself, "How can I love this person even more?"

If our goal is to become better people, fighting for truth and spiritual growth, then to be told of a misstep would certainly be welcome. Indeed I have witnessed in the growth of children that those who are not reprimanded or ever disciplined seem to have an insecurity to them. There seems to be the lasting fear and questioning on behalf of the spoiled child: why was I not reprimanded for this?

Of course, there is an art and skill to giving rebuke.

Rabbi Splansky: That's the trick.

Two thousand years ago, the Mishnaic Sage Rabbi Tarfon asked, "I wonder whether there is anyone in this generation who knows how to accept reproof," while Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah quipped, "I wonder if there is anyone in this generation who knows how to give reproof" (Babylonian Talmud, Archin 16b).

Criticism is hard to receive and hard to give in such a way that it can be received. But effective critique of ethical lapses can keep a society, a congregation, a family from collapse.

Rabbi Fishman: During this season, our thoughts turn to the Haggadah and one of its most well-known sections: the four sons. Is a child really deemed so bad that they are defined as the "Wicked Child"? Does not such "profiling" lead to a certain self-fulfilling prophecy?

A serious and soul-searching question is being raised. "Mum/Dad, I don't care about this seder/religion/celebration because I never saw you get excited about it, either. If you never gave me the tools with which to appreciate it, how do you expect me to be meaningfully engaged?"

Rabbi Splansky: The "Rasha," the "Rebellious Child" is by far the most interesting character. If I had to choose just one of the four "children" for my seder, I'd choose the one who would challenge my thinking, even if irreverently. We don't only set a place for the "Rasha" at our table because he needs our attention and guidance. We draw him nearer, because we need him, too. Every edgy question he lobs at the festive table gives us the opportunity to articulate our own convictions, our own faith, our own commitment to bringing the world "from degradation to exaltation."

To the Rasha we mustn't just speak flowery words of platitudes. We have to show him. However, if he's agreed to sit at the table, he's already engaged, and if he enjoys critical thinking, then with the right teachers and role models he can become a Chacham, a wise one.

Rabbi Fishman: A story is told that a person came to the famed Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk asking to be forgiven for his behaviour. Reb Elimelech decreed that for such a misdemeanour, the harsh and painful consequence of having burning oil poured down his throat was his only salvation.

With a broken heart and great humility, the man agreed and accepted his fate. Closing his eyes, he opened his mouth and at that moment, the rabbi took a spoon full of honey and placed it in his mouth instead. "You have made a full atonement," declared the Rabbi. "Now go out back into the world and use your talents for the good, become the righteous person you know you can become."

Rabbi Splansky: I've heard that story over the years, and I admit, it still terrifies me. The learning is gleaned from the Jew in the story who was self-aware enough to know he needed to change. His search for another's critique is a sign of the strength of his character.

We Jews are especially critical of one another. It is not an attractive trait. But when the criticism is borne from love and offered with love, it can create cohesion of thought and purpose. It can protect our "kinsmen" who are vulnerable at the margins. Moreover, when we seek out criticism from one another, we build trusting relationships and discover our finer selves.

How to advance ourselves in the art of Jewish criticism? Be ever mindful that more than we want to be right, we want to be good. ■

How to reach us

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SeeJN | Purim Parade

MENDY HECHTMAN/FLASH90 PHOTO

Israelis in central Jerusalem dressed up in costumes for Purim last week.

SeeJN | Pro-Israel rally

MENDY HECHTMAN/FLASH90

Toronto City Councillor James Pasternak spoke at a rally March 3, the day Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the U.S. Congress, in support of Israel and to raise awareness of the dangers of a nuclear Iran. The rally was held by the group Concerned Canadians Against Nuclear Iran in front of the United States Consulate in Toronto.

From Yoni's Desk

What's the Diaspora's role in Israeli elections?

After an intense and divisive election campaign, it's almost time to find out just what the future holds for Israel. And as Israelis prepare to go to the polls on March 17, Diaspora Jews are watching with great interest and anticipation. The former are tasked with deciding the makeup of the next Knesset, while the latter are left to debate a question that may be even more difficult to answer: what role does the Diaspora play when it comes to an Israeli election?

It's important for Jews around the world to be well informed about this election's main players and parties, and the central issues at stake. The good news is it's never been easier to stay on top of the latest news and commentary from Israel (not to mention those viral campaign ads, which have been among the more entertaining developments of this campaign). If you haven't been following the action since Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition dissolved in early December, there's still time to catch up. And given the frenetic pace of Israeli politics, a few more twists and turns are likely.

But having amassed the requisite pre-election insight, what next?

Many argue that's where Diaspora participation in this Israel election – in *any* Israeli election – ends. Because for all the available information, all the video streams and Facebook comment threads, unless you're there on the ground, your opinion doesn't count. That viewpoint was articulated last week by Yoni Leviatan, a self-described "British-born, American-raised, Israeli-blooded *oleh*," who criticized anti-Netanyahu voices in America in a blog for the *Times of Israel*.

"If you want to be a good Jew, and you want to support the State of Israel even though you disagree with its prime minister," he wrote, "then you're left with only two options: 1. Make aliyah and vote Bibi out of office [or] 2. Shut the f**k up."

Others might not have put it so bluntly, but Leviatan's opinion is a popular one – in Israel especially, but also in the Diaspora. Still, it seems disingenuous, perhaps even disrespectful, to suggest Diaspora Jews don't have any voice when it comes to Israeli politics. After all, our communities are inextricably tied to Israel in so many ways – emotionally, politically, financially, spiritually – and it only makes sense that we would want to experience the passion and debate of the campaign. We have something riding on the outcome, too – not in the same way or to the same degree as Israelis, but it's there all the same. Under the circumstances, it's hard to stay quiet, to hold it all inside. Sometimes it can be too much to handle.

Israel's election laws contain no allowance for absentee ballots – unless you're away on official state business, you literally have to be in Israel on March 17 in order to vote. Perhaps that's just as well, because there's no substitute for living in Israel. As vibrant and diverse as Diaspora communities are, the Jewish State stands as the pinnacle of Jewish life.

That is as it should be. But you can't blame the rest of us for wanting to be part of it in our own way, especially at this pivotal moment. ■ — YONI

EXCERPT

'People are really good at heart'

Seventy years after her death, it's time to ask: was Anne Frank right?

Eli Rubenstein

As we mark 70 years since the death of Anne Frank – in Bergen-Belsen some time in March of 1945, just weeks before liberation – it is worth recalling the devastating critique Cynthia Ozick wrote for the *New Yorker* almost 20 years ago.

In her well known essay, Ozick actually suggested that it would have been better if Anne Frank's work had been burned, and never seen the light of day.

Yet, when one re-rereads her writing one can't help but be amazed by the literary skill and idealism on display in *The Diary of a Young Girl*, a work that has been translated into 67 languages and read by 30 million people.

Anne Frank was thinking and writing about subjects that many – myself included – would only begin to contemplate much later in life, and expressing herself in ways which most writers far beyond her years could only hope to aspire to. And this from a 14-year-old girl locked in an attic for two years…

Here are just a few small examples:

"No one has ever become poor by giving."

"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature. As longs as this exists, and it certainly always will, I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be."

"You can be lonely even when you are loved by many people, since you are still not anybody's one and only."

Perhaps her most famous quote is this one: "It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

So what disturbed Ozick so much?

Of course, Ozick was not criticizing Anne Frank but, rather, what had become of her after her death – the way her story was diluted and distorted – especially by the overuse and misuse of the "good at heart" quote mentioned above.

Ozick argued that the Broadway play and film about Anne Frank removed almost all references to Anne Frank's Jewishness and the culpability of the Germans, along with most expressions of pessimism and sadness recorded in her diary, transforming her ultimately tragic story, into an upbeat, redemptive tale of humour and hope.

Ozick was especially infuriated by the prevailing usage of the phrase "people are really good at heart," because it eclipsed many other foreboding statements Anne makes in her diary. Most importantly, Ozick felt that Anne's betrayal, deportation to Auschwitz and death in Bergen-Belsen, belie the sentiment that "people are really good at heart." In Ozick's words, the damnable phrase is "torn from its bed of thorns," "pulls the wool over the eyes of history," and obscures the ultimate fate of the person who wrote it.

Perhaps camp survivor, Bruno Bettelheim best summed up the challenge to Anne Frank's most famous line by responding: "If all men are good (at heart), there never was an Auschwitz."

Anne Frank

Indeed would Anne Frank have ever written these words in Auschwitz or Bergen-Belsen? Would she have stuck by them had she survived?

So, then, how do we preserve in our young people the innocent belief in the goodness of humanity, expressed by Anne Frank, when faced with the grim reality of Auschwitz? Should we? Does the Holocaust, in fact, not teach us that humanity is inherently evil? And if we concur, are we not, in a strange twist, proclaiming Hitler victorious? For, if humanity is so utterly hopeless, so beyond salvation, why should we indeed care one whit about each other?

Here, I believe, lies the answer to the divide between Anne Frank and Cynthia Ozick/Bruno Bettelheim. Anne Frank was right – one may argue. The majority of people are good at heart – but that is not nearly enough. We must also act, stand up, make a difference. Otherwise we become accomplices to the victimizers – and ultimately, the enablers of Auschwitz.

This message, indeed, has much resonance in Jewish thought, for, as often noted, Judaism is a religion of "deed and not creed." We care much more about your actions, than about the interior landscape of your thoughts and beliefs. Moral action is always to be preferred over pious sentiment.

Indeed the Holocaust did not happen only because of its infinitely evil perpetrators – but because most of the world's good people did not stand up straight enough or soon enough.

Anne Frank died because not enough people who were "good at heart" mostly people like you and I acted upon their beliefs.

Perhaps Anne Frank's words were more of a wish, a prayer, than a hard and fast statement about human nature.

It is up to us to not only fulfill Anne's words, but to surpass them, to not only be good at heart, but to act on those good intentions.

So that one day, no more precious children like Anne Frank and millions of others, will have their pure and hope-filled ideals so utterly betrayed, and left to a fate no child should ever suffer. ■

Excerpted from Witness: Passing the Torch of Holocaust Memory to New Generations, *to be published by Second Story Press, Fall 2015. Rubenstein is national director of March of the Living Canada, a program sponsored by Jewish Federations of Canada and local Jewish UJA/CJA Federations.*

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As election looms, our experts weigh in

AVI BENLOLO
President and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

Unlike the American political system, which has two parties (Democratic and Republican), or the Canadian system with three main parties (Conservative, Liberal, NDP), Israel is represented by some 34 political parties. Predicting Israel's upcoming election results is, therefore, a near impossibility.

The mood in Israel today is twofold: fearful and impatient, with a desire for change. On one hand, Israelis are hyper-concerned about the threats that surround them, including a nuclear Iran, missiles from Hamas and Hezbollah, and an Islamic State spillover from Syria. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has done a relatively good job of keeping Israel safe.

On the other hand, a consequence of the natural human need for change is that most Israelis are ready for new leadership. This is why the Zionist Union headed by Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni is leading in the polls. However, in Israel, it's safety first. This is why Netanyahu is likely to triumph, although very much weakened by the social change most Israelis seek.

I believe the next government will form a fractured coalition in the Knesset. Whatever the outcome, you can bet one thing for sure: the next election will be right around the corner – again. ■

AVRUM ROSENSWEIG
President and CEO of Ve'ahavta, The Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee.

The Jewish People and the State of Israel are as complex as the characters in a Russian novel.

Three of my nieces, sisters in their 30s, have different views of the Israeli elections.

Miriam, a mother of seven who lives next to an Arab village, hopes Benjamin Netanyahu will continue to be the prime minister. She says his coalition would include "[Naftali] Bennett, the haredi parties, and either Lapid's Yesh Atid or Lieberman's Yisrael Beitenu." She doesn't want to think about a Labor victory.

Devorah, from Efrat, is voting for Meretz, a secular party that "will provide human rights for all its citizens." Devorah states, "I support their lobbying for women's rights. I want my kids to not think they are better because they're Jewish, to not make decisions in life based on the Holocaust, and to learn to live together with the overall population."

Deena, a prolific writer living in Jerusalem, doesn't care about the elections. Deena writes, "I believe in grassroots initiatives since I think politics brings out the worst in people."

That will be the outcome of the Israeli elections – a structure voted in by millions of (mostly) Jews, with divergent views hoping for a plethora of outcomes for Israel. Complex! ■

Exterior of the Knesset. Israelis go to the polls on March 17. FLASH 90 PHOTO

MICHAEL DIAMOND
Toronto consultant, entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist.

UJA Federation's shinshinim created an informative website about the Israeli election, www.voteisrael2015.com, that asks visitors to cast simulated ballots. Thusly encouraged, and unlike previous Israeli elections when I simply watched and squirmed, this year, I tried to behave like an Israeli and vote.

I decided to vote for Kulanu – a Likud-like party that is not Likud and includes former Israeli ambassador to the United States Michael Oren on its list, as well as several others from different parts of Israeli society, many of whom have a focus on the economy and security. Kulanu, I believe, could form part of either a left- or right-oriented coalition.

But then I thought: who am I to suggest my vote ought to matter, given that I'm a Canadian who doesn't have to run to air-raid shelters when missiles fly, pay high levels of taxes to support Israel's military, or see my sons risk their lives in the IDF?

Those who are fully invested Israelis should know much better than I what must be done to enhance and protect their lives. After all, it is they who must deal with the outcomes. I can only watch, offer support and cheer from the sidelines. ■

BERNIE FARBER
Former chief executive officer of Canadian Jewish Congress.

At the best of times, Israeli elections are fraught with complexities and a myriad of candidates and parties, so you often need a score card to know the players.

This time, Israelis are voting in what is ostensibly the most complicated and vital election in their country's history.

Iran, the economy, right-wing parties, left-wing parties, centre-left, centre-right, a national housing crisis – all will play a role in who comes out on top. But in Israeli politics, the party that wins the most seats doesn't necessarily determine who will be prime minister.

Over the last year, it looked like Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had a lock on victory. However, recent events suggest it's more of a horse race.

Most parties have sophisticated internal polling procedures run by some of the best pollsters money can buy. For instance, as reported in the Israeli press, internal polling by all the key parties suggests Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid is set to gain the most. And a recent Panels poll, with an admittedly small sample, shows a trend away from Netanyahu: 60 per cent said they don't want him as prime minister after the March 17 vote.

When the majority in poll after poll point to the economy as the key issue in this election, you know storm clouds are on the horizon for Likud. ■

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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On being Mizrachi, and writing a good sex scene

Mira Sucharov

One of the best contemporary works of fiction I've read in the last few years has been Israeli-Canadian Ayelet Tsabari's 2013 debut collection of short stories, *The Best Place on Earth*.

The characters and settings draw the reader in effortlessly. The conflicts are both internal and situational, and they feel urgent and real. The writing is intelligent, sexy and restrained. The judges of the prestigious Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature clearly thought so, too, as the book is the latest winner of the $100,000 (US) award.

I caught up with the Toronto-based Tsabari by phone in Israel, where she was visiting family and friends. She is insightful, thoughtful and articulate, as well as warm and humble – she told me she was "shocked" when she heard the news of the prize. We spoke about identity, the short story form, her favourite hidden summer spot, what makes a novel Canadian and Israeli, and how to write a decent sex scene.

One of the first things that comes to mind in Tsabari's writing is the ethnicity of the characters: almost all are Mizrachi, a label with which she herself identifies.

"It was really important to me to have Mizrachi characters who go about their lives, and not having their Mizrachi [identity] be an issue. That's never questioned when you have stories about Ashkenazis. That's the default. I wanted to shatter that, to break the pattern."

Some of Tsabari's stories are set in Canada – there's a memorable one set on Hornby Island, the tiny B.C. oasis whose peacefulness she found she was mentally contrasting with the intensity of Jerusalem – and another in Toronto. Most are set in Israel, though, revealing important themes about life, love and loss set against the background of physical insecurity. Tsabari wrote the book in Canada, was mentored by another Canadian author, Camilla Gibb, and acknowledged that others have told her the book possesses a Canadian sensibility.

Tsabari confided that she tried to avoid writing a conventionally "political" book. "I didn't want to write about the war, about conflict. What I'm interested in is people's lives… But I wanted to set it against that backdrop. This is how I grew up. It's always there – the conflict, that sense of menace."

Still, she did have what she considers a political aim. She wanted to give voice to a place that is often better known to outsiders through the media. She wanted to "complicate things," she told me, to "focus on the lives of one family… and one person, rather than the mass of people you see when you watch the news."

I asked her why she chose the short story form. While she is currently working on a couple of longer-form projects, she told me that she "love[s] the brevity of [short stories]. I love imagining a life in a short span. I love the idea of a collection." She added, "It's kind of like travelling… You get to know people, you really feel like they're a part of you, you forge what you think are life lasting relationships, then you move on. And because so many of the characters [in the book] are transient and nomads, immigrants and travellers, I felt that the container fit."

As for how to write a good sex scene, Tsabari explained that writers should provide as much detail as they would for any other type of scene, include it only if it advances the plot, and above all, avoid euphemisms. It's good advice, really, that could be applied to most everyday interactions: as we encounter one another, we should strive to understand the inner lives of people as they really are. And as readers, we can be grateful for glimpses of our country's fine new voices helping us understand other places at the same time as we are able to discover new truths about ourselves. ■

Mira Sucharov is an associate professor of political science at Carleton University.

Where is the integrity?

Mordechai Ben-Dat

A commentary headlined "Is Zionism Past its Expiry Date?" by Patrick Martin, which appeared Feb. 20 in the online edition of the *Globe and Mail*, is a textbook example of an anti-Israel polemic. Quite apart from its questionable content however, perhaps its most egregious quality is the devious, indirect manner by which its content finds the page, so to speak.

Space does not allow an adequate parsing of the commentary. Indeed, it could form the basis of a seminar on how to detect an oblique, anti-Israel rebuke. But it's important for readers – not only supporters of Israel – to recognize some of the arch devices typically used by an author or speaker intent on doing indirectly what he or she will not attempt directly.

The drive-by smear: At the very outset, i.e., in the third paragraph, the author seemingly innocuously and gratuitously mentions the "Zionism-as-a-form-of-racism" resolution passed by the UN General Assembly in 1975 to support an entirely subjective, insupportable proposition that "not since 1975… has the subject [Zionism] been so hotly contested." The statement is absurd on its face. Anyone who follows the unceasing, myriad public debates in and about Israel would know this. The nature of an evolving Zionism is constantly discussed in Israel, and especially so during general elections. Worse, inexplicable and deeply troubling is the fact the author fails to mention anywhere in the subsequent text that the General Assembly actually revoked that scurrilous resolution in 1991.

Non-representative sources: The four politicians on whose views the author primarily relies to illustrate his thesis – Hanin Zoabi, Avigdor Liberman, Naftali Bennett and Avraham Burg – are decidedly not from the mainstream of the Israeli electorate. The author also quotes a Tel Aviv University professor who criticizes the very name of the newly combined Labor-Hatnua party list, the Zionist Camp. He does so by again repeating the "racist" invective in a clearly implied reference to Zionism.

Partial truths and omitted contexts: The author cites the attempt to disqualify Zoabi from standing for election to make a point about today's Zionist advocates. He fails to provide the context for this effort, namely her outrageously hostile behaviour toward the state. Nor does he mention that in the past, Jewish candidates, too, due to their extremist actions, have been barred from standing for election. The author presents extreme positions – and in the case of Burg's point of view, entirely marginal to the vast majority of Jews in Israel – as normative ones in reference to the debate about Zionism.

The provocative headline. It is unlikely the author was involved in writing the piece's headline. However, it effectively illustrates the wily bias prevalent against the Jewish state. Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish People. Of the 193 member states of United Nations General Assembly, only one is Jewish. Why, of all nationalisms, must this one still justify its existence?

The early, unqualified association in the article between Zionism and racism and the subsequent extremist proof texts the author cites in reference to that association leave one suspecting that the intent of the piece was to once again re-plant that crooked flag of "Zionism-equals-racism" in the mental terrain of the genuinely unaware and/or smugly pleased anti-Israel reader.

The currency of a newspaper is its credibility. Whether readers believe in a newspaper rests upon far more than the accuracy of the facts in its stories. We all understand that errors of fact or other mistakes can creep into a work in any number of unintended ways.

Credibility, rather, rests on a far more substantial base than "mere" accuracy. It rests upon perceived integrity. Integrity, of course, is a broad concept, but we would all agree that it encompasses, at the very least, honesty, fairness, ethical treatment and an overall loyalty to principles of truthfulness. The *Globe and Mail*'s Feb. 20 commentary encompasses none of those qualities. Unfortunately, it shakes one's belief in the newspaper's integrity. ■

We need a new model for day school funding

Rabbi Jay Kelman

Imagine if a business that had been growing for 50 years suddenly, over six short years, lost one-third of its customers. Such a scenario would lead either to a restructuring of the business or its demise. Management and the board would devote endless energy to engineering a turnaround. New ideas and innovative thinking would be the order of the day.

Sadly, we in the Jewish community are also losing customers at an alarming rate. Intermarriage, assimilation and apathy have become the norm. As the 2013 Pew report on U.S. Jewry noted, roughly the same number of U.S. Jews have a Christmas tree as are members of a synagogue. And our most effective tool for developing serious and engaged Jews, the day school, is in a state of near-collapse. Like many crises, the situation seems fine, but there are cracks below the surface for those who dig a bit deeper.

It was distressing to read that the Ottawa Jewish Community School will be closing its high school, the only such co-ed Jewish institution in the capital. It joins a growing list of Jewish schools that have shut their doors in recent years.

I'm a teacher at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Toronto's Jewish community high school. After peaking at around 1,530 students six short years ago, the expected enrolment for the 2015-16 academic year is just over 1,000 students. This is a staggering statistic, one – that as far as I can tell – has gone largely unnoticed in the Toronto Jewish community. This represents more than 500 students who are much more likely to intermarry and much less likely to be involved in the Jewish community as they build families. And for the number crunchers out there, it means fewer donors to our communal needs. A Jewish day school with 500 students would be one of the largest in North America.

And lest anyone think the decline has to do with quality of education, TanenbaumCHAT can boast a 98 per cent retention rate among students who do attend, the highest of any private school in Canada.

Yet, there is no sense of urgency in the community about the declining numbers in so many of our schools, nor has there been a serious discussion of the implications for the future. Will there be Jews interested in filling the beautiful campuses we've built and are building for our descendants?

While there may be many contributing factors to the decline, one hovers above them all: affordability. With the inflation rate for day school fees being at least double the rate of general inflation, it truly is becoming less and less affordable to give our children, the Jewish future, a day school education.

Many of our communal leaders feel the problem is unsolvable and argue that unless we receive government funding – something that is not imminent in Ontario, to say the least – Jewish education will become more and more the exclusive domain of the financial elite. Already, UJA Federation of Toronto allocates more funding to Jewish education than any other community in North America, and with so many other needs, many say there is little that can be done.

Can it really be that the wealthiest community in Jewish history can't afford to educate its children? The cost of failure is too great to allow that to happen. As I have elaborated upon in the past in these pages, solutions exist. It will cost some money. However with the financial tools and sophisticated investment strategies available today, the actual cost is much less than is commonly imagined.

But more than money – which exists in our community in unprecedented abundance – we need innovative leadership. The same ingenuity that so many have used to flourish financially must be brought to bear as we restructure the financial model of Jewish education – an education that must be available to all and a financial burden for none. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Love: where can we find it?

Norma Baumel Joseph

Recently, Anat Hoffman and I shared our divergent views about Women of the Wall in these pages. The dispute was respectful and transparent. However, Anat's column had the headline, "Norma, I love you but…" The statement bothered me and got me thinking. What is love, what does it mean when we declare love and how do we know?

It seems to me, after almost 50 years of marriage with the love of my life, that love is not simply an emotional state. It is not merely a suffusing of chemicals in the brain. Love must derive from a relationship and implicate a very real commitment. Without those elements, true love cannot exist.

We can be enamoured of someone, we can "love" a food or a place or some work of art. But without a human connection that entails what Martin Buber called an "I Thou" exchange, there is no love. It is perhaps possible to have such an interface with a work of art, but the fullest sense of love is only experienced in human terms, with actions and interactions. We are, of course, human beings with bodies and thoughts and emotions. All our parts need involvement.

In biblical terms, the most desirable human relationship of love is that experienced between a woman and a man, intent on each other, made for each other like Eve and Adam. The purpose of human existence would seem to be to find the right person with whom one can share the totality of one's being: "bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh."

According to Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik, the story unfolds in order to teach us the absolute human need for companionship and love. Those essential elements are only found with another human being with whom one can share everything, physical and spiritual, hopes, dreams and expectations.

This very human love is then the prototype for the most exalted and desirable theological stance: the love for God. What a glorious idea. To learn to love God based on our own finite and imperfect experience of loving another human being. Given this proposition, the Bible commands us to "Love God!" We can find that love, reach for it and express it. But how?

> *Love must derive from a relationship and implicate a very real commitment*

In the well-known prayer, *Shema*, we commit to loving God. We state that we shall love God with all our might, with all our being, with total dedication and allegiance. As a result of this commitment, or in consequence of the love, we pledge to pay attention to God's words and to keep them with us. So love necessitates an act of some sort – because the act itself either constitutes the love or celebrates it.

We state this in the plural form, as a community, not simply individually. We bind our descendants and ourselves to both the love and the ritual action. How can we?

In the classical prayer book, there is a significant prayer that precedes the *Shema*. In it, we wisely and prudently remind God to love us. This relationship then is a two-way street. We ask and even demand that God love us in preparation for our love of God. We ask in the name or merit of our ancestors, we ask for our past and our future. We need to learn and to teach the ways of God so that this love will be a standard for our family and community. This love is a result of action and interaction of relationships with the living and the dead. It entails many activities of learning, doing, committing and uniting. And it leads to joy and gladness, to redemption and intimacy. It is both existential – crucial in shaping our destiny –and actual – necessary for life now.

I have known such human love and glimpsed the attendant divine love. It requires real time acts and relationships, of that I am convinced.

No, Anat, sorry, but you don't love me. You don't even know me. ■

News

Israeli prenup to help agunot likely not effective in Canada

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Israeli rabbinical and legal experts unveiled a new prenuptial agreement last week meant to end the phenomenon of agunot – women "chained" to husbands who refuse to grant them a divorce – but Canadians will likely have to find their own solutions to the problem.

The Israeli proposal requires maintenance payments of up to half the spouse's salary until a religious divorce, or *get*, is issued. Disputes would go to a religious court for arbitration.

But in Ontario, courts won't enforce the decision of religious courts on matters of family law, so there's no legal way to enforce the prenups, said Yael Machtinger, a PhD candidate in socio-legal studies at York University whose thesis focuses on agunot. In addition, many Orthodox rabbis in Canada don't want to push couples entering marriage to agree to a prenup, she said.

Rabbi Dovid Shochet, a member of the beit din (religious court) of the Orthodox Vaad Harabonim in Toronto, said "a prenup is not a new invention." It is a contractual obligation that would be enforced in a secular court, not in Jewish religious courts. And ketubot, the Jewish marriage contract, usually are written with a requirement that a husband support their spouse, making a prenup redundant, he said.

The Israeli proposal was introduced by Tzohar, an Orthodox Zionist group whose stated goal is to nurture "moderate, rabbinic leadership and shaping public policy." Tzohar's proposal was developed in conjunction with the Israel Bar Association.

The prenuptial agreement, which was six years in the making and went through 16 different drafts, contemplates that spouses on the verge of breaking up should spend six months trying to resolve their differences. If that fails and one spouse refuses to grant a divorce, that spouse is required to pay the other 6,000 shekels a month or half the person's salary, whichever is more. This is meant to discourage dragging out the divorce process.

"No one deserves to stay chained in a terrible marriage with a knife at their throat," said Rabbi David Stav, chair of Tzohar.

In a phone interview from Israel, Rabbi Stav said the prenups are purely voluntary, but Tzohar rabbis officiate at 5,000 marriages a year, meaning more and more couples are getting the protection the document affords in the case of marriage breakdown

Tzohar is engaged in a campaign to convince new couples to agree to the prenups – and married ones as well. He and his wife, Aviva, recently signed their own prenup after decades of marriage, he said.

In North America, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) years ago introduced its own prenup, adjudicated by its associate organization, the Beth Din of America, which sits as an arbitration panel. The prenups have become more popular since being introduced more than 15 years ago, said Rabbi Michael Whitman of Adath Israel Poale Zedek synagogue in Montreal.

"There are many rabbis, hundreds probably, across North America who will only officiate at a wedding if the couple agrees to the prenup. I'm one of them," he said.

Rabbi David Stav and his wife, Aviva, sign a prenuptial agreement. YANIV HOLZMAN PHOTO

"When done properly, it virtually ends the problem of recalcitrant spouses."

The RCA prenup does not have the same impact in Canada. "It appears the RCA document will not be upheld by a Canadian court, because the courts in Canada will only allow monetary penalties imposed by courts, not by rabbis [or] panels," he said.

To address this issue, Rabbi Whitman wrote his own prenup 12 years ago. It's weaker than the RCA one in that it doesn't include financial commitments, he conceded. But it has proven effective. By reminding spouses they've agreed to abide by Jewish law, it has great persuasive effect, he said.

"I'm now working on a new document that will be acceptable to Canadian courts," he added, saying he has consulted with lawyers, law professors and retired judges to ensure it complies with Canadian law.

"We are close to a final document" that he hopes will be adopted by rabbis across the country.

Machtinger said in her graduate work, she has interviewed dozens of women in Toronto and New York who are agunot. Many Orthodox rabbis have tried to address the problem by refusing to marry couples unless they've signed a prenup. "It's the best solution we have at this time," she said.

In Canada, "rabbis have to be willing to use a prenup when they marry couples. A beit din has to be willing to enforce a prenup. It seems they're not willing to use this," she said, noting that many say it's not appropriate to introduce the idea of divorce when a couple is contemplating a long and happy marriage.

Rabbi Schochet said ketubot already stipulate a husband must support his spouse until they're divorced, so there's no advantage in including that in a prenup. And at any rate, the province won't enforce a beit din decision regarding maintenance under either a prenup or a ketubah. In Israel, courts will enforce a prenup, he said.

There's also no mechanism available to compel couples to enter a prenuptial agreement, he said. He acknowledged that in New York, "a few rabbis make it [mandatory], but not many." The last thing couples want to hear when getting married is about a divorce, he added.

But south of the border, "they're making it part of the culture, it's normalized," Machtinger said. In fact, Rabbi Jeremy Stern, executive director of the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA), organizes prenup parties. The idea is that a prenup reflects a couple's love for each other and says that even if a marriage ends, neither party would use denial of a *get* to hurt the other party, she said. ■

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Toronto-born educator to head Ramaz School in NYC

FRANCES KRAFT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rabbi Eric Grossman.

Rabbi Eric Grossman, 43, a graduate of the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (CHAT), has been named incoming head of school at the Ramaz School in Manhattan, a modern Orthodox day school encompassing preschool through Grade 12.

He will replace Paul Shaviv, who served for 14 years as director of education at what is now known as TanenbaumCHAT before joining Ramaz three years ago.

Shaviv described Ramaz at the time as "sort of the flagship Jewish high school" in New York and the United States. Shaviv, who was on contract at the school, said his future plans include "more independent work, and some writing."

"I have greatly enjoyed my three 'transitional' years, and wish Rabbi Grossman every success," he added.

Ramaz, which has 1,150 students, has "a wonderful reputation in the day school world," Rabbi Grossman told *The CJN* in an email interview.

For the past seven years, he has served as head of school at the Frankel Jewish Academy (FJA) in West Bloomfield, Mich., a multi-denominational high school with 225 students.

In a letter to the Ramaz community, Jacob Doft, Ramaz's chairman of the board, welcomed Rabbi Grossman and cited his "thoughtful and organized management approach, inspiring teaching style and dynamic speaking skills."

The rabbi, an alumnus of York University and Yeshivat HaMivtar in Efrat, received rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Daniel Channan in Jerusalem. His early Jewish education took place at Adath Israel Congregational School, and he joined CHAT's "new stream" program for students who had not previously attended day school.

Rabbi Grossman, whose wife Karynne Naftolin also grew up at Adath Israel and attended CHAT, is still in touch with Sam Kapustin and Gary Levine, two of his high school teachers, whom he credits with inspiring his career path.

As well, York University professor Martin Lockshin has also inspired him and guided his career, he said. Lockshin described Rabbi Grossman, who served as his research assistant in the late 1990s, as "a gifted educator." Rabbi Grossman continues to publish in the field of biblical studies.

Adath Israel's Rabbi Steven Saltzman, who died last September, was another mentor, and the shul's cantor emeritus, Eliezer Kirshblum, Rabbi Grossman's former Hebrew School principal, has also been a role model.

"The greatest gift my parents gave me was taking me to the Adath Israel every Shabbat," said Rabbi Grossman, who became Orthodox while studying at yeshiva in Israel. He has, however, retained a strong connection with his home synagogue, which is Conservative.

Rabbi Grossman said his priorities as head of school stem from a focus on students as well as the school's "mission," which is based on Zionism, American values and Jewish law at both Ramaz and at FJA.

Early last year, Ramaz faced two high-profile issues that were reported on by Jewish media. In January 2014, in response to an announcement by another modern Orthodox high school, Ramaz stated that girls would be allowed to wear tfillin at the school's morning prayers if they wanted to.

A month later, the school revoked a student-initiated invitation to Rashid Khalidi, Columbia University's Edward Said Professor of modern Arab studies, to speak at the school. Students protested the decision in an online petition.

Rabbi Grossman did not comment on those issues at the time, but told *The CJN* last week that whether an issue is political or religious, it is essential to consider what's best for students and what's consistent with the school's mission. He noted that the rabbis of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun, with which Ramaz is connected institutionally, "are available to help Ramaz navigate these complex issues."

Addressing the high cost of Jewish day school tuition, Rabbi Grossman said that both Ramaz and his current school "are blessed with magnanimous donors... The high cost of day school is driven by the resources needed to hire the best teachers, so the difference must always be made up in financial aid dollars." ■

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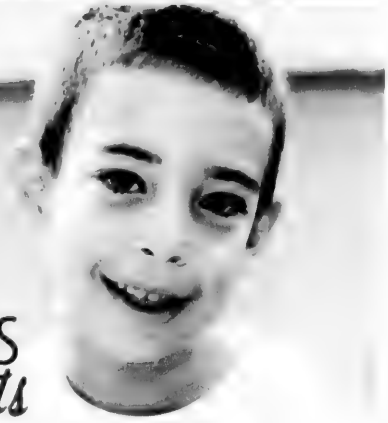

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CHW Children Healthcare Women

Muslim and Jews unite at Int'l Women's Day event

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

If you take out the accents, the greetings of "shalom aleichem" in Hebrew and "salaam aleikum" in Arabic sound the same.

These expressions of welcome were repeated quite a few times on a sunny Sunday afternoon in North York to mark International Women's Day. Nearly 200 Toronto-area Jews and Muslims came together March 8 at the Borochov Cultural Centre to meet each other and begin a dialogue about helping their communities.

The program, organized by Na'amat Canada and the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, was the first step by the two groups toward merging their networks of women.

"If we don't talk to each other and we don't come together... Islamophobia and anti-Semitism will continue growing," Gerry Anklewicz, president of Na'amat Canada,Toronto, told *The CJN*. "When you know about the other, then there is no other."

For both Na'amat Canada in Toronto and CCMW's local group, this was the first inter faith event either had held in years. Human rights activist Karen Mock helped Na'amat get in touch with Muslim community leaders, and both sides welcomed the idea.

"If we are united and working together, we're that much more powerful to fight hateful rhetoric and for the equality of women's rights," said Fathima Hussain, president of the CCMW in Toronto.

Aside from interfaith relations, with stories about sexual harassment frequently in the news and ongoing issues with equal wages for women, there were many hot-button topics on participants' minds.

The event brought out girls as young as 10, as well as a few Na'amat volunteers in their 90s. The program took months to plan, and many of the attendees said they were excited to get the chance to speak to women from other cultures.

Half an hour before the event's start, most of the chairs were taken. Some community leaders and dignitaries, including York Centre MP Mark Adler, had to search for seats in the packed room. Not long into the program, it was standing room only.

Before the speeches, some of the younger participants took selfies with new friends at their tables, and it wasn't long before the women were sharing stories across cultures.

The women met at the Borochov Cultural Centre in North York. JORDAN ADLER PHOTO

The Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims also helped to plan the celebration, along with the Women's Intercultural Network (WIN). WIN honoured Liberal Sen. Mobina Jaffer with an International Women's Day award for her achievements.

WIN also acknowledged Na'amat Canada with the Vara P. Singh Award, a tribute to its volunteer efforts. The women's organization turns 90 this year.

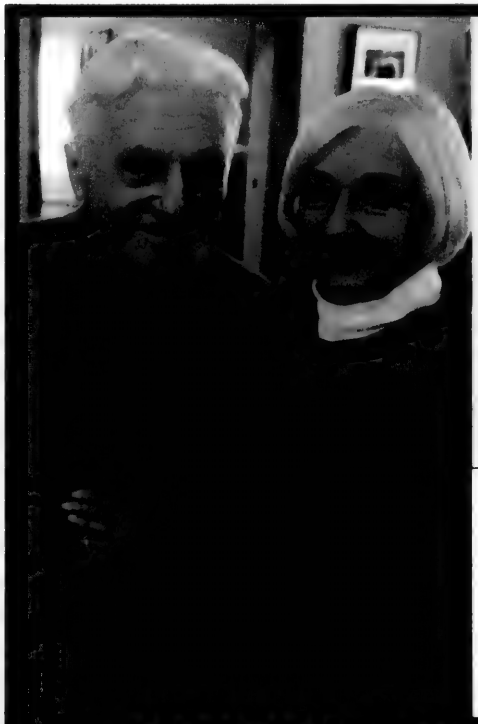
In her keynote address, Jaffer spoke about her dream for all women to be able to obtain education and be free from violence. She also told the women that the value of this initial meeting would be lost if the same Jewish and Muslim women didn't meet again until the next International Women's Day.

"We either look out for each other, or we destroy each other," she said. "We have to work together."

Jaffer, born in Uganda and currently representing British Columbia, is the chair of the Senate standing committee of human rights. She was also Canada's first Muslim senator when she was appointed in 2001 and has championed issues involving gender-based violence and security for women and girls.

Having served as Canada's Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan a decade ago, she spoke about how disheartened she was by the lack of female voices in talks. "I've always felt that I don't want men to make decisions for me," she said. "I need to be at the table."

Jaffer urged guests to engage in powerful discussion and learn from each other's stories and pain. "I truly believe it will be the women who will bring peace between Israel and Palestine," she said. Many greeted that statement with applause. ■



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Rabbi Jerry Steinberg

Rabbi Michael Stroh

While Rabbi Jerry Steinberg and Rabbi Michael Stroh have had divergent career paths, the two Reform clergy are the sole Canadians being honoured for their 50 years in the rabbinate at this month's 126th annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR).

Each year, the CCAR, the principal organization of Reform rabbis in the United States and Canada and the largest and oldest rabbinical organization in the world (it was founded in 1889), celebrates its members who have reached the 50-year mark.

At this year's convention, to be held March 15-18 in Philadelphia, CCAR will recognize 27 member rabbis ordained in 1965. The convention will also feature workshops, speakers and a hands-on social justice project.

"We're very proud, as an organization, to honour these individuals who have served their communities in such unique and meaningful ways," Rabbi Steven Fox, CEO of the CCAR, said in a statement.

Both Rabbi Steinberg, who was born and raised in Regina, and Rabbi Stroh, who is originally from New York City but is a dual American-Canadian citizen, were ordained at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion – Rabbi Steinberg at the school's Cincinnati campus and Rabbi Stroh at its New York campus.

"I feel great," Rabbi Steinberg, 79 and a resident of Thornhill, said of the honour.

Retired for six years, he continues to work as part-time rabbi at a small synagogue in Ajax, B'nai Shalom v'Tikvah – a post he's held for 12 years.

"It's a great congregation," he said. "I enjoy them, and they enjoy me. It's a shidduch."

Rabbi Steinberg spent 35 years working as a clinical psychotherapist in Toronto, specializing in dreams, past-life regression and psychogenic illnesses.

Following his ordination, he spent two years living in an ashram in the interior of British Columbia exploring yoga and meditation. He subsequently moved to Winnipeg and became founding rabbi of Temple Sholom, where he worked for five years.

Rabbi Steinberg was later hired by the federal government as a consultant in yoga, meditation and altered states of consciousness, subjects he has lectured widely on, often to Jewish groups.

"They had this program called the Non-Medical Use of Drugs Directorate," he explained. "They thought yoga and meditation might help young people stay clear of drugs, so I became the consultant."

He has also taught comparative mysticism and meditation at the University of North Dakota and Jewish history and literature at the University of Manitoba.

"The area of Judaism I relate most to is Kabbalah, which means to receive from, or connect with, God," Rabbi Steinberg said of the link between eastern spiritual practices and Judaism. "The word 'yoga' also means to connect to God."

He authored *Melting: Poems of a Frozen Man*, published 1992, and *Rogue Rabbi: A Spiritual Quest from Seminary to Ashram and Beyond*, a memoir published in 2012, and is working on a novel about the interface between sexuality and spirituality.

"I've had an interesting life," he mused.

Rabbi Stroh, 76, moved to Toronto a year after his ordination.

He met the late Heinz Warschauer, the then director of education at Holy Blossom Temple, at a leadership training program in the United States, and Warschauer asked him to join Holy Blossom as an assistant to Rabbi Gunther Plaut.

Rabbi Stroh spent five years at Holy Blossom before helping a group of young congregants moving further north to found Thornhill's first Reform synagogue, Temple Har Zion.

He spent 35 years as spiritual leader of Temple Har Zion, where he established an adult education program, which he described as one of his proudest accomplishments. "People participated (in it) far beyond entry level," he noted.

He continues to teach there, as well as at Holy Blossom.

Rabbi Stroh has, over the years, made substantial contributions to the Reform movement: he chaired the Reform Round Table: A Discussion on the Content of Reform Judaism, under the auspices of the CCAR; he participated in the writing of the New Reform Principles, released in 1999; he founded and was president of the Reform Zionist organization, Arza Canada and he was the past chair of Arzenu: International Federation of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists.

Raised in a Conservative household, he said he "was drawn to the Reform movement because I felt I could participate in it in an honest way, in terms of what I believe and the kind of movement it is, which is open to different points of view." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 12, 2015

Ezer Mizion hopes for more Jewish bone marrow donors

SHERI SHEFA
SSHEFA@THECJN.CA

The executive director of Ezer Mizion Canada, a non-profit health organization founded in Israel, hopes that its upcoming fundraising event will raise awareness about the importance of a Jewish bone marrow donor registry.

Raquel Benzacar Savatti, Ezer Mizion Canada's executive director, told *The CJN* that Canadian Jewish patients in need of a bone marrow transplant are likely to have more difficulty than others finding a match in the Canadian Blood Services Registry because they're under-represented.

"It's a numbers game. That's the bottom line. We know that in Canada we have [fewer than] 400,000 Jews, and of that number... there is really only a certain demographic that is the right age and has good health to be qualified as a potential donor," Savatti explained.

The division head of general and thoracic surgery at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, Dr. Jacob Langer, who is co-chairing the March 22 Benefit for Life event at the Carlu with his wife Ferne, agreed that the issue stems from the fact that Jews are a small minority.

"I would suspect the low numbers [in Canada for Jewish donors] are not because we're less likely to donate. I think it is because there are so few of us," Langer said.

Savatti explained that the likelihood that a patient's sibling will be a match is 25 per cent, but the likelihood that the match will come from someone of the same ethnic background is 99 per cent.

In 1998, Ezer Mizion established its own bone marrow donor registry and today, it's the largest Jewish one and the fourth-largest registry in the world.

Savatti said that in 2009, the Israel Defence Forces agreed to offer its new recruits an opportunity to get swabbed and register with Ezer Mizion as part of the IDF induction process.

"Since then, the registry has grown exponentially. We now have over 750,000 samples of active donors in the registry," Savatti said. "We've got an arsenal of the best - young and healthy potential donors."

Ned Nasi, a Toronto Jewish father to a 21-year-old son who was diagnosed with leukemia in October, understands more than most how important registries like Ezer Mizion are.

After learning that his son would need a bone marrow transplant as part of his treatment and discovering that his other son wasn't a match, he began to search registries around the world.

"We were told that there are two important things that play a role in finding a good match," said Nasi, a Jew who moved to Toronto from Turkey five years ago. "One is genetic background and the other is the geography that you come from. In that case, we had two populations to draw from – one was the Turkish population and one was the Jewish population."

Last month, Nasi was told by his son's doctors that a match had been found, although they weren't able to disclose where it came from.

Langer said Jewish patients are most likely to find a match through Ezer Mizion, and the more Jews that are registered, the higher the chance a Jewish patient can find a life-saving match.

Savatti said the registry offers Jews a safety net.

"If the registry reaches a number of 1.2 million active donors, we would have, potentially, a donor for every Jewish patient in the world," Savatti said.

Ehud Barak will speak at the March 22 event.

But that goal requires money.

"[Processing] each DNA test... costs $65... Just to process all the DNA that we get from the soldiers alone, we need about $3 million a year. We can swab everyone and their uncle. But we need the funds to extract that data to get it into the registry."

The March 22 event, which will feature a keynote address by former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, is a step toward that goal.

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Hamilton native wants to live on Mars

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Ben Criger, right, is one of the Mars One project's top 100 candidates, out of 200,000 initial applicants.

For Ben Criger it's a no-brainer: "If somebody says, 'We're leaving for Mars,' you say, 'Yeah, OK.' That's just what you say."

The 28-year-old is one of the top 100 candidates being considered for the Mars One project, run by a Netherlands-based organization that's attempting to form a settlement on the distant Red Planet.

More than 200,000 would-be explorers initially applied to Mars One in 2013 and now, after multiple cuts, the remaining applicants will be whittled down until just 24 individuals remain.

Criger is one of six Canadians still in the running to make a permanent move to Earth's second-closest neighbour in the solar system. The next round of cuts will likely begin later this year or next year.

"Maybe one per cent of the time I'm either excited or horrified," Criger said of his top 100 status.

He's nervous about being a failed reality TV contestant, because part of the process will likely be documented in a reality-television-style broadcast. Mostly, though, he says it doesn't feel much different than when he originally applied.

The Hamilton, Ont., native is currently living in Aachen, Germany, while doing post-doctoral work in theoretical physics and quantum information. Before that, he completed his PhD at the University of Waterloo.

As a physicist, he's excited by the innovative technology he'll be able to use on Mars, largely thanks to its thin atmosphere and gravitational pull, which is 62 per cent less intense than Earth's.

If all goes according to Mars One's plan, four pioneering astronauts will blast off in 2024, with four more joining every two years.

The journey to Mars is predicted to take approximately seven months in extremely tight quarters. Once they land, the colonists will live in an inflatable habitat, where they'll eat, sleep and grow crops.

That is, as Criger said, if they're able to launch the rocket at all. A Mars landing of this magnitude has never been attempted, and many are skeptical about the mission's feasibility.

Since there will be Internet access for the colonists on Mars, Criger thinks he'll feel somewhat connected to home, but he'll miss some its simple pleasures, such as some of the food and coffee.

While there, his diet would be mostly limited to what he and his fellow colonists could grow in the habitat. He predicted that they would grow simple crops such as wheat and soy.

Though not religious, Criger values a work ethic that he believes is rooted in immigration movements, such as the mass Jewish migrations of the early 1900s.

Criger also sees a link between Mars One and the migration waves of the past, though from a communications perspective, he thinks it will be easier to stay connected with family and friends than it was for immigrants in the past.

"We're comparatively going to be in constant contact," he said.

As for his parents, "their feelings are mixed about it," he said.

"You can't expect someone to be completely behind you all the way. They do stand to lose something if I go away forever," he added.

"So they're a little emotional about it. But at the end of the day, they respect what I'm doing. My parents are proud of me, and I couldn't ask for anything more." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 12, 2015

Dov Altman 'left a legacy of being a mensch'

JODIE SHUPAC
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Dov Altman often referred to himself as "the luckiest person in the world," his wife, Elana Fleischmann, said.

Altman died Feb. 25 at Toronto General Hospital at age 55. He had suffered from chronic lung rejection following a double lung transplant, which he underwent due to suffering from pulmonary fibrosis.

For the past 13 years, Altman was executive vice-president of the Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University, which raises funds for, and connects Canadians to, the Israeli university.

Deeply passionate about Israel and the Jewish community, at age 41, he left a successful career in commercial property leasing to pursue a path he found more meaningful.

Already actively involved in the community as a lay leader – he was chair of canvasser training and motivation for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's 2002 campaign and served on the boards of Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation and Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation – Altman felt compelled to contribute in a full-time capacity.

"After 9/11, Dov said to me that he just couldn't continue doing commercial leasing," Fleischmann said. "He wasn't passionate about it."

Altman accepted the position at Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan, which Fleischmann said reflected his feeling that quality education is critical to Israel's future.

"He said he felt he was the luckiest person to have that job," she said. "It meant he was able to visit Israel, and nothing made him happier than that."

Gillian Sinclair, current executive director of the Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University, said, "Dov had a strong passion for his work.... His greatest joy was being able to talk to people about Bar-Ilan and its contribution to the State of Israel."

Altman's devotion to the Jewish community began at a young age. Born in Toronto, the youngest of four children, Altman attended William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute and, at 15, became a chapter president of B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO).

When Altman was 17 and Fleischmann – who was president of her local BBYO chapter in Ottawa – was 16, they met at a Toronto BBYO weekend called the "Beau Ball."

After a logistical mixup caused the Ottawa chapter to miss an event, she and Altman had a "huge fight."

"I yelled at him, and the next week, I wrote him a letter apologizing," she explained. "The rest is history."

The couple married in 1987.

Altman earned a bachelor's degree in political science from York University and got his first job doing property management with the Toronto Harbour Commission. He subsequently did commercial leasing for companies such as Royal LePage and Cadillac Fairview.

Altman was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis about nine years ago, but he didn't experience symptoms until 2011. In 2013, he was placed on a lung transplant list, and, though he received a transplant that September, six months later, his health seriously declined.

Even while sick, Fleischmann said, Altman maintained a positive disposition.

"He was always joking, always asking how everyone else was," she said. "He made it his business to find out what all of his nurses names were, his caretakers."

After he passed away, the head of the hospital transplant team wrote her to say that the hospital staff "cared so much about Dov."

Altman's warmth, kindness and generosity were reflected in the way his friends and neighbours rallied around the family, who are longtime members of Adath Israel Congregation, during Altman's sickness, and in the outpouring of responses to his death.

Dov Altman

"There were over 1,000 people at his funeral" Fleischmann said. "Over 500 at the shivah."

She emphasized that Altman's impact on others has been immensely comforting.

"I can't tell you the legacy he left behind. It's not always about how successful you are, but about being a mensch, and the reputation you leave in the world. And boy did Dov leave a legacy of being a mensch."

In addition to his wife, Altman leaves two children, Neal and Jillian. ■

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Neil Sedaka to headline Chai Lifeline benefit concert

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Pop music legend Neil Sedaka will be in Toronto next week to entertain audiences on behalf of Chai Lifeline, an international charity organization that provides programming and support to seriously ill children and their families.

Sedaka, whose 50-year-career gave way to classic hits including *Calendar Girl*, *Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen* and *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*, will perform for about 2,000 people as part of Chai Lifeline's *Sing for the Children* benefit on March 16 at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall.

"What could be better than giving tzedakah and listening to Sedaka?" said comedian Elon Gold, who will act as the event's master of ceremonies.

"[People can] give a little gold while listening to some Gold."

Gold, whose career highlights include a number of appearances on the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, and a *Just for Laughs* comedy special, said he's been a supporter of Chai Lifeline for the past 10 years.

"The work they do is so amazing, important, touching, meaningful and life-changing. It helps people in ways that you can't imagine, nor do you want to," Gold said.

"The goal of the night is to raise money and awareness and have a good time, and for me, I think music and comedy is the best of both worlds."

Cantor Simon Spiro of Beth Tzedec Congregation, will also perform at the eighth annual concert for Chai Lifeline Canada.

Rabbi Mordechai Rothman, director of the Canadian chapter of the international organization, said the proceeds from the event will maintain and expand its services to Canadian families with children fighting serious pediatric illness.

"This is our largest and most important fundraiser. [It] really keeps our doors open, and it is where we get our core funding of our programming," Rabbi Rothman said, adding that it costs about $1.5 million annually to keep the Canadian offices operating.

"For children who are stricken with cancer, or other lifelong illnesses such as cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy, we provide a number of services to families as they deal with the diagnosis."

He said in most cases, when a child is diagnosed with cancer, one of the parents is forced to take time off work or quit their job to be available to take the child to doctors appointments and be present for on-

Elon Gold

going treatments.

"The Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario estimates that a family's income will go down by as much as a third with a diagnosis of cancer – at a time when there are all kinds of extra financial things that are needed, like medication, parking, and things like that," Rabbi Rothman explained.

"We also take a holistic approach and look at mom and dad, so we'll provide financial support, provide counselling support, support groups, and opportunities to meet other parents who are also dealing with a similar situation."

He said while the organization offers support to the parents, it also provides for the children in the family.

"For the sick child we have big brothers and big sisters. We'll give toys and games and things to the child, and tutoring to keep them up to date with school," he said.

Chai Lifeline also operates a kosher summer camp in upstate New York for children with cancer called Camp Simcha.

"We also look at the siblings... they have to deal with not having mom or dad around like they're used to because mom and dad are focused on the sick child."

At the upcoming concert, Rabbi Rothman said the guests will hear from a young woman who will share her experience as a recipient of Chai Lifeline's services.

But Gold, who has a new comedy special on Netflix called *Chosen & Taken*, said the evening is focused on entertaining people.

"It's always nice to support an important cause and be entertained at the same time," he said, adding that he's looking forward to performing in Toronto.

"I always love performing in Toronto – I have a lot of friends there – and especially for my people because I get to do material that I can't do at most of my gigs. I'm constantly coming up with new bits, just based on the fact that I live a Jewish life," Gold said. ■

Tickets for Sing for the Children, which start at $50, can be purchased at www.chaiconcert.com.

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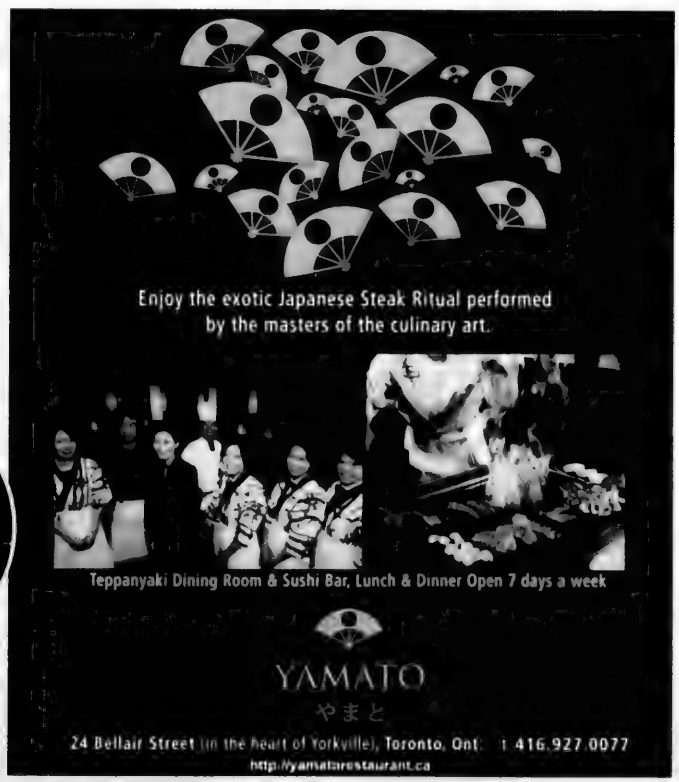
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Federation education program shows early success: report

JANICE ARNOLD
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A Federation CJA program launched in 2012 to make Jewish day school education in Montreal more affordable without putting financial stress on the schools, appears to be having the desired result.

"The early returns are promising," according to an evaluation by the Boston-based Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), a North American organization that believes day school education is essential to the flourishing of the community. It seeks to make these schools affordable without compromising their quality of education or long-term sustainability.

Federation CJA is one of its partners.

Three years ago, the federation launched the CAPS (Creating Access: Promoting Success) program, backed by $47 million in endowment funding secured by its Generations Fund, in partnership with major donors and the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal.

Aimed at middle-income families, CAPS offers to those eligible a freeze on tuition from kindergarten through Grade 6 and Secondary I through V. On top of that, incentive grants of $1,800 are available for children entering kindergarten or high school.

All seven of the mainstream day schools are participating in CAPS, and more than 650 students are currently benefiting. The deadline for applications for 2015-16 is April 3.

This is above the 3,000 students, generally from lower-income families, who receive support from the federation's long-running Tuition Assistance Allocation program.

Harry Bloom, PEJE's strategy manager for financial sustainability, lauded Montreal's approach for finding the right balance between accessibility and ensuring the schools' quality and viability.

"Montreal's feeder grades [kindergarten and Secondary I] are filling up quickly, and the middle income and incentive grants are cited in parent research as key factors in new enrolment," he says. "The number of middle-income, full-paying families in the day school system is increasing."

Parents' perception of how good the schools are is also rising, as is school fundraising, he found.

Natana Shek-Dor, director of the Generations Fund, said the fund pays the schools the full difference between the tuition freeze and the actual cost of tuition up to six per cent per year, thereby allowing the schools to maintain or improve standards.

She told *The CJN* that receiving PEJE's "stamp of approval is gratifying...but even more gratifying is seeing the schools get stronger."

CAPS
access:promotingsuccess

Shek-Dor said the CAPS approach is more "holistic" than simply making day school education less expensive.

"The bottom line is we are ensuring that a broader range of people have access and that the day school system is excellent. Families are able to project what the education will cost over multiple years, and the schools have the safety net that allows them to raise tuition on an annual basis thereby ensuring their quality and keeping them competitive with any of the best options out there – with the added bonus of being Jewish."

Monica Mendel Bensoussan, president of Talmud Torah/Herzliah High School, one of the participating schools, said, "Thanks to CAPS, our school community can focus on excellence in its annual budgetary process. Most families who are accepted have security in knowing that tuition is capped for the duration of their children's stay.

"Board discussions surrounding tuition increases are centred around strategic priorities instead of how much of an increase our parent body, particularly middle-income families, can tolerate."

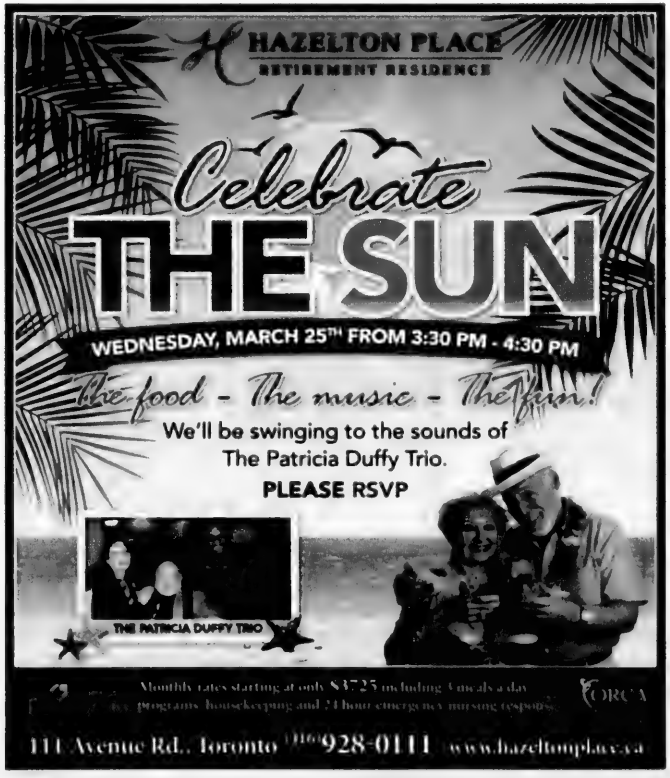
Bloom also praised the "excellence" grants to schools managed by the federation's Bronfman Jewish Education Centre. This money enables schools to "invest in top-notch people such as heads of school, development directors, admission directors and marketing directors.

"The Generations Fund has allowed schools to search for and mentor new hires in these key positions because it believes that by 'getting the right people on the bus'...academic excellence and sustainability-enhancing programs and processes will result."

He notes that these are not "no strings attached" handouts; recipients must account for success or failure in achieving the outcomes set.

Funding is also available for educational leaders to participate in various "capacity-building" programs run by PEJE.

"Surely there will be bumps in the road in the Montreal community and school partners' pursuit of the trifecta of excellence, sustainability and affordability, but it seems like a model that should be a beacon for other communities to follow," Bloom concludes. ■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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 12, 2015

Hebrew U, dragon boaters raise funds for autism research

SHERI SHEFA
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Hebrew University is partnering with Dragon Boat Israel (DBI), a Canadian-Israeli fundraising initiative that brings the sport of dragon boat racing to Israel while raising money for autism research.

Although this is the first time Hebrew U has partnered with DBI, the May 28-29 festival, to be held on Israel's Sea of Galilee, is the third event of its kind.

Debbie Halton-Weiss, DBI's founder and chair, explained that for the first two festivals, held in 2012 and 2013, the events raised money for Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA and combined raised about $150,000.

She said Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Druze participants come together from all over the world to form 40 teams and take part in a 300-metre race off the shores of the Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Kinneret.

After two successful events in 2012 and 2013, Halton-Weiss said DBI worked to establish a "sustainable" fundraising partner.

"We invested a lot of money in bringing top expertise, consultants, to steer people to Israel to do the festival and in 2014 we felt that would be a great time to have the Israelis take more leadership in the festival," Halton-Weiss said.

She said she approached Shelli Kimmel, director of the Ottawa chapter of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University, who has also volunteered with DBI since its inception, about the possibility of partnering with Hebrew U.

"When it was presented to the executives of Dragon Boat Israel, it spoke to a lot of the people who were in the room, and they felt it was something they felt they could hang their hats on in terms of reaching out to people for sponsorship and raising money for," Kimmel said.

She said at an institution like Hebrew U, there were so many worthy causes to raise money for, but they decided on raising money for autism research and hope to develop an autism centre at the school.

"It would be a multidisciplinary centre in terms of the research being done, but also for those who want to work with children... and want to be able to go out into the under-serviced communities of Israel in the periphery," Kimmel explained.

"It's easier to get services you need for anything if you're in one of the major cities. Their goal is to try to reach the under-serviced communities, the minority populations, immigrant populations, people in the periphery of the country."

Dragon boaters on the Sea of Galilee
DAN GREENBERG PHOTO

Halton-Weiss said she was also happy about the decision to raise money for autism.

"We wanted something research-based but we also wanted something clinically based and we thought the autism piece was a great fit," she said.

Halton-Weiss said that in the short time since dragon boating was introduced to Israel, Israelis have really embraced it and have used the boats for events outside of the festival.

"There is a breast cancer survivor team, a blind team. Degania Beit is a kibbutz team. They were having some issues around their old membership and their new membership, and they used dragon boating as a team-building exercise to bring the old members in with the new, and found it was really successful," she said.

"One team, the Ohalo Dolphins are a team that won the 2013 festival we held. They went on to compete in Italy at the world championship representing Israel using our messaging of diversity and inclusivity. They were a team of Jews, Christians, Arabs, Bedouins, men, women, all sizes, all shapes, and they raised their own money to get to Italy and represented Israel, and they were brought to the starting line with a big Israeli flag and a big hooray, saying this is the Israeli team bringing in a little bit of peace into the world."

As for the upcoming festival in May, DBI and CFHU are currently registering teams who are required to raise funds to participate in the race.

"We have different faculties from Hebrew U coming on board, including the law faculty and the medical faculty, and we're trying to create a little competition among the faculties," Halton-Weiss said. ■

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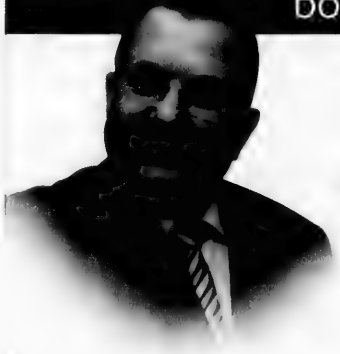

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Hundreds attend first Limmud Toronto event since 2009

SHERI SHEFA
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In the first such event in six years, hundreds of people gathered March 8 to take part in Limmud Toronto 2015, an international Jewish learning festival that promotes Judaism's rich history, culture, and heritage.

Limmud Toronto, which was founded in 2007 by a U.K.-born volunteer named Peter Sevitt and modelled after Britain's 30-year-old Limmud educators' conference attended by about 2,500 people annually, was held at the Alliance Francaise Toronto.

About 85 rabbis, professors and community leaders, spoke on topics relevant to Toronto's young professionals, including art, music, the Bible and Talmud, Israel, health, Jewish history, Jewish identity and education, Jewish values and philosophy, social activism and politics, and literature.

In one of the sessions, Rabbi Aviva Richman, a Talmud teacher at the New York-based yeshiva Mechon Hadar, led a discussion titled "The Talmud Meets the *Vagina Monologues*."

She said she wanted to explore the Talmud with a feminist lens and used excerpts from Eve Ensler's *Vagina Monologues* – an episodic play that features monologues relating to the female experience of sex, menstruation, masturbation, birth and orgasm – to serve as commentary on talmudic passages that relate to sexuality.

"I thought maybe a less vulnerable way to bring women's voices into the Talmud is to use these monologues as commentary to the Talmud passages," Rabbi Richman explained.

"What would happen if you took the Talmud and either instead of, or in addition to having Rashi in the margins, have some of the scripts from the *Vagina Monologues* on the margins that kind of interrupt the talmudic texts and comment and go back and forth?"

She said approaching talmudic texts in this way is not about saying "the Talmud is wrong about this, and the modern women's voice needs to come in and make it right… I'm more interested in creating a conversation about female sexuality that is springing from the Talmud."

Another session led by Rabbi Michael Skobac, director of education and counselling for Jews for Judaism Canada, explored some of the negative stereotypes that people have about religion in general and how Judaism suffers from it.

In his lecture titled "Is Religion Killing Judaism?" Rabbi Skobac said he doesn't often meet Jews who reject Judaism.

Rabbi Aviva Richman leads a session titled "The Talmud Meets the *Vagina Monologues*."

"Often what they are rejecting is a sad and unfortunate caricature of Judaism," he said. "People have… a rather negative association with the idea of religion. It is not a sexy word for many people. It often conjures up negative associations, and I think if we associate Judaism as a religion, I believe it is damaging to our impressions of Judaism."

He said he often hears non-religious people refer to religion as the "opium of the masses," a term coined by Karl Marx, something people use as a crutch if they are lost or have experienced trauma.

"I suspect that many people see religion as something that will cramp my style and make me miserable, interfere with my freedom – it's just dos and don'ts," he said.

"How many people think about Shabbat as 25 hours of torture when you can't do anything? That is how people might frame it, as opposed to seeing Shabbat as a day of liberation where we are often freed from those things that enslave us. It depends how you look at it."

As a ba'al tshuvah who once rejected organized religion, Rabbi Skobac said Jews have a responsibility to make the world a better place. What's missing is "buy-in" from the Jewish People.

"I don't think we're going to be able to fulfil any kind of historical role in this world unless we have a buy-in from the Jewish nation," he said "If we're living in a world, where quite possibly a majority of Jews are not plugged into the ideals of Judaism, it is tough for us to make an impact as a people."

Limmud organizers have already booked next year's festival. The goal is that within three years, Limmud Toronto will host an annual three-day conference. ■

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Security, the economy, Iran, peace with the Palestinians,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
Spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Tikvah ASNH in Montreal

Politics at its very core is a concession to weakness. We, the people, are not able to govern our own behaviours and so we choose to give away some of our power to others who will rule over us. We are thus admitting that the very basis for political power and authority is rooted in understanding that our freedom and our power are a zero-sum game. The more power we give away the less power we have.

If Israeli society can come out of these elections with a renewed sense of energy and optimism, it could be because they will focus not on politics and power, but on another realm altogether – society as the arena of co-operation.

Israelis today are in a position where civic society is in great need of help. Caring for ethnic minorities, championing the cause of the poor and continuing the journey to where those to my political right or my political left are not seen as the enemy, as the incomprehensible other.

Instead, a post-election opportunity could be for Israelis to realize just how much room there is for co-operation and collaboration with each other. As we recently heard in Congress – We're mishpachah. ■

RABBI BARUCH FRYDMAN-KOHL
Spiritual leader of Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto

Although the Israeli election initially appeared to be a Seinfeld-Shakespeare collaboration with much ado about nothing, it quickly morphed into a referendum about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. After almost 10 years in office, Netanyahu owns both the progress and the problems of the country.

The spectacular growth of the high-tech sector was unleashed by Netanyahu's policies. So were the economic and social challenges of the many people left behind. The relative quiet in the Palestinian community as well as the inability to move from stasis to a viable two-state solution sit at his doorstep. The general security of Israel, along with the attacks from tunnels and missiles, were also attributed to him. International respect for Israel and popular alienation throughout Europe were placed on his shoulders.

And there was Iran. The Speech became the focus of media attention. With one dramatic example of strength, Netanyahu shifted voter attention away from his weaknesses. Will it be enough?

After the vote, the "other campaign" will begin. Will the new president entrust Netanyahu with the responsibility of forming a government or will Reuven Rivlin turn to the Zionist Union and other parties? What will the enhanced status of the Arab political base mean? Will the new haredi parties push hard to repeal the law requiring yeshiva students to enter the military? What will the new parties accept in order to enter the government? Stay tuned. ■

JEAN M. GERBER
Consultant in community planning and program assessment in Vancouver

Israel today is at a critical juncture. For Israel's sake, I would hope a new government would undertake the following: an immediate stop to settlements in the occupied territories; a phased reduction in their financial support; a serious effort (without ineffectual U.S. hovering) to reach an agreement with the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank; phased-out support for haredi yeshivas until they include full secular studies; increased support for the Tali school system; increased, not decreased, study of Jewish history and sources in the secular system.

Should a new government be formed with the same jumble of parties, each with its own demanding agenda, none of these changes will take place and the internal health of the nation will continue to decline, as the various sectors draw further into their own fiefdoms, suspicious and angry with each other.

For the Diaspora, bewildered as to how to react, the outlook is bleak. The organized community will support whatever government is in power (warts and all) while a growing segment of Diaspora Jews will simply disengage from what they cannot understand, let alone support uncritically.

A politician tells you what you want to hear. A true friend tells you what you should hear. ■

RABBI DOW MARMUR
Rabbi emeritus of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto

Rabbinic wisdom has it that after the last biblical prophets, the gift of prophecy was taken from sages and given to fools, as illustrated by the reflections below.

Democracies benefit from a change of government, sometimes even when it's not for the better. That's one reason why I'd like to see Isaac Herzog-Tzipi Livni of the Zionist Camp in the saddle. An even more important reason is that they are more likely to address the burning issues of the day – not only Iran and defence.

These include (a) the growing gap between rich and poor, reflected in the price of housing and caused in part by the obsession with settlement construction, and (b) the lack of progress in peace-making with the Palestinians: it's too convenient and grossly misleading only to blame the other side.

Haredi Jews walk past a large campaign poster in Jerusalem depicting Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni of the Zionist Camp. YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

My fear, however, is that we'll have an even more intransigent coalition that may include rabidly right-wing parties and thus endanger the future of Israel.

My compromise hope is a so-called national unity government, preferably with Herzog as prime minister and Netanyahu as minister of finance or minister of defence, but even with Netanyahu as prime minister, Livni as foreign minister and Herzog in finance or social welfare. ■

RABBI HOWARD MORRISON
Spiritual leader of Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto

One of my favourite narratives from the Talmud explains a difference between the schools of Hillel and Shammai. While the school of Shammai would articulate its view clearly, the school of Hillel did something far different. It would first state the case made by the school of Shammai with accuracy and respect, then it would articulate its position. One of the reasons Jewish law follows Hillel in most of the famous Hillel-Shammai debates is due to the respect and care Hillel had for its rival.

Last week, I witnessed much discord over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to the U.S. Congress. The discord was so loud, I was concerned about internal Jewish unity. Hillel's articulation defines Jewish unity at its best. As one explores the ideologies of different parties in Israel, one can recognize the passion and commitment that each has for its people and its land.

After the election, world Jewry will need to support Israel's democratically elected leadership. I hope and pray world Jewry will demonstrate the kind of unity taught to us by Hillel, that we are one people, regardless of our passionate disagreements.

While we may hold fast to our innermost beliefs and convictions, can we also articulate with respect and care the passionate view of someone with whom we disagree? ■

MICHAEL TAUBE
Political columnist and former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper

Making political predictions is a mug's game. Then again, it's never stopped me before!

Israel's upcoming legislative election will be close. The historical trend of forming a coalition government in the Knesset will surely continue.

It's no secret who I want to win.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Likud are the most effective representatives of modern conservative ideas. They firmly support a free market economy and private enterprise. Meanwhile, their strong, no-nonsense position for Israel's safety and security is exactly what's needed.

Although Likud's popularity numbers have fluctuated, and the left-leaning Zionist Union between Labor and Hatnua has gained traction, my sense is voters will maintain the status quo. Netanyahu will cobble together a working agreement with right-leaning religious parties, and remain in office.

The future Israeli government's next

political corruption – how will Israelis react on March 17?

steps will be replete with political landmines. Potential military threats from Iran and Syria are top of mind. Hezbollah and Hamas remain problematic. ISIS looms in the background. And, there's that little issue with icy U.S.-Israel relations to deal with.

One thing is for sure. No matter who wins on March 17, it'll be a thankless task. My hope is it stays within Netanyahu's firm grip. ■

GIL TROY
History professor at McGill University in Montreal

There are two different ways of framing the upcoming Israeli election. Many Israelis can't live with him: they are fed up with Benjamin Netanyahu's political game playing, his inaction domestically, his – and now Israel's – disastrous standing internationally. Others can't live without him, fearing a weak, temporizing Isaac Herzog who has promised to alternate with the broadly unpopular yet grudgingly respected Tzipi Livni. Israelis, then, will face the democratic dilemma of voting their hopes or voting their fears.

Israelis also will face the peculiar Israeli dilemma stemming from their complicated electoral system: do they vote for their favourite candidate or do they have some coalition-shaping strategy? The polls suggest that while the Herzog-Livni Zionist Camp has a good chance of winning more votes than Netanyahu's Likud, the coalition math is sobering. As a result, an organization like V-15 just emphasizes the Anybody But Bibi push, while the new Kulanu party emphasizes its centring role regardless of who wins, pushing a Likud coalition left and a Herzog coalition right.

Ultimately, we can confidently predict two election-day outcomes. First, it will be peaceful, as all Israel's democratic election days have been. And second, whoever wins, Israelis will worry, complain, grumble – yet survive. ■

DAVID J. CAPE
Chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs

As the advocacy agent of Canada's Jewish federations, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' (CIJA) mandate is to advance the policy interests of the affiliated Jewish community. We try to reflect the broadest community consensus and demonstrate a unity of purpose. Because we are non-partisan, we are not beholden to any political label, affiliation or ideology. Our operating ethos is "unity not uniformity," and it is through this lens that we view the Israeli election.

We think it is neither helpful nor appropriate for CIJA to predict the shape of the next Knesset. As for the options facing voters, we express no preferences. We trust Israeli democracy to reflect the aspirations of its citizens as it has for more than six decades.

The only hope we would articulate is for the next Knesset is to embody a maximum degree of unity and representation within Israeli politics, with every segment of Israeli society feeling that its voice is being heard and its needs are being addressed by the state. Given the extraordinary challenges facing Israelis – security threats, economic constraints, religious-secular reconciliation and accommodation, and issues of social justice, unity may be the best message Israeli voters can send to their leadership. ■

MIRA SUCHAROV
Associate professor of political science at Carleton University, Ottawa

With polls revealing a near dead heat between Likud and the Zionist Union, the devil will be in the coalition details. With a maximum of 24 seats projected for either slate, the winner will have to more than double its own weight with coalition partners. And this means that the Zionist Union will have to reach rightward. That, in turn, will lead the leaders-elect to have to select from potential coalition members who are hostile to one another. It also means a smaller likelihood for significant movement on the peace process. The Joint Arab List stands to gain electorally, but has stated its refusal to partner with a Zionist coalition government. All this points to the likelihood that the Likud will be asked to form the next government.

If elections indeed bring more of the same, those of us who were holding our breath hoping for movement toward peace will be forced to exhale into a continued status quo. While we might say that in democracies, the people get the government they deserve, we must not forget that the Palestinians under occupation shouldn't be subject to any government of a country of which they are not citizens. ■

JAY KELMAN
Founder of Torah in Motion and a teacher at TanenbaumCHAT in Toronto

The only think certain about an Israeli election is that there will be at least one major surprise. What is most needed is a strong government not beholden to the often narrow interests of parties that focus on only one or two issues.

We need a government that with a full term will have the strength, wisdom and time to tackle the main social and economic issues facing Israel, such as the unaffordability of housing, the much-too-wide income gap between rich and poor, and the integration of haredim into the workplace (and maybe even the army). I would love to see the rhetoric toned down as people appreciate that most of those with opposing views have the best interests of the Jewish People at heart – even if they have a very different view of what those best interests are. Unfortunately, it appears that peace is as far away as possible and management, not solution, of the conflict is all we can hope for at present.

Being that I'm writing this on Purim, let's have some fun and predict the following seat count: Likud 26, Zionist Union 23, Bayit Yehudi 14, Yesh Atid 13, Joint Arab List 12, Kahalon 10, Shas 6, United Torah 7, Meretz 4. ■

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
Spiritual leader of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation

Although current polls favour Benjamin Netanyahu to be prime minister again, the one thing you can be sure of in Israeli politics is that nothing is for sure.

Bibi lost the prime ministership in 1999 (to Ehud Barak) largely for socioeconomic reasons in Israel, a factor with which Diaspora Jewry is unacquainted. Furthermore, it's been suggested that Netanyahu lost because a strong U.S. president, Bill Clinton, wasn't fond of his Israeli counterpart, and may have played a role in getting him ousted.

Despite Netanyahu's popularity with the U.S. Congress and much of the United States and Canada, it's clear that U.S. President Barack Obama isn't exactly enamoured with him, especially not after his speech to Congress. While a strong prime minister who is tough on security – especially Iran – and is a tough negotiator with the Palestinians is what Israel appears to need right now, the future for Israel's leader is as obscure as ever.

Watching Netanyahu address Congress and invoke the story of Esther at the beginning of his speech and Moses' parting words of "be strong and resolute" at the end filled me with great pride and emotion. I pray his words meet their mark. ■

MICHAEL MOSTYN
CEO of B'nai Brith Canada

As Jews living in the Diaspora, Israeli politics are of great interest. While we're fortunate to live in a country that has such strong political support for Israel, we nonetheless tend to find ourselves reflecting on the safety and security of our spiritual and ancestral homeland.

Canadian Jews want to see Iran prevented from acquiring weapons capability.

The regime in Tehran is virulently anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist and a serial violator of human rights – a government that should not be trusted with the bomb. Iran's ongoing support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas and its expanding influence may also provide the next prime minister an opportunity to dialogue with neighbouring Arab states that share regional concerns.

Additionally, Diaspora Jewry is troubled by the increased lawfare directed at the Jewish state as the Palestinian Authority is seeking to prosecute Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and has ceased security co-operation with Israel.

We occasionally forget that to the average Israeli, these issues are sometimes secondary. Key domestic matters in this election have been affordable housing, the economy and government transparency.

While Israeli voters will cast their ballot for the party they feel best reflects their stand on major issues, we in the Diaspora would like to see the next government stand strong in the face of the major external challenges and security issues facing the country. ■

For full results and coverage of the Israeli election see cjnews.com

INTERNATIONAL

Creation of Palestinian state irrelevant, Netanyahu says

Prime minister backs away from speech of 2009, in which he expressed support for two state solution

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
JERUSALEM

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the creation of a Palestinian state, a move that he supported in a famous speech at Bar-Ilan University in 2009, was no longer relevant in the current reality in the Middle East.

"In the Mideast today, any evacuated territory will be overtaken by radical Islam and terror groups backed by Iran. Therefore, there will be no withdrawals and no concessions. It's just not relevant," a statement released by the Likud party on March 8 read, attributing the remark to Netanyahu.

The statement came after the *Olam Katan* newsletter, distributed in synagogues on Friday nights, published a Q&A with the Likud and other parties in which one of Likud's remarks was that the policies expressed in the Bar-Ilan speech "have been annulled."

"Netanyahu's entire political biography is the struggle against the establishment of the Palestinian state," the party said. *Haaretz* reported that Likud MK Tzipi Hotovely, a proponent of annexing the West Bank, had answered the question.

Meretz party leader Zahava Gal-on decried the statement, posting on Facebook: "So here, for those who doubted, this is the truth about our prime minister. This is what he really thinks about the two-state solution, this is what the draft proposal revealed this week is worth... this is what can be achieved by a Likud coalition: lies, procrastination, biding time, and more lies."

Gal-on slammed the "two-faced prime minister who is bringing upon us a binational state with his bare hands."

Netanyahu and the Likud's repudiation of what was a declared policy came several days after *Yedioth Ahronoth* published a document reportedly drafted by Israeli officials outlining Netanyahu's alleged concessions to the Palestinians, alluded to in Gal-on's statement.

According to the document, Netanyahu agreed to negotiate a peace deal on the basis of the 1967 borders, with land swaps; to acknowledge Palestinian aspirations in East Jerusalem; to evacuate settlers from the West Bank; and to allow those who so choose to remain under Palestinian rule.

Benjamin Netanyahu in Ramat Gan in 2009 MICHAEL KRAMER FLASH 90 PHOTO

The publication rattled the Likud party and drew harsh criticisms from politicians to the right of Netanyahu, including Yisrael Beytenu head Avigdor Liberman and Jewish Home leader Naftali Bennett.

Two Likud members, Benny Begin and Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein, said the document was fabricated and the publication of it was meant to harm the Likud.

Netanyahu's former national security adviser Yaakov Amidror suggested on Sunday that if the document was leaked by Washington – as had been suggested – it would undermine the possibility of future U.S.-brokered talks.

"There is no doubt that this leak radically impairs the possibility of serious negotiations in the future," Amidror told the *Walla* news website.

"It doesn't matter who will be the next prime minister – Benjamin Netanyahu or Isaac Herzog – he will not be able to rely 100 per cent on the confidentiality of the negotiations after a leak like this. The same is true for the Palestinians, who will ask themselves, 'We will agree to all these ideas, and then read about it in the papers?' For us, the damage is only political, but on the Palestinian side, it could cost lives," continued Amidror.

"Whoever leaked this caused severe damage to the process, because neither side will be able to rely on the American administration any longer," he added.

Amidror insisted that the document did not accurately represent Netanyahu's position, but was rather an American draft proposal that "was meant to be bad enough for both sides so they could say they had reservations, without telling the Americans to 'Go to hell.'"

"There is no Israeli-Palestinian agreement here, only an American attempt to create a draft that will allow both sides to go to the negotiating room and talk," he said. ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com

Thousands protest against government

JTA
JERUSALEM

Tens of thousands of Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square after Shabbat on March 7 calling for a change in the government.

"Israel Wants Change," as the anti-Netanyahu rally was titled, attracted up to 40,000 people. The event was organized by the One Million Hands movement, a grassroots campaign against right-wing political parties in Israel that calls for a focus on socio-economic issues.

"Israel is surrounded by enemies. Enemies do not scare me. I worry about our leadership," former Mossad chief Meir Dagan told the crowd. "I am afraid of our leadership. I am afraid of a loss of determination, of a loss of personal example. I am afraid of hesitancy and stalemate, and I am afraid above all of the crisis of leadership, a leadership crisis that is the most severe ever here."

Dagan accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of "dragging us down to a binational state and to the end of the Zionist dream."

Thousands rally against Netanyahu in Tel Aviv. ASSAF SHILO ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Two nights earlier, Dagan in an interview on Israeli television slammed Netanyahu and Jewish Home party head Naftali Bennett for policies stirring problems with the Palestinians and the Unites States.

Other rally speakers included Michal Kastan Keidar, the widow of an officer killed in last summer's Gaza military operation, and Amiram Levin, a former commander of the IDF's Northern Command and ex-deputy Mossad chief.

Keidar accused Netanyahu of being more concerned with Iran than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A pro-Netanyahu rally is scheduled for the same venue on March 14, three days before Israel's national election. ■

OPINION

Next Knesset will be sullied by two ignominious personalities

Yair Lootsteen

Here in Israel we are less than a week before another round of elections and if polls are right, there's nothing much to look forward to. More of the same or even worse.

Seeing as the Babylonian Talmud teaches that "prophesy is given to fools," I won't give you my forecast of how bad things will really turn out.

I will, however, venture to predict that the next Knesset will be sullied by the presence of two ignominious personalities – one new in this arena, the other continuing. While Baruch Marzel and Hanin Zoabi could not be more further apart in their world views, our parliament would be better off with neither of them.

Whether as a symbol of the strength of Israel's democracy, rather than its weaknesses – I'll let you decide - our Supreme Court recently overturned decisions disqualifying their candidacies.

Born in Boston, Marzel grew up in Israel and lives with his family in Tel Rumeida, one of Hebron's Jewish enclaves. An ultra-nationalist, he was a prominent supporter of Rabbi Meir Kahane. Anti-LGBT and anti Jewish-Arab intermarriage, he and his cohorts are regular fixtures demonstrating against Jerusalem's annual gay pride parade and at celebrations of mixed marriages.

Last May, he demonstrated against Pope Francis' visit to Mount Zion and every year he celebrates the actions of another American-born Baruch, Baruch Goldstein, who massacred 29 Muslim worshipers in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron during Purim 1994. He supports deporting all disloyal Arabs from all parts of the Land of Israel, including the West Bank and Gaza.

Marzel will get into the Knesset having teamed up with Eli Yishai, who broke off from the Sephardi ultra-Orthodox Shas Party because of infighting within that party since its spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, died in 2013. Marzel is a blemish on Yishai and on his new party, and he will bring nothing but dishonour and disgrace to the already not so hallowed halls of the Knesset.

Much to his chagrin, he will be joined in those failures by Zoabi, who's well ensconced in the middle of the new united list representing all three major Arab parties.

Zoabi, a Muslim native of Nazareth, has been an MK since 2009, representing the Balad Party. Balad believes Israel should cease being a Jewish state, to be replaced by one that is binational and democratic in nature. In that vein, she exits Knesset chambers during any singing of *Hatikvah*, stating this is neither her anthem nor her hope.

In 2010 she achieved particular notoriety upon joining the flotilla of Turkish ships trying to break Israel's blockade of Gaza. She was on board the Mavi Marmara when Israeli naval commandos stormed that ship and during the ensuing violence which left nine passengers dead.

Last July, soon after Palestinians kidnapped three Israeli teenagers hitchhiking in Gush Etzion, south of Jerusalem, (and before it was known they'd been killed) Zoabi expressed understanding for the kidnappers, stating: "Is it strange that people living under occupation and living impossible lives, in a situation where Israel kidnaps new prisoners every day, is it strange that they kidnap? They are not terrorists. Even if I do not agree with them, they are people who do not see any way to change their reality, and they are compelled to use means like these."

Zoabi is much less concerned with the risk of Iran attaining nuclear weapon capabilities than with the existing risk of Israel wielding such capabilities.

Both Marzel and Zoabi are firebrands who'll add more colour to the Knesset than any true content; they'll use their parliamentary immunity to do more damage than any sort of benefit.

While freedom of expression is a cornerstone of any democracy, democracies must protect themselves from misuse of such freedoms. The next Knesset should legislate airtight provisions ensuring Marzel and Zoabi and those similar to them won't get into parliament next time round. ■

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Cambridge debating students say Israel is a rogue state

ALEX DAVIS
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, LONDON

Students at England's prestigious University of Cambridge voted last week overwhelmingly in favour of the motion "This House Believes Israel is a Rogue State"during a debate at the Cambridge Union Society.

In a packed debating chamber, 51 per cent of attendees voted in favour of the motion, 30 per cent abstained and 19 per cent voted in opposition.

The debate featured six prominent speakers, most notably the Jewish American political scientist Norman Finkelstein in proposition (for the motion), and Vivian Wineman, the president of the board of deputies of British Jews, in opposition.

Finkelstein was joined by the Palestinian academic, Prof. Ghada Karmi, and the human rights activist Ben White in proposition. Wineman was supported by Hannah Weisfeld, director of the pro-Israel pro-peace movement Yachad, and Davis Lewin, deputy director of the global think tank the Henry Jackson Society.

The proposition opened the debate by focusing on Israeli settlement growth in occupied Palestinian territories since 1967, which White labelled a "grave violation of international law. Karmi further argued that "Israel's preferred methods are violence, aggression and war" and described the state as a "threat to its neighbours."

Wineman, tried to place the state in the wider context of the Middle East and received loud hisses upon declaring Israel as the "only democracy in the Middle East." Wineman additionally provided a passionate rebuttal to the point on settlements, accusing White of obscuring the fact that Israel has withdrawn from settlements in the past in attempts to broker for peace.

Weisfeld chose a different tact, focusing closely on Israeli domestic politics. She argued that any nation with a strong system of parliamentary democracy that allows open criticism, along with a free press, cannot be called rogue.

Despite heated early exchanges between speakers, students remained largely respectful and listened carefully to points raised.

However, the final speaker in opposition, Lewis, was met with vocal abuse, including boos and hisses throughout his speech. This began after Lewis described the motion as "disgusting" and expressed his frustration that Israel was "once again" being debated because of an "obsession" with the state. The loudest jeers of the night came when he dismissed Palestinian death tolls as "minor" by comparison to the hundreds of thousands of casualties of the Syrian civil war.

Students at Cambridge University in England at the debate last week. XANTHE GILMORE PHOTO

Union Society president Amy Gregg was repeatedly forced to plea for calm, especially when the debating chamber erupted after Lewis described the Israel Defence Forces as the "most moral army in the world."

"We will review the debate footage, but as the disturbances were general audience noise, rather than repeated incursions by an identifiable individual, we do not anticipate taking disciplinary action," Gregg said after the event.

She denied that Israel was being unfairly focused on, stating: "This is the first debate we have held on Israel in two years. In the meantime, we have discussed Russia, Iran and the Arab Spring, to name but a few of our debate subjects.

"The Israel-Palestine conflict is a topical issue that, as evidenced by turnout, our members are extremely interested in, and this is a primary consideration in deciding which debates to run."

Nevertheless, some Jewish students felt uncomfortable and intimidated by interruptions, which culminated in chants of "Free Palestine, Free Palestine" at the end of the debate.

One student commented, "I felt the debate in general was poorly managed, with little intervention from the president or officials when it became out of hand and hostile – even to the point where we could not hear the speaker. It became extremely chaotic."

The controversial result comes just months after the Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom was met with loud protests as he addressed students in the Union Society chamber. In addition, a recent survey found Israel to be the second-most disliked country by Britons in the world, behind only North Korea. This follows a significant surge in anti-Israeli sentiment in 2014 across Britain, something Cambridge students appear far from rejecting.

Founded in 1815, the Cambridge union is the world's oldest continuously running debating society. Notable past speakers have included Winston Churchill and Ronald Reagan, as well as the Dalai Lama and Moammar Gadhafi. The society prides itself on debating a wide variety of controversial topics ranging from legalizing the sex industry to capitalism's influence on the Third World.

The same motion was debated at the Cambridge Union in 2010, but was comfortably rejected by a significant majority. Just five years on, it appears Britain's brightest students have had a clear change of heart toward the Jewish state. ■

Alex Davis is a freelancer in England. Twitter: @Alex_Davis95.

Proposed Iran agreement not limited to 10 years, U.S. official says

JTA
JERUSALEM

The proposed nuclear agreement with Iran will not be limited to a decade, a senior U.S. official said.

On March 8, the unnamed official who briefed Israeli journalists by phone said the deal would include several phases and last for longer than a decade, according to Israeli media reports. The official added that the world powers negotiating with Iran are "not rushing" to reach a deal.

Still, the United States plans to achieve its goal of reaching the outline of an agreement by the end of March, the official said, with the deal signed three months later.

The world powers, the official said, are working for "the right deal and we're not rushing. We want a political agreement and we want the right agreement without having time pressures." Also, the official said, the world powers "will not allow Iran to go nuclear."

"We can reach a long-term agreement that will distance Iran from a nuclear weapon, an agreement that will last more than a decade, an agreement that will be better than a military strike," the official said.

In an interview broadcast Sunday on *Face the Nation*, U.S. President Barack Obama said the world powers have offered Iran an "extraordinarily reasonable deal," but that gaps between the two sides remain.

Obama said that Iran must be willing to "accept the kind of verification and constraints on their program that so far, at least, they have not been willing to say yes to."

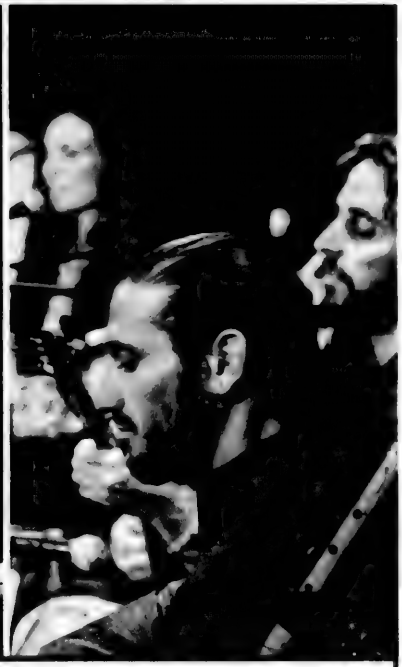
He also said that the United States and the world powers would "walk away" rather than accept a bad deal.

"If we cannot verify that they are not going to obtain a nuclear weapon, that there's a breakout period so that even if they cheated we would be able to have enough time to take action, if we don't have that kind of deal, then we're not going to take it," Obama said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in an address last week before a joint session of Congress called the current outline a "bad deal" and said the lawmakers should reject it. ■

Jewish Life

Interfaith musical ensemble brings its message to Toronto



SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

For the past 10 years, Israel's Diwan Saz Interfaith Ensemble has used its music to promote peace, harmony and coexistence. The group brings its message to Toronto this week as part of the second annual Spotlight on Israeli Culture.

The two-month showcase that runs until March 23 features the best of Israeli music, theatre, film, dance and visual arts, and brings together a number of local organizations that work to promote Israeli culture.

One of those organizations is the Ashkenaz Foundation, which hosts an interfaith panel discussion titled "Music and the Arts: A Bridge to Peace," March 11, at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre in Vaughan, Ont.

Using the work of Diwan Saz as an example, a panel of artists and community leaders explores how music, art and culture can bridge communities all around the world.

The following night, on March 12, the multicultural group Diwan Saz, made up of Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Bedouin musicians who perform ancient music from Central Asia, Turkey, Persia and Israel, will perform at Toronto's Aga Khan Museum.

Speaking from his home in the Galilee, 39-year-old Yochai Barak, the group's founder and musical director, told *The CJN* that when the group first formed 10 years ago, he had no idea what it would become.

"It is totally different today. It started just for the sake of playing music with some very advanced students of mine, and musician friends," said Barak, who teaches at a music school in Jerusalem called the Center for Middle Eastern Classical Music.

"After a few years, it evolved so that the best musicians in Israel came and joined us. Also, we live in the northern Galilee next to Nazareth and we're surrounded by Christian and Muslim and Jewish villages, so from all over they came, and it became not only about music, but a dialogue."

The band members are Barak, who plays the saz and baglama; Udi Ben-knaan on the lyre and saz; percussionist Eyal Luman; Amir Shahsar, the Persian vocalist and nay player; Lubna Salame, the Arabic vocalist; Tzipora El-Rei, the Hebrew and Turkish vocalist; bassist Rani Lorentz; a Turkish oud and kanun master named Mumin Sesler; cantorial master Rabbi David Menachem; and Muhammad Gadir, a nine-year-old Bedouin singer.

"[Gadir] lives in the village next to us, and I know his father from childhood. We are like family," Barak said.

He said the "interfaith dialogue aspect" of the band happened organically.

"It was nothing I had thought about doing. It just naturally happened. We have a very good relationship. This area is very peaceful. We love the culture around us," he said.

Barak said the band represents a living example that the power of music can transcend boundaries and differences.

"It shows what happens when people of goodwill and dedication to unity bring their hearts and talents together for mutual harmony and respect and inspiration," he said.

"It is very special. I can see it in the crowd. Also in different countries where we play, people – it really touches them and shows different possibilities for things to evolve and not just be in the way we are used to thinking about it and see in the media."

Barak said what is unique about their performances is that they go beyond what is happening on the stage.

"It can't happen without the crowd. The crowd is part of the scene that's happening on the stage and we welcome everyone to come and be part of it," he said.

"I think music is the highest level of communication between people. If you think about it, there is no one who doesn't like music. Everyone likes different types of music, but when we try to connect on this level of music and not just starting to go deep inside the different conversations – it's surprising to see how you can connect on this high level and how it can affect daily life."

Diwan Saz is currently touring a number of North American cities, including Boston and Vancouver. For more information, visit www.diwansaz.com. ■

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Young jazz musician following in his family's footsteps

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A new generation of jazz musicians is emerging in Canada, and saxophonist Jake Koffman is one of its brightest stars.

Koffman, 28, has been making a name for himself playing at Toronto clubs and recording. He's working in the family business – making music – as did his two grandfathers, Canadian jazz icon Moe Koffman and Toronto Symphony Orchestra conductor Victor Feldbrill.

Moe Koffman was best known for his *Swinging Shepherd Blues*, a 1957 Canadian and U.S. hit he wrote and recorded on flute. The single became a standard and helped to put Canadian jazz on the map.

Like Moe, Jake is a woodwind player. He learned to play clarinet at 13, while attending St. Andrew's Junior High School in Toronto. A year later, he began studying saxophone, his main instrument today. Around that time, he visited his grandfather several times for music lessons.

"He taught me the fundamentals, proper breathing technique and how to get a nice sound from an instrument," Koffman said.

That year, 2001, he played *Swinging Shepherd Blues* on alto sax at St. Andrew's and, coincidentally, two hours later was summoned to the school office to hear devastating news about his grandfather.

"I got called down and [was] told he had just passed," Koffman said.

But other family members were there to support the budding musician. Koffman's father, Herbie, used to play trumpet, and his grandfather, on his mother's side, is Victor Feldbrill, 90, a violinist who conducted the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in the 1970s.

Koffman said Feldbrill, who bought him his first clarinet, is more of an encouraging grandfather, while Moe was his first musical influence. Jake didn't expect to make music a career, but over time discovered his own ability.

"I never thought I would get into music until I noticed that it came easier to me than other people," he said.

From the age of 13, Koffman has been gigging, playing in punk, hip hop, blues, R&B, reggae and wedding bands, but he confirmed his dedication to jazz when he enrolled in the Humber College jazz program. Since graduating in 2009, he has established himself as a band leader and sideman and he released his first CD last October.

Jake Koffman.

> *I never thought I would get into music until I noticed that it came easier to me than other people*

Koffman loves performing – "and the big rush you get from playing in front of people," – but going into the studio to record his first CD was nerve-wracking, he said.

"Making a studio album is a lot different than playing live. I was obviously nervous."

Koffman's excellent debut album, *The Jake Koffman Quartet*, showcases ballads and the up-tempo bebop Koffman enjoys playing. His grandfather was one of the first Canadian jazz players to adopt the bebop style that came out of New York in the early 1940s.

Most of the material on the CD is original, including Koffman's minor blues *Drake Lake* and Moe Koffman's *For Jezz*, which is dedicated to Jake's step-grandmother. A couple of the tunes were written by the quartet's pianist Bernie Senensky, who played with Moe, and one was penned by the group's drummer, Morgan Childs.

Koffman plays saxophone and flute, and Neil Swainson, who also played with Moe, is on bass. One of the CD's tracks, *Laura*, a standard, has been on rotation at the radio station JAZZ-FM.

For the past three years, Koffman has been a member of the horn section of singer Nikki Yanofsky's band whenever she plays Toronto. Koffman was thrilled when Yanofsky's mentor, Quincy Jones, a record producer who's worked with some of the great musicians of the 20th century, introduced Yanofsky's band at one of her performances here last spring.

"He grabbed my sheet of music and said, 'Yeah, it looks good,'" Koffman recalled. "It was a great experience."

Although being a musician can be a precarious lifestyle, Koffman said he wouldn't have it any other way. "It can be scary because you never know when your next paycheque is coming. But I love it. I wouldn't do anything else."

You can listen to Koffman's album on Spotify and download tracks from iTunes, and you can connect with him on Facebook. For more information, visit www.jakekoffman.com. ■

Intimate with nature on an Alaska cruise

Cruising the Tracy Arm, below and above. The closer you sail to the face of the Sawyer Glacier, the denser the ice floes. TOBY SALTZMAN PHOTOS

TOBY SALTZMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

"Bubble feed, portside! All eyes on bubbles!" Alex Carroll, our naturalist guide shouted, sending everyone on our small expedition boat rushing to the rails as five humpback whales emerged on the water's surface, each spouting fountains, swimming nose to tail in a giant circle.

Each about 45 to 50 feet long, they moved as if synchronized, flipping tails high as they dove down, leaving a ring of bubbles in their wake. "You're seeing a rare sight of gams – or groups of humpbacks – feeding together," Carroll said. "They're typically solitary mammals, but they've communicated to rally to create a bubble net to corral the bloom of small fish and krill, and push them to the surface so they can feed."

Minutes later, the whales breached the surface, jostling in a feeding frenzy, their mouths gaping as they inhaled their catch. So close, we could see their jaws and baleen plates that filter the food. "These whales have communicated, creating sounds by controlling the airflow through their pharynx," Carroll said.

Explaining that she is an acoustic technician, she dropped a microphone into the water so we could hear their oscillating tones. "Wow! Tones usually evolve in a slow progression, but we just heard five harmonics!" Carroll exclaimed, raising the microphone. Amazed, we watched as the whales repeated their act four times, the last diving so close and under our boat, we felt their spray. "This is the most beautiful sight I've ever seen," Carroll said when they disappeared and then surfaced in the distance.

Ten minutes later, while sailing through the Saginaw Channel near Point Retreat Lighthouse, she shrieked: "Orcas, starboard!" Counting fins slicing the sea, and black-and-white bodies arching into the air, we figured on 18 or 20.

"Orcas or killer whales are pod oriented and stay with their mothers. They usually hang near the coastline, so it's rare to see them here." Carroll dropped her microphone again, dazzling us with the orcas' sonar songs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 53

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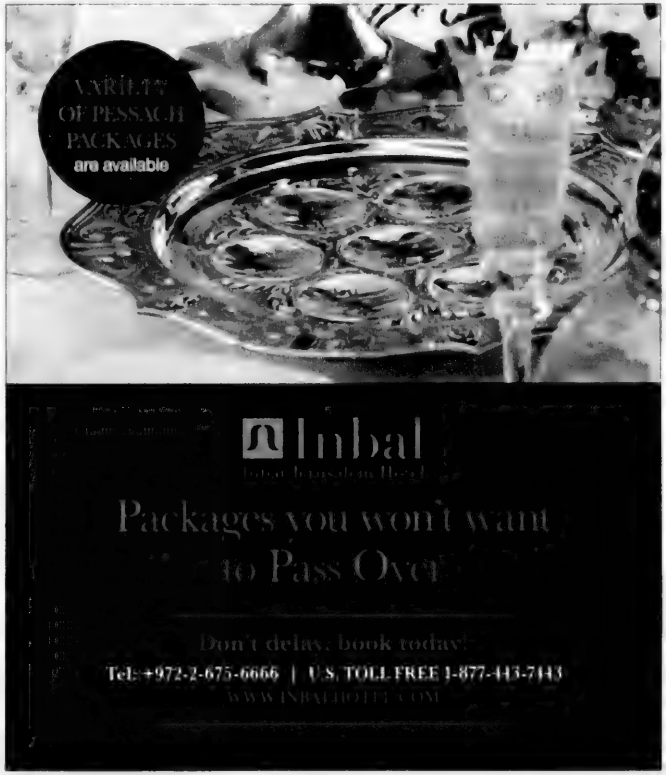
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'Rabbi' reaches congregation of millions

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In the summer of 2012, David Julian Hirsh found his calling as a rabbi, and reached a congregation of around 750,000 Americans a week. A year later, he traded that job for a cantor's robes and got an even bigger audience. In November 2014, Hirsh found the biggest reception of his career – as a rabbi again – yet did so in front of a whopping five million people.

What is Hirsh's trick to getting a large, faithful following? Play a Jewish spiritual leader on television.

Hirsh, a Montreal native, has found his niche playing roles that connect him to his Jewish roots. He played a rabbi in both the final season of Showtime's drug comedy *Weeds* and a recent episode of the NBC thriller *Grimm*.

Meanwhile, his acclaimed performance as an Orthodox cantor in the Lifetime movie *Twist of Faith* earned Hirsh a Canadian Screen Award nomination this year.

"I didn't think that I'd be able to merge the two in any way," he says, referring to his religion and his acting.

"When I started doing theatre, I was working with the Jewish [Repertory] Theater of New York and I was lucky enough to work on these roles that had spiritual elements. In Hollywood, [I thought] you're not going to find that anywhere."

For his portrayal of Rabbi David Bloom on *Weeds*, Hirsh tried to adopt his grandfather's Polish accent. The voice did not thrill series creator Jenji Kohan, he tells *The CJN*. However, Kohan had wanted to be a rabbi and tried to offer some of her own thoughts about faith into the series through that character.

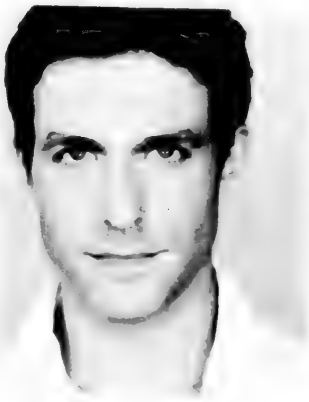
"She was wrestling with some interesting themes… that she was able to write in for the rabbi that I think a lot of us wrestle with," Hirsh says. "To be able to touch any of that in Hollywood is a great thing."

Originally, Hirsh only meant to get into acting as a hobby before law school, but says he fell in love with the craft during a summer program in New York City. He aspired to work mainly in theatre, but eventually made his way to Los Angeles to audition for "pilot season."

Despite his newfound specialty for tackling religious roles, Hirsh is still looking for parts. Now living in Los Angeles, Hirsh says he takes acting classes every week and runs out to auditions at least once a day. Lead roles on short-lived Canadian comedy *Naked Josh* and the TNT medical drama *Hawthorne* helped to boost his resume, but screen work is not constant.

"Even if you've reached a high level of success… you're still going for job interviews at the age of 40," he says.

Regardless, the Jewish parts are his favourite ones, Hirsh says. Now that he has cornered the market for playing rabbis, he is working on developing a show for Canadian television. He says it is a historical drama centred on the Jewish mob in Montreal in the 1940s and 1950s.



David Julian Hirsh

Beyond recent jobs, Hirsh has been attached to various Jewish roles in his career. In 2006, he starred as the protagonist in the CBC/BBC adaptation of the Mordecai Richler novel, *St. Urbain's Horseman*. On the New York stage years earlier, he played a rabbi's son. Elliot Gould played the rabbi in that production. Years later, Hirsh recommended Gould for a small part in *Horseman*.

For *Twist of Faith*, Hirsh played Jacob Fisher, a Brooklyn cantor mourning the loss of his family. He eventually finds a sort of salvation in a small Alabama town, where he befriends Nina, a church choir leader played by R&B singer Toni Braxton.

> *"Even if you've reached a high level of success… you're still going for job interviews at the age of 40."*

The role of a Jewish man falling in love with a black Christian woman could have courted a lot of controversy, but the interfaith themes resonated with audiences. The part also called on Hirsh to sing next to Braxton, which is no easy feat.

Hirsh says that *Twist of Faith* was the most meaningful performance of his career. To prepare for the part of a man going through mourning, Hirsh thought of his grandparents, Holocaust survivors who lost much of their family in the war.

"This [film] was one of the first times I felt at peace," Hirsh says. "I felt fulfilled as an actor and as myself. It was all connected. I hope and pray I get more roles like that."

"The study of acting is the study of life. So when whatever's happening in my life is happening in my work, it's kind of nice."■

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

FILM EXPLORES PRESENCE OF JEWISH BERBERS IN MOROCCO

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Tinghir-Jerusalem, Echoes From the Mellah*, a 2013 French-Moroccan production directed by **Kamal Hachkar**. Curious about the Jewish Berbers who used to live in his Moroccan village, and wondering why they left, historian-filmmaker Hachkar heads off to Israel and Morocco to solve the mystery. A fascinating examination of a little-known facet of Jewish history.

With guest speaker **Yigal S. Nizri**. $15, $10. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, March 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets available one hour prior to screenings; cash only.

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Names in the News

Toronto-based author **David Bezmozgis** has won the 2014 Edward Lewis Wallant Award, which was presented to him in West Hartford, Conn., on March 2. Bezmozgis, who won for his recent novel *The Betrayers*, is also the author of a previous novel, *The Free World*, and the collection *Natasha and Other Stories*. The Latvian-born writer focuses on stories about Russian-Jewish emigres.

The award was named for the late **Edward Lewis Wallant**, author of *The Pawnbroker* and other works. It is given to a Jewish writer who is not well known and who has published a recent work of significance for American Jews. Past winners include **Cynthia Ozick**, **Curt Leviant**, **Chaim Potok**, **Myla Goldberg**, **Dara Horn** and **Julie Orringer**.

• • •

Names in the News II

Tarragon Theatre and Volcano Theatre present the premiere of *Infinity* by **Hannah Moscovitch**, one of Canada's most prolific and acclaimed writers. A shocking, funny and revelatory elegy to time and love, *Infinity* runs April 1 to May 3 in Tarragon's Extraspace, 30 Bridgman Ave. $50, $55. Previews ($27) begin March 25. www.tarragontheatre.com, 416-531-1827.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• **Diwan Saz** is an interfaith ensemble made up of Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Bedouin musicians who perform ancient music from Central Asia, Turkey, Persia and the Holy Land, promoting peace and harmony through their music. They are performing in Toronto in partnership with Ashkenaz as part of the Spotlight on Israeli Culture. $34, $28. Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr. Thursday, March 12, 8 p.m.

Hannah Moscovitch

• The Toronto Public Library and the Consulate General of Israel present two Israel films. *Aviva, My Love* (March 16, 5:30 p.m.) features the tale of a hotel cook who secretly yearns to write; and *Jellyfish* (March 23, 5:30 p.m.) presents the intersecting tales of three women in Tel Aviv. Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St. Admission free. www.spotlightonisraeliculture.ca

• Opera educator **Iain Scott** continues his series on "Opera and Shakespeare." Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays, March 23 and 30, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Drop-in $18.

• **Joseph Kertes** discusses his new novel *The Afterlife of Stars* at the Lunch & Learn Day. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, March 26, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. To be followed by two afternoon programs on Passover, $4 drop-in each. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

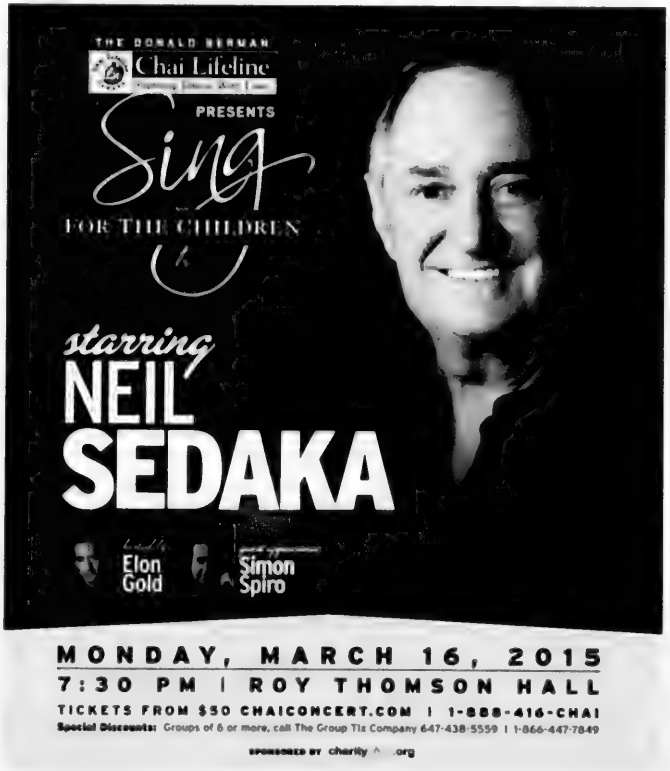
• **Steppin' Out Theatrical Productions** presents *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way to the Forum*. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St. March 26 to 29. Tickets, 905-787-8811, www.rhcentre.ca or www.steppingout.ca

• *The Jewish Radio Hour*, an entertainment written and directed by **Theresa Tova**, with musical director **Fern Lindzon** and performers Tova, Lindzon, **Harvey Atkin**, **David Gale**, **Aviva Chernick** and **Moish Kanatkin**, plays one night only at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Wednesday, June 17, 7:30 p.m. $36. www.rhcentre.ca, 905-787 8811.

• • •

At the Galleries

The Miles Nadal JCC Gallery at the J presents a 10th anniversary group exhibition of past artists including **Bernice Eisenstein**, **Harry Enchin**, **Judy Singer**, **Myriam Nafte**, **Rafael Goldchain**, **Sheree Rasmussen** and others. Bloor and Spadina; on view March 12 thru April 6. ■



THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 12, 2015

Dylan, Cohen and the music of the Akedah

JIM DIAMOND
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Since the recent release of Bob Dylan's (née Robert Zimmerman) *The Basement Tapes Complete*, and Leonard Cohen's 80th birthday, I've been contemplating two of the greatest musical icons and poets laureate of rock music in the '60s and onward and how their music emerges from their Jewishness.

The title track of Dylan's 1965 album, *Highway 61 Revisited*, begins provocatively with a partial retelling of the opening lines in the binding of Isaac narrative (Akedah) that originally appear in Genesis 22. The first stanza reads as follows:

"Oh God said to Abraham, 'Kill me a son.' Abe says, 'Man, you must be puttin' me on.' God say, 'No.' Abe say, 'What?' God say, 'You can do what you want Abe, but the next time you see Me comin' you better run.' Well, Abe says, 'Where do you want this killin' done?' God says, "Out on Highway 61.'"

A few years later, Leonard Cohen, released his own version of that same biblical narrative in *The Story of Isaac*. Part of its message was a protest against the older generation's decisions to send their children to war. Consider Cohen's rebuke:

"You who build these altars now, to sacrifice these children, you must not do it anymore. A scheme is not a vision, and you never have been tempted by a demon or a god. You who stand above them now, your hatchets blunt and bloody, you were not there before. When I lay upon a mountain and my father's hand was trembling with the beauty of the world."

The Akedah's theme of trial, sacrifice, martyrdom and death of the beloved son, which so critically informs and shapes subsequent Jewish, as well as Christian, theology seeps its way into modern popular music. These songs cannot possibly be understood first, without understanding their rootedness in a long Jewish tradition engaging the significance of music, and second, without a close look at their direct referent — one of the most powerful and shocking passages in the Hebrew Bible.

The very name Israel midrashically compounds the words song (*shir*) and God (*el*) which captures both the metaphysical bond between God and music, and the physical uniqueness of Israel as the national reflection of this integral bond.

Moses Nahmanides (13th century)considered the song at the end of Deuteronomy a précis of the entire Jewish historical experience – "Now this song, which is our true and faithful testimony, tells us clearly all that will happen to us." Jewish experience and chronology produce a divine musical score. Thus, by renaming Jacob as Israel, the angel he struggled with introduces music into his existence. It is no coincidence that immediately afterward, if only for a fleeting moment, Jacob reunites with Esau, his estranged brother, in a genuine mutual expression of love.

The formal mitzvah that obligates Jews individually to write a Torah scroll is derived from a particular divine mandate addressed to Moses and Joshua to inscribe one small segment of the Torah, the Song of Moses – "And now write you this song and teach it to the Israelites" (Deut. 31:19). The rabbinic rereading of the command transforms the entire Torah into an epic poem, a song. The minor poem of Parshat Ha'azinu mirrors the major "poem" of the Torah from Genesis to Deuteronomy.

Leonard Cohen's The Story of Isaac was partly a protest against the Vietnam War.

Just as only nature heard the divine voice at Creation, the poem commences in kind with nature – the heaven and the earth – as God's audience. And just as the Torah moves from the universal story of creation to the particular story of a single people, concluding with it and its leader on the cusp of establishing its own homeland, so too does the poem crescendo from its opening in Creation to its climax in the people of Israel and its land.

R. Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, (Netziv, 1816-1893), claimed that the poem captures the nature of the Torah much better than prose in its covert allusiveness that discloses meaning far beyond the simplicity and overt message of prose. The profound discoveries of the sage transform the *talmid chacham* (wise student) into the Torah's troubadour.

Dylan and Cohen, rock's *talmidei chachamin*, emerge out of this tradition in which song and Torah study, poetry and spiritual devotion, are intertwined in a sacred embrace. Their turning to Judaism's sacred texts is not sacrilegious but rather midrashic extensions of the profound role music plays within the tradition. In order to afford them their due, we need to apply Netziv's methodology, searching for meaning in the songs' allusions.

Highway 61, winding its way some 2,250 kilometres across the United States, from the south in New Orleans to the north in Minnesota, symbolizes the spectrum of genres of quintessential American music. Dylan anchors that route in the image of the Akedah, which animates it with both the terror of encounters with God and the adventurous discovery of the lengthy road that traverses a wide swath of his own country. The road therefore discloses the endless musical possibilities it encompasses.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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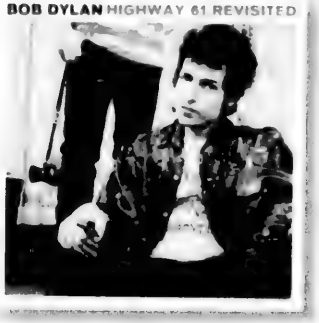
Songwriters' music emerges from their Jewishness

BOB DYLAN HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED



Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited.*

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

If the killing is to be done on that highway, then perhaps Dylan appropriates Abraham's encounter and trial as a paradigmatic symbol of breaking new ground in poetry and musical creativity.

The music that deserves to travel this road needs to adopt the boldness, the morally shocking, the risk taking, the offensiveness and the suffering that must have informed Abraham's willingness to sacrifice what he most loved. If the poet songwriter wants to play it safe and compose comfortable music, then she "better run."

For music to approach the realm of the transcendent, it requires the censure and moral outrage that novelty and pioneering so often attract. The toll for the musical highway of meaningful inventiveness is sacrifice of the highest order.

> *Cohen's treatment of Abraham, like Dylan's is tinged with both reverence and revulsion*

Cohen's treatment of Abraham, like Dylan's, is tinged with both reverence and revulsion. Abraham's relationship with his son starkly contrasts with those "over 30" in Cohen's own time, who fail to measure up to the tragic nobility of their biblical predecessor. The current child sacrificers are "schemers" not driven by a "vision."

Misguided or not, Abraham sets out sincerely to accomplish something much larger than himself, to pursue a vision that leaves a sacred legacy. A scheme, on the other hand, colloquially conveys a sense of deviousness and of immoral plotting to exploit others for one's own benefit. Playing on the midrash that Abraham's trial is prompted by Satan, one can judge Abraham's test to have been invoked either negatively by a "demon" or positively by a "God," but his temptation to murder at least reflects a relationship with the Transcendent, with something beyond his own existence. The parents of Cohen's Vietnam era have no such excuse, no temptation other than their own cruel self-interest.

Also reminiscent of the midrashic uniqueness of Abraham's knife, signified by the rare Hebrew term *ma'akhelet*. Abraham's weapon in Cohen's hands is elegant. Earlier in the song, Abraham's axe is said to be "made of gold." It was neither "blunt," nor crafted to cause the most excruciating pain, nor "bloody," since at the end of the trial Abraham in fact does not sacrifice his son. Axes used as weapons are normally made of copper, bronze, iron or steel, and so the preciousness of Abraham's axe of gold almost certainly indicates ornamental use rather than weaponry.

Cohen's contemporary generation's willingness to sacrifice its children is no real test, for the love its parents feign for their children is superficial, and therefore effortlessly overcome. Their love bears no resemblance to Abraham's passionate and all-consuming love for Isaac, as the midrash understands the implications of the heightened biblical multi-phrasing: "your son, your only one, the one you love, Isaac." They "were not there before" and thus cannot hope to stand in Abraham's shoes.

Cohen exquisitely blends the biblical narrative, rabbinic midrash, and his own midrashic ingenuity to first evoke the nightmarish terror in the murderous movement of Abraham's hand over Jacob's throat. But it also resonates paradoxically with a type of "beauty" in Abraham's gesture that contrasts starkly to the cruel, crude and barbaric drafting of Cohen's contemporary children to the foreign battlefield. Cohen's music itself annotates the "trembling" of the Akedah with "beauty."

Now I understand what initiated one of the great Jewish master-disciple relationships of the 20th century. After years of study and searching for a teacher to whom he could indenture himself, Rav David Cohen, known as the Nazir, visiting the same residence in Switzerland as Rav Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook (1865-1935), overheard Rav Kook praying in the morning. He was so enraptured by Rav Kook's musical rendition of the Akedah, "with an exalted song and melody," that he immediately knew his quest had come to an end, and he became Rav Kook's devoted acolyte for the remainder of his life. He captures Rav Kook's melodiously overwhelming effect by adopting the biblical description of King Saul's own transformation as a result of joining a prophetic musical troupe when he "was turned into another man."

If the retelling of a horrifying narrative such as the Akedah, imbued with what Kierkegaard called "fear and trembling," could, by its chanting, be spiritually transformative and inspire the kind of cathartic enlightenment Saul himself experienced, then one can be certain that the singer, in this case Rav Kook, is the one who knows how to extract beauty from every other part of the Torah. Leonard the kohen, in his rendition of the Akedah, follows the lead of these earlier kohanim in communicating its inner beauty through song. ■

The above is an excerpt from an article that appeared in the journal Milin Havivin.

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PASSOVER FOOD

Eat a Passover dinner in style

ALINA DAIN SHARON
JNS.ORG

For some of us, a certain measure of austerity is associated with the Passover holiday. Just as our people were forced to eat unleavened bread after escaping from slavery in Egypt, we forgo bread and other leavened products in favour of matzah for a week.

At the same time, restaurant chefs, cookbook authors and home cooks alike have been embracing the idea that cooking on Passover does not need to be inherently bland – and can even be upscale.

"The purpose of Passover is to celebrate our freedom from slavery in Egypt. Eating unleavened bread/matzah is due to the haste in which we left. But by no means is the purpose of Passover to remember the lack of normal food," says *Joy of Kosher* cookbook author Jaime Geller.

"As with all celebrations, we mark this momentous, life-altering, sea-splitting event in our history with food, family and prayer," she adds.

Joy of Kosher with Jamie Geller Magazine and JOYofKOSHER.com staff members, and Geller herself, "stretch and flex and exercise our culinary muscles each and every year, coming up with new, creative, inspired and easy recipes and menus to make this Passover the most delicious, enjoyable, memorable holiday ever," Geller said.

The following recipes from JOYofKOSHER.com can make for a fancy kosher-for-Passover dinner that Geller believes will impress your guests.

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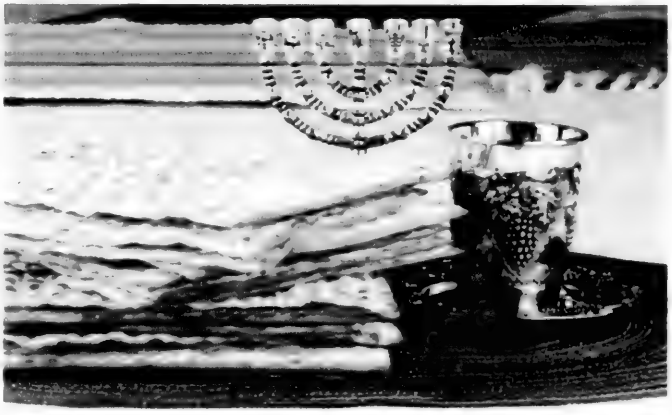

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Salmon Cakes With Tropical Fruit Salsa

Croquettes are cute and elegant for your starter course. They're also wonderfully light and refreshing. The tropical salsa is the perfect complement to the richness of the salmon. The balance of sweet and savoury flavours instantly pleases the palate. This is a starter with zing!

For cakes:

- ❑ 1 (2-lb.) side of salmon, skin on
- ❑ 1/2 cup red onion, diced
- ❑ 2 tbsp. matzah meal
- ❑ 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ❑ 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ❑ freshly ground black pepper
- ❑ 4 tbsp. olive oil

For salsa:

- ❑ 1 cup diced pineapple
- ❑ 1/2 cup diced mango
- ❑ 1/2 cup diced red onion
- ❑ 2 tbsp. chopped cilantro
- ❑ 1/2 jalapeno, seeded and finely chopped
- ❑ juice of 1 lime
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. kosher salt

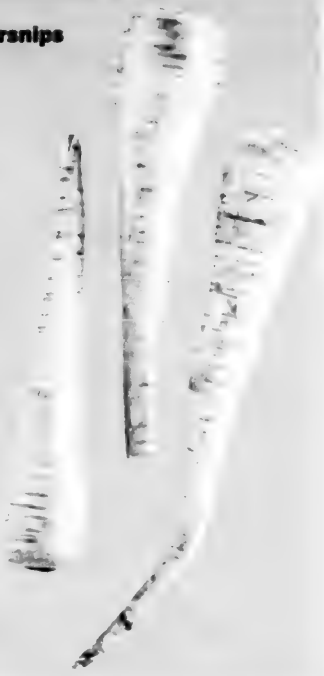
Preheat oven to 350 and lightly grease a large baking sheet. Bake salmon, skin side down, for 25 to 30 minutes or until cooked all the way through. Let cool completely.

Once salmon is cooled, gently flake away from the skin and break into large chunks. Place in a large bowl and combine with eggs, red onion, matzah meal, salt and pepper. Stir to mix well. Scoop about 1/3 cup at a time into your hands and form into a round patty about 1/4-in. thick. Place on a sheet pan and repeat with remaining mixture until you have formed 10 cakes. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl combine pineapple, mango, red onion, cilantro, jalapeno, lime juice and salt. Mix well and set aside.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry 5 cakes at a time for about 5 to 8 minutes per side or until golden brown and crispy. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate while frying remaining cakes. To serve, top each cake with a few tablespoons of salsa. Makes 10 cakes.

Grilled Ribeye With Crispy Parsnips



Ribeye is one of the most popular, juiciest, expensive steaks on the market. This cut is more marbled than others, which makes the steak especially tender and flavourful. Crispy parsnips are the perfect, slightly sweet alternative to French fries.

- ❑ 8 medium parsnips, peeled
- ❑ 4 cups olive oil
- ❑ 6 rib eye steaks, 1-in. thick, room temperature (6-8 oz.each)
- ❑ kosher salt
- ❑ freshly ground black pepper

Using a peeler, peel parsnips into thin strips until you cannot peel anymore of the parsnip.

Heat oil over medium high heat. Fry parsnips in batches for 2 to 3 minutes or until golden brown. Remove and let drain on paper towels and sprinkle with salt. Repeat until all parsnips are fried.

Heat grill pan over high heat. Season steaks liberally with salt and pepper and grill for 4 to 5 minutes per side for medium rare doneness. Let rest 5 minutes before serving or slicing. ■

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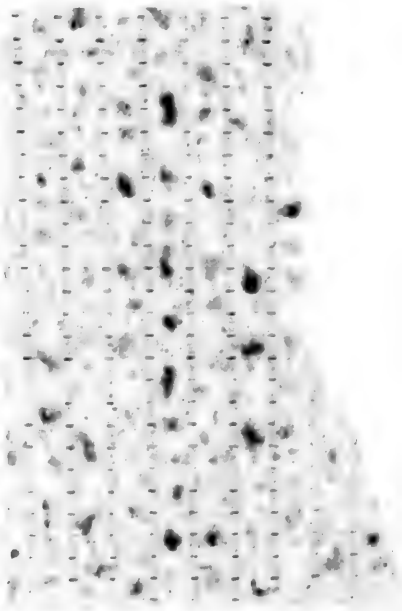
Evoking memories of the holiday



FRANCINE KURLANDSKI
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I always wish that I could view the Passover holiday with the eyes of a child. I remember the excitement in the house. Everyone was scurrying around with chores to do, to help out and bring in the holiday that continues to fill me with the memory and smells of days gone by. But that enchantment never really leaves. The child is still inside me, and now I am the mother, instilling that same excitement in my children, and yes, still in myself.

To make the seder meals a success requires determination and ingenuity. Menus are planned, new items need to be bought to replace the worn, and the strategy begins. It starts with the home being dusted, polished and cleaned from top to bottom. The Passover dishes are brought up from the stairwell. Every dish, cup and serving piece brings back for me the nostalgia and beautiful memories of those who passed them on. Every item is a treasure that evokes a story that's etched in family history. The favourites of generations past are served such as gefilte fish, matzah balls, brisket, tzimmes and farfel kugels

So here are some recipes to continue the enchantment of the holiday – meals for the child, parents, grandchildren and friends all to enjoy. Chag Samayach.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Photo from Taste of Passover by Paula Shoyer

Brisket And Stuffed Potato

- ❑ 4 lb. brisket
- ❑ 1 cup water
- ❑ 2 mediums onions
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. pepper
- ❑ 1 tsp. paprika
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. garlic
- ❑ 8 potatoes peeled, cut in half
- ❑ 1/2 cup matzah meal
- ❑ 1 small onion, grated
- ❑ 1 egg
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. pepper

Place brisket in a large pot with water, onions, salt, pepper, paprika and garlic. Cook slowly, covered, on top of stove, turning meat often. Add water as needed until meat is brown and tender about 2 -1/2 hours. Remove from pot.

Scoop out centres of potatoes and blend in food processor. Add matzah meal, grated onion, egg, salt and pepper. Fill potato cavity.

Cook potatoes in the gravy from the roast until soft. Slice the roast. Reheat with potatoes and serve.

Award-Winning Vegetable Kugel

- ❑ 2 cups shredded potatoes
- ❑ 2 cups shredded carrots
- ❑ 2 cups shredded zucchini
- ❑ 1 medium onion
- ❑ 1/3 cup matzah meal
- ❑ 2 large eggs
- ❑ 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- ❑ 1/8 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/8 tsp. pepper

Place each vegetable through food processor shredder and measure. Preheat oven to 350. Grease a large pan.

Place all the ingredients together in a large bowl and stir until well blended. Spoon into pan and bake 45 to 60 minutes until cooked through and top is golden brown. Cut into 12 pieces and serve. ■

PASSOVER CATERING

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Choose 1: Coleslaw or baby spinach salad with red onion, toasted almonds, Mandarin oranges and citrus vinaigrette.

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Choose 1: Garlic mashed potatoes with caramelized onions, vegetable farfel or herb roasted mini potatoes.

Choose 1: Green beans with caramelized onions and toasted almonds or candied roasted root vegetables topped with toasted pecans.

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Breakfasts to whet your appetite

Photo from *Taste of Passover* by Paula Shoyer

DAPHNA RABINOVITCH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Breakfast can pose certain challenges at Passover. I mean, how many times can you eat matzah brei? Or, what do you do if your child, like my son, doesn't like kosher for Passover cereals? Or is used to muffins, pancakes or waffles to get him started on his way in the morning? Well, you improvise. The recipes below are my adaptation of some regular recipes made kosher for Passover. The first recipe is basically a muffin batter made in the form of a cake, to bring that something special to your breakfast table. The Apple Pancake Puff is made in an 8-in. square, which alleviates the problem of flipping and having a couple of skillets going.

Blueberry Muffin Cake

This muffin in cake form is wonderful accompanied by yogurt or even some butter. I think it's kind of fun to stand things on their head – how many times can you offer cake to your youngsters for breakfast and be pleased about it?

- ❑ 1 cup potato starch
- ❑ 1/4 cup + 2 tbsp. matzah cake meal
- ❑ 1/2 cup almond meal
- ❑ 2 tsp. kosher for Passover baking powder
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- ❑ 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- ❑ 1/2 cup unsalted butter or margarine, melted
- ❑ 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ❑ 1/2 cup milk, at room temperature
- ❑ 2 tsp. grated lemon zest
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups fresh blueberries

Preheat the oven to 350. Lightly grease a 9-inch springform pan. Line the bottom with a circle of parchment paper; set aside.

Whisk together the potato starch, cake meal, almond meal, baking powder, salt and soda; set aside.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the sugar, butter, eggs, milk and lemon zest. Pour the wet ingredients over the dry ingredients, stirring with a rubber spatula just until mixed. Fold in the blueberries. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan.

Bake in the centre of the preheated oven until a cake tester inserted in the centre comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Cool the cake in the pan on a wire rack. Serve warm. Makes 8 servings.

Apple Pancake Puff

Akin to a German puff pancake, this breakfast treat is piled high with razor-thin slices of apple. If you have a mandolin, use it – it will save you time. If not, then simply slice the apples very thinly. I like to use a mixture of Red Delicious and Granny Smith apples, which keeps the apple puff a bit tart. In a pinch, slice the apples the night before and store them in some acidulated water overnight to prevent browning.

- ❑ 6 tbsp. potato starch
- ❑ 2 tbsp. matzah cake meal
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. kosher for Passover baking powder
- ❑ pinch each cinnamon and salt
- ❑ 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ❑ 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- ❑ 2 tsp. vanilla sugar
- ❑ 1/3 cup milk
- ❑ 2 tbsp. melted butter
- ❑ 3 apples, peeled, cored and very thinly sliced.

Preheat the oven to 400. Lightly grease an 8-in. square baking pan. Line the pan with parchment paper so that there is a two-in. overhang on two sides.

Whisk together the potato starch, cake meal, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in a bowl.

In a separate large bowl, whisk the eggs with both sugars until they're a little pale, about two minutes. Whisk in the milk and then the melted butter. Using a rubber spatula, add the apples, tossing them gently until the apples are well coated. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan.

Bake in the centre of the preheated oven until the batter is set and the apples are softened, 30 to 35 minutes.

Cool the pan on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Serve in squares. Makes 6 to 8 servings. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

One menu three ways for Passover

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dairy, meat or pareve – what to cook for Passover? For the seder meals, there is only one way to go – meat. But what about the vegetarians at your table? I have a least three at mine. So there you go, searching for other recipes that you can add to your already very large menu. Well here is the answer: one menu three ways. Prep and cook these recipes the exact same way, up to just before the end. Then add the extra meat or dairy to some, leaving the rest as they are. You may have trouble deciding which section of your cookbook to tuck these recipes into.

Matzagna

Matzagna is a tasty and fun-to-eat spin on traditional lasagna. To prepare a vegetarian version, just leave out the ground chicken, or substitute with grated cheese for a dairy meal.

- ❑ 2 large eggplants, cut into 1/2-in. cubes
- ❑ 6 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ 3/4 cup diced onion
- ❑ 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- ❑ 2 cups diced red bell pepper
- ❑ 5 large zucchini, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- ❑ 1 can (28 oz.) tomatoes, well drained, liquid reserved
- ❑ 1 tbsp. dried basil
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- ❑ 2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. pepper
- ❑ 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley, or one tbsp. dried parsley
- ❑ 2 lb. ground chicken
- ❑ 7-8 sheets matzah
- ❑ reserved tomato liquid mixed with 1/2 tsp. basil and 1/2 tsp. oregano
- oil to grease pan

Heat 4 tbsp. of the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the eggplant and sauté until almost tender. Remove to a dish. Heat the remaining oil in the same skillet over low heat; sauté the onion, garlic then add the zucchini and red pepper. Cook for about 10 minutes, then add the eggplant back to pan. Place over low heat and add the tomatoes, basil, oregano, salt, pepper and parsley. Simmer, uncovered, stirring frequently, for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the chicken mixture in two batches until just cooked through, about 2 to 3 minutes per batch. With a slotted spoon to drain off any fat, transfer the cooked chicken to a bowl. Refrigerate until needed.

To assemble: grease a 15x10x2-in. Pyrex baking dish with oil. Cover the bottom of the baking dish with a layer of matzah. The matzah can be cut or broken into smaller pieces to fit. With a pastry brush or a spoon, wet the matzah with the tomato liquid and herbs. Spread a layer of the eggplant mixture over the matzah, then one-third of the *cooked ground chicken. Repeat the layering process 2 more times. Bake in 350 oven until heated through, about 50 minutes. Allow to cool for 5 minutes before cutting.

*If you are making a dairy Matzagna, sprinkle 1/2 cup grated cheese over each of the three layers. For pareve matzagna, leave as is.

Zucchini 'Pasta'

Watch the surprise on the faces of your guests when you bring a platter of al dente "spaghetti" to your dining table. To make this zucchini "pasta" you have many options: You could use a spiral vegetable slicer, my new favourite kitchen toy. This tool makes very, very long spaghetti strands out of your vegetables. You can also use a julienne slicer, a vegetable peeler or a mandolin for a similar but shorter pasta effect. This dish is pareve, so it can be served at any meal. To prepare a dairy version, consider adding a sprinkle or a dollop of an interesting cheese. For a meat version, add your favourite meatballs when serving. As the main or as a side dish, this dish will be a hit this Passover, and healthy fun all year round.

- ❑ 5 large zucchinis
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. pepper
- ❑ 1/4 cup olive oil
- ❑ 3 plum tomatoes, chopped
- ❑ 1 bunch fresh basil leaves, torn

Prepare zucchini "pasta" whichever method that you prefer. Mix salt, pepper and oil. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Ready a colander over the sink. Heat large fry pan. When water is boiling blanch the zucchini for 20-25 seconds and pour into the prepared colander. Add oil mixture to pan and then add zucchini and tomatoes. Stir-fry until coated and heated through. Add in fresh basil. Drain off any liquid. Twirl with tongs and plate.

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Chicken Fingers	$20.00 per lb
Chicken Wings	$16.00 per lb
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Stuffed Cornish Hen	$24.00 per hen

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(1lb serves approx. 4 people)

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Creamy Coleslaw	$8.00 per lb
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(1lb serves approx. 4 people)

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Seasonal Vegetable Saute	$25.00 per lb
Honey Balsamic Root Vegetables	$25.00 per lb
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EXTRAS

Seder Plate	$8.00 per plate
Charoset	$6.00 per 1/2 lb
Potato Kugel Au Gratin	$30.00 per pan
Apple Kugel	$31.00 per pan
Sweet Potato & Zucchini Kugel	$30.00 per pan

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(Each cake serves 12 to 14)

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What's New

MARCH 12 - MARCH 19

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, March 12

ETHICS IN A TIME OF TERRORISM
Rabbi Moshe Meirovich presents a 3-part lecture series on "Jewish legal ethics in a time of terrorism," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

PEACE THROUGH MUSIC
The Diwan Saz Interfaith Ensemble performs as part of the Spotlight on Israeli Culture, 8 p.m., Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr. $25/$30. For tickets, 416-646-4677.

BIBLE CLASS
Weekly Bible class led by **Aaron Nussbaum** resumes with studying the Book of Zachariah, Beth David Synagogue, 9:15 a.m. 416-633-8097.

FROM DESERT TO DELIVERY ROOM
Dr. Rania Okby, Israel's first female Bedouin physician, speaks at 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Friday, March 13

SHABBAT ACROSS CANADA
Am Shalom Synagogue, 767 Huronia Rd., Barrie, hosts services at 6 p.m. and a free Shabbat dinner. Call 705-792-3949 to reserve.

Sunday, March 15

ISRAEL ADVOCACY WORKSHOP
Learn how to defend Israel on campus, in government, in the media and among peers, 2-9 p.m., The Village Shul, 1072 Eglinton Ave. W. Keynote speaker is **Christie Blatchford**. $20/$25. Register at bit.ly/israelday2015.

JEWISH REVIVAL IN POLAND
Genevieve Zubrzycki, of the University of Michigan, discusses "Making sense of the Jewish revival in contemporary Poland," 2 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC. Sponsored by the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Association of Warsaw's Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

KOSHER COOKING DEMO
Atzmaut chapter of Hadassah WIZO holds a kosher cooking demonstration and wine tasting, with chef **Gadi Braudi,** 1-4 p.m., Kehillat Shaarei Torah Synagogue. $36. 416-446-1977.

To Cuba, with love

For 54 consecutive years, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (and the Canadian Jewish Congress before it), along with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, have provided kosher for Passover food to the Jews of Cuba. From left, Yael Karol, chair of CIJA Toronto's community advisory committee, with Shoel Silver and Felicia Posluns, 2016 UJA campaign chairs, help load the shipment of Passover food at United Natural Foods.

Monday, March 16

NEIL SEDAKA
Neil Sedaka performs in a benefit for Chai Lifeline Canada at Roy Thomson Hall. For tickets, visit www.chaiconcert.com or call 647-430-5933.

VISION IMPAIRED SENIORS
Vision Impaired Seniors group meets at 7 p.m. for supper and entertainment, Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W. RSVP **Bess** 905-508-2892.

Tuesday, March 17

THE GOOD LORD BIRD
Marilyn Herbert reviews *The Good Lord Bird* by **James McBride,** 8 p.m., Adath Israel Synagogue. For more information, call **Beverly** 416-499-6920.

Wed., March 18

PASSOVER LECTURE
Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky discusses "Finding Pesach equilibrium," 8 p.m., B'nai Torah Congregation.

TALMUD CLASS
Talmud class resumes, led by **Aaron Nussbaum,** studying Tractate Megillah in English, 9:15 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

REEL AND SPIEL
Beth Emeth Synagogue shows the film *Goodbye, Columbus*, 7 p.m. $5.

Thursday, March 19

ISRAELI SCIENTIFIC INNOVATIONS
Rabbi Stephen Wise, author of *Israel – Repairing the World*, discusses "Israeli scientific innovations," 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion. $3/$6.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
Drivers are needed March 29 to deliver food hampers for NCJW's Passover food drive. Call 416-633-5100.

Circle of Care needs volunteers to deliver meals to Holocaust survivors. Call **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext. 496.

Baycrest is looking for volunteers (over 13) to assist with palliative care, meals and special events. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

JOB FAIR
JVS holds a job fair, March 24, 3-5 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St. Pre-registration required with resume at lebovicjobfair@jvstoronto.org

TREASURES OF THE CARIBBEAN
The Beth Tzedec museum hosts an exhibit of photos, *Jewish Treasures of the Caribbean*, on until April 30. To book a tour, contact **Dorion Liebgott**, 416-781-3514, ext. 232 or dliebgott@beth-tzedec.org

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com

- Let's Be Blunt: An evening forum for parents on teens and drug use, March 24, 7:30 p.m.
- Looking Ahead: A 6-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals, starts March 26, 7 p.m.
- Widow/Widower under 65: A 6-session group for people under 65 who have recently lost a spouse, starts March 31, 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800 and ask for intake.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of March 26 is March 16. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

For Seniors

› **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526 or colinb@mnjcc.org.

› **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC. Donald Stuss** discusses "The amazing plastic brain," March 12, 1:30 p.m. Passover seder, April 2, 1:30-3 p.m. Register by March 20. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

› **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, March 18; Spa day, facials, manicures, barber, hairdresser, March 12, 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; High tea with big band Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m.; balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

› **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112 March 17, **Kevin Courrier** discusses "The hidden art of Steven Spielberg," 10 a.m.; March 18, Healthy Aging Fair, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; March 19, **Jaime Slavin** discusses "Eating with the seasons," 1:30 p.m.

› **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. March 25, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.

› New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.

› Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.

› Shaar Shalom. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.

› Beth Emeth. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.

› Temple Har Zion. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com.

› Beth Tzedec Synagogue. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.

› Chabad of Markham offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email rabbig@chabadmarkham.org.

› Beth Sholom's seniors group meets for lunch and exercise every Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

› Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com

› Learn to play bridge, starting April 13, 10 a.m.

› **Osnat Lippa** presents "El Greco," Tuesdays, April 14-28, 1 p.m.

› **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Mix it up with media," Thursdays, starting April 16, 1 p.m.

› **Sadko Hadzihasanovic** teaches "Portrait drawing and painting," Fridays starting April 17, 9 a.m.

› Portrait sculpture with **Kathryn Chelin,** April 13-June 15, 7-9 p.m.

› Dance and yoga for young adults with an intellectual disability, April 14-June 16, 6:15 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

› Spring registration for programs is now on.

› The gallery celebrates its 10th anniversary with a group exhibition of past artists from March 12- April 6.

› **Iain Scott** teaches a course on "Opera and Shakespeare," March 23, 30, 1:30 p.m.

› *Circus Berserkus* is a circus show about mental health and recovery. March 19, 8 p.m., March 20, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., Al Green theatre. www.algreentheatre.ca

› Sign up for Winter Wellness Workshops: MELT training for runners, March 23, 6 p.m. ; MELT for neck and shoulders, March 29, 10:30 a.m.; Melt decompression of the spine, March 29, 1:30 p.m. Email fitnessguru@mnjcc.org or ext. 574.

› Canada improv games, Toronto regional finals are held at the Al Green Theatre, March 24-28, 7:30 p.m.

› Bring your lunch and learn day, March 26. **Joseph Kertes** discusses his new novel, *The Afterlife of Stars*, 11 a.m.; **Zahava Lambert** discusses "Passover customs reflected in illuminated Passover Judaica," 1:30 p.m.

› Israeli family Kabbalat Shabbat, March 27, 5:30 p.m. Dinner, games and kids activities in Hebrew. Ext. 321.

› Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, March 29, 1 p.m. Ext. 521.

› Invitation to Dance: film, panel and mixed abilities dance event, March 22. Film 2-4 p.m.; dance 4-6 p.m. Email inclusion@mnjcc.org or ext. 330.

› Shabbat family party (ages 0-4 with an adult), Fridays at 11:15 a.m.; Shabbat club (ages 3-5), Fridays 12:30 p.m. Free Passover-themed Shabbat family party open house, March 27, 10 a.m. RSVP anniem@mnjcc.org.

› Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Tinghir-Jerusalem: Echoes from the Mellah*, March 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Yigal Nizri.** Box office opens one hour before screening time.

› Register now for the Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singer's edition, July 13-17, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Theatre edition, Aug. 17- 21, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

› Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or call ext. 147.

› Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.

› iSocialLab brings together young Israelis interested in community-building and entrepreneurship. Email lizar@mnjcc.org or ext. 321.

› Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

› Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs presents "How to talk to our children about issues facing Israel and the Jews," March 24, 7 p.m.

› Ceramics classes start April 12.

› Watch *Hearts of Tango*, about the Toronto tango scene, March 28, 7:30 p.m.

› **Dr. Joey Shulman** discusses "Balance hormones, boost energy and burn fat naturally," April 16, 7 p.m.

› **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m.

› Vendors wanted for Israeli market, April 23, 5-9 p.m.

› Learn to play mah-jong, Tuesdays at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m.

› Silk painting on scarves starts April 24, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. ■

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

Ask Ella

Go out on a high note

Ella Burakowski
ellacjn@gmail.com

Dear Ella,

With tax time around the corner, I went to see my accountant Jack this week. He's been handling my money for decades, and for the first time, I saw signs I may have to find a new accountant. I don't know Jack's exact age, but he is a Holocaust survivor, and I am guessing probably in his mid- to late 80s.

This man has always been sharp as a tack, but while I was there, he made a few obvious errors and asked me questions I knew he had the answers to in the past. I didn't have the heart to say anything and now I'm torn. How do I leave someone whom I've been loyal to for so many years? I don't want to hurt his feelings, but I can't afford to have him working with my money any longer.

When Loyalty Has to End

Dear When Loyalty Has to End,

It's a blessing to be physically and mentally able to accomplish in your 80s what you were able to do in your 40s. Usually, throughout a career, you work your way to the top, hopefully reach a peak then level off. However, an eventual decline in ability and stamina is inevitable.

I can only imagine the horrors Jack lived through in his youth, the struggles he overcame to get to this country and make a new life, and the feeling of pride he and his family must feel for everything he's accomplished. The mere fact that he's still working in a position that requires a sharp mind is a testament to his very character.

At this stage, Jack probably has no clue how to move on without this job. It must terrify him to think of what he will do every day if he doesn't have it. He'll have no routine, no purpose to get up in the morning – or so he may believe.

In hindsight, perhaps you should have gently pointed out the mistakes. Jack may not be aware that he's slipping. It's much easier for you, who only sees him once or twice a year, to see the decline. Maybe Jack or his family are not aware that time has finally taken its toll on his ability to continue in his career.

You have to be practical. Logically you can't use a professional who can't do their job at an optimum level. You can still remain friends, but ultimately you have to be honest. Give Jack the respect he deserves. Point out your concerns and explain why you have chosen to move on. Thank him for the many years he took such good care of your finances.

It would be a shame for Jack to be remembered for the mistakes he made in the end, rather than his successes and incredible endurance that very few people are lucky enough to have into such an advanced age.

There is something to be said about ending on a high note.

Dear Ella,

I used to love my job, but it's no longer challenging. The things I used my mind to solve are now solved by computers.

All I do is program data and the machine spits out answers. After 27 years of doing the same work I think I'm ready for a change. But what can I do? I have hobbies and love to create. I bake, paint, sew and love to decorate, but those aren't careers. I'm so set in my ways, I'm afraid to budge. My job is easy, but I see my life passing before me.

Need a change

Dear Need a change,

Change is scary, especially without a plan. But I can hear that you have done a lot of thinking, and now it's just a matter of putting your courage hat on and making the mental move first. Once you've done that, the actual physical move will require a more concrete strategy.

If you can afford to, perhaps go back to school to learn interior design, or how to become a pastry chef, or how to open your own dressmaking/alteration business. Start with the scores of career assessment quizzes and information sites on the Internet.

Ultimately, you should speak to a professional career counsellor who will know the steps you should take and guide you in the right direction.

Once you have a plan, it will be time to jump in with both feet.

We are the creators of our own destiny. Now go create. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Family Moments

Mazal tov to Leon Roth on your birthday! We love you a Ganze Leyben! Until 120 at least! Your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Wishing our dear mother and grandmother, Gertrude Toulch Staviss, all our love and best wishes on her 92nd birthday celebrated on Feb. 19.

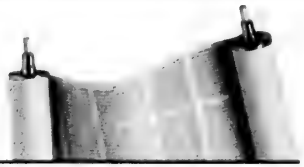
Sara (Ahronheim) & Elie Koffman are excited to announce the birth of our son, Morris "Moe" Aaron, on Feb. 17. Big sister Cloe is in love.

Mazel tov to Bernice & Irving Buchbinder on your 60th anniversary on March 13 with much love and best wishes from your entire family.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Parshah

Vayakhel-Pekudei | Exodus 35:1 - 40:38



Rabbi Ilan Acoca explains why every Jew is obligated to build their own mishkan
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl argues mitzvot can keep us connected to Revelation
Rabbi Catharine Clark on the importance of women's interpretations of the Torah

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

We know that the Mishkan serves as a model for the divine service of every individual Jew. Every one of us is entrusted with the obligation to build an internal mishkan within in order to make ourselves a living sanctuary for the Divine Presence.

But just as the Mishkan required construction, so do we. In constructing our internal mishkan, we are apt to wonder whether we are capable of producing exquisite, delicate, complex qualities within ourselves and our lives. Are we capable of achieving great heights? Can we truly make ourselves into a fitting home for the Presence of the Almighty Himself.

Parshat Pekudei reassures us: if we truly desire and make a firm decision to grow, our efforts will be blessed from on high. When we make the continual effort to come to receive the Torah's guidance, we will not be left empty-handed. Our receptivity will be rewarded with guidance, help and internal strength. The knowledge, understanding and wisdom we yearn for will be forthcoming. We will receive what we need to succeed at building our internal mishkan, glorious and beautiful, exquisite and sacred – the actualization of our truest self. What the Almighty Himself desires is our sincere commitment. All the rest is in His hands.

I was recently privileged to be part of a Canadian Sephardi delegation that went to visit the Canadian Parliament. The purpose of the delegation was to make the government aware of our existence and to advocate on behalf of Jews from Muslim countries.

The most uplifting moment was when some of us met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who spent time with us thus building a mishkan in each one of us.

May we all merit to build an internal mishkan within us and our peers. ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

The double Torah portion of Vayakhel and Pekudei closes the book of Exodus and concludes the 10 chapters devoted to the Mishkan, the portable wilderness sanctuary. The Torah presents detailed, formal and ritualized directions of what to do and a comprehensive report of the construction and dedication of the portable sanctuary. Amy Cooper Robertson suggests that the details are so exact that, paradoxically, we are bewildered by them. Thus the literary text actually simulates the incomprehensible experience of Revelation.

This would correlate with the observation of the great Spanish sage, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, that "The essence of the Mishkan is to be a place for the divine Presence at the Ark." As the Ark of the Covenant, it was intended to safeguard the sacred stones that were the expression of the Covenant. As the Ark of Testimony, it was to be a place where God "shall meet with you there and speak with you." Commanded first but constructed last, the Ark was the heart of the Mishkan and the way that the people of Israel could continue to experience the connection of the ephemeral event of Revelation.

In our day, those who seek the Presence of God have neither the Tablets of Testimony nor the Ark of the Covenant. We wander in our personal wilderness, hoping for an occasional moment of inspiration. Although we lack the sanctuary symbolic of Sinai, we do have the mitzvot, which add holiness to our lives and create *tzavta*, a way of coming together with God and community, a finite act that has the possibility of evoking the Infinite. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto. Follow him at www.beth-tzedec.org and https://www.facebook.com/bfrydmankohl.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

In the long list of items Bezalel made for the Mishkan, the Torah gives us an unexpected detail. We learn that the wash basin and its stand were made of the copper from the mirrors of the women stationed at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. For no other item in this account of the artisan's work do we learn who supplied the raw materials.

In his commentary on this verse, Ibn Ezra tells us that it is the practice of all women to beautify themselves each morning using their mirrors. However, these special women, who were so close to the holiness of the Mishkan, willingly gave up their mirrors and their attention to appearance in the service of God.

Ibn Ezra's comment is a stark example of what was lost to us because for centuries, women's interpretations of the Torah were not recorded. Ibn Ezra thinks that women so enjoy our morning grooming routines that it takes being next to the Presence of the Lord to get us to give up our mirrors. I wonder if Ibn Ezra's daughters would agree.

In reality, many women find this attention to our appearance oppressive. These morning beauty routines take time, time that could be better spent on work, family, self and community. Yet, if we do not make this effort every morning to style our hair and apply our makeup, we and the work we do are not taken seriously – even at times when we are supposed to be close to God. A few years ago, in keeping with the prohibition against ointments, a colleague of mine did not wear makeup on Yom Kippur. A congregant criticized her for failing to look "professional" on the most important day of the Jewish year.

Maybe it is time for each of us to turn in our mirrors to the service of God. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is the spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ont.

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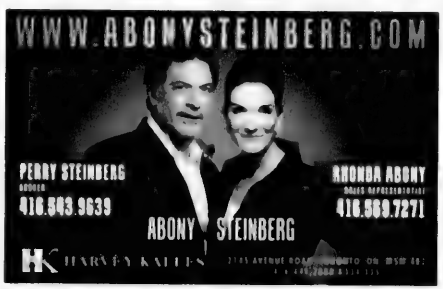

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A whale of a cruise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

This awesome whale watching experience – an intimate view of whales that people dream of – was just one of the specialty excursions that Silversea's Silver Shadow featured on our 10-day Alaska itinerary looping from Vancouver.

Having previously sailed all of Silversea's vessels, and cruised Alaska's Inside Passage on large ships, we'd chosen this cruise for two reasons: the indulgence to interlace luxury and nature, and because the 540-passenger, 36,000-ton ship's small size would allow navigation deep into narrow channels to sites that prohibit larger vessels.

Silversea delivered every promise of luxury in an all-inclusive package and beyond every expectation for unique nature experiences, proving to me (a fourth-time cruiser to these waters) that I can return several times, each for different sensations.

With many excursions available for this itinerary, Silversea's travel journal – offering everything from guided culture tours, sea-kayaking, sport-fishing from fly-in lodges, scuba-diving, dog-sledding to rainforest hikes – was delivered early, a boon for advance planning.

From Ketchikan – our first port of call – two half-day tours of Misty Fiords provided a true sense of Alaska's wilderness as a haven for wildlife. On a flight-seeing tour, we came eye-to-eye with an American bald eagle. We could see the yellow ring of its eyes and its piercing gaze, its slick white head and sharp beak, the oily feathers and thick claws clenched towards its abdomen. Separated only by a glass bubble, we watched mesmerized as this noblest bird of prey joined us in a surreal, mid-air dance. Undaunted by our whirring helicopter, it elevated its wings and swooped toward the trees.

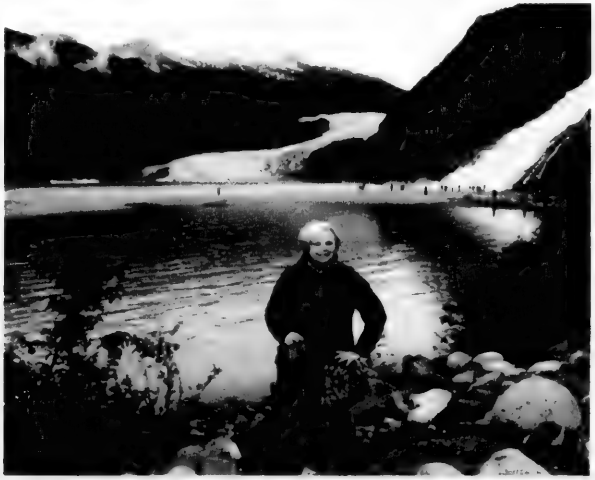
A gam of humpback whales in a feeding frenzy.
TOBY SALTZMAN PHOTOS

On the afternoon boat tour, as we navigated between tiny green islands and veered into a narrow fiord, our guide spotted wild birds, hawks diving for prey, eagles nesting in trees. We slowed to a drift near rocks clustered with dozens of seals. Some lazed like shiny lumps; some grunted, slapping their tails; playful babies splashed in the water. When the channel opened to the serene pocket of Rudyard Bay surrounded by mammoth rock mountains, we were awestruck by the silence, interrupted only by the sounds of birds and splashing fish.

In Juneau, we geared for an all-day jaunt combining Mendenhall Glacier and whale watching. As we'd previously taken heli-flights to walk the slippery glacier crest, we hiked the wilderness to the glacier's foot.

Every day, every port brought new adventures. From Skagway, the White Pass & Yukon Steam Train took us above the tree line to the tundra. Golfing in Prince Rupert added a notch to our "courses played." The day spent cruising Tracy Arm was – in a word – spectacular: basking in sunshine, we revelled in unfolding scenery as the Silver Shadow's captain navigated through the narrow channel between sheer walls of the fiord, past ice floes to the turquoise face of Sawyer Glacier.

Our last port of call, Victoria, B.C., was lush with flowers, romantic as ever. With so many options – from kayaking to extreme sport-fishing – we leisurely strolled through Butchart Gardens, enjoyed English High Tea at the Fairmont Empress, then returned to indulge in massages at the 83,000-sq.-ft. spa before a final, epicurean celebration in Silversea's Relais & Chateaux restaurant, Le Champagne. Divine. Disembarking in Vancouver, we wished to return again. ■



The writer hiking through the wilderness to the foot of the Mendenhall Glacier and waterfall.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 12, 2015

Hannah Kehat: Orthodox Israeli feminist pioneer

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Hannah Kehat is a modern Orthodox Israeli academic, teacher and the founder of Kolech - Religious Women's Forum, the country's first Orthodox Jewish feminist organization, which she established 17 years ago. Kehat spoke last month in Toronto and Vancouver at talks sponsored by the New Israel Fund of Canada.

The CJN spoke with her prior to her Canadian appearance about her foray into feminism, Kolech's activist and educational activities, and the key issues that she feels women in Israel – and particularly religious women – are facing today.

Hannah Kehat, founder of Israel's first Orthodox feminist organization, spoke in Vancouver and Toronto last month. YOSSI ALONI (MAARIV) PHOTO

Did you grow up in an Orthodox community?

Yes, I grew up in the haredi neighbourhood of Mea Shearim. It was not considered acceptable for women in this community to go to university, but I decided to do it. This was one of the reasons for my leaving this style of life and changing to a more modern way of life, because I wanted to study and not to give it up.

I left the community when I was about 20 and, other than my parents and siblings, with whom I still have relationships, I cut my connection to it. I went to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and studied Jewish philosophy and Bible studies. I later did a doctorate at Hebrew U in Jewish philosophy. Now I'm writing, researching and teaching Jewish studies. I teach at some academic colleges in Israel.

Had you always identified as a feminist?

I didn't identify as a feminist at that time when I first left the haredi community. I just wanted to go on with my studies. But in retrospect, I see it was a feminist act not to give up, to fulfil myself and not to become a haredi woman who has to stop her studies and have a big family… Later, at about age 35, I identified as a feminist and started the feminist movement of religious women in Israel. That was about 17 years ago.

What are the biggest issues faced by women in Israel today?

I think, because in Israel there's no separation between church and state, that is the main problem of women in Israel, especially the religious. There's the problem of agunot, and of women who want to convert to Judaism. There's a huge gap between the situation of women and the rabbinic establishment. In the last two years, we've had a bit of success in the Knesset, with members like Aliza Lavie, from Yesh Atid, who tried to change a little bit the laws, but it's really a big challenge. It's very political.

> *When we first started Kolech, even to say the word 'feminist' among religious women was forbidden, taboo*

We recently helped a lesbian religious woman that a rabbi had shamed and discriminated against, so we took him to court, and he [eventually] had to pay her. We've had some achievements in the Supreme Court. For example, it's now illegal to make a woman go to the back of the bus. I personally sat in the front of a bus between two haredi men this week, and nobody dared say anything, because they know now if they did, the driver would call the police. So we can say we changed that. Kolech was fighting in the Supreme Court for that. We helped to do it. And women at the Western Wall can now pray and nobody bothers them. So there are some achievements.

Aside from the types of activism you mentioned, what are Kolech's main activities?

We have many positive activities, both cultural and educational. We have a lot of workshops and programs in schools to empower young women, teach them and talk to them, and for boys, too, about gender issues, sexual issues. It's a lot of listening and talking to them about issues that bother them as teenagers. We do this in religious, but not haredi, schools, and sometimes in non-religious schools.

We've also published books, newsletters and academic articles.

How many members does Kolech have?

We have about 2,000. And in our Facebook group, we now have about 10,000 people. It's very alive and dynamic.

And last year, a new movement of haredi feminists started to be active on Facebook and we've started to meet them. They come to our meetings. It's the beginning of a change in the haredi world.

What kinds of resistance, or pushback, has Kolech encountered?

Most of the time we're not attacked, but supported, and the dialogue hasn't been too aggressive, though there have been times when it became aggressive.

For example, on the issue of sexual abuse by rabbis, when we started to demand and investigate the issue and deal with complaints against rabbis, we became a target for threats. And there was pressure put on my boss to fire me, on my family and friends. My boss did try to fire me because of these battles and my decision to complain against rabbis, and I was in court for five years and won.

It was hard for the rabbis. We had broken a taboo. Nobody before had talked about sexual harassment or domestic violence in religious communities. There was this idealization that the religious society was a super model, that everyone was OK and that there were no such problems in that community. Kolech was the first organization that started to talk about this and to say, "We have to take this seriously and go to the police." At the end of the day, most rabbis changed their attitudes, and today they really participate and ask us to teach them about these issues.

How do you best get through to women in haredi communities?

There's now this big group of haredi feminists and we meet with them and they admire us and learn from us, come to us for guidance. These women have computers. They're smart and very interesting.

To what extent, if at all, do you draw on Halachah to argue points about feminism?

Sure. We have to use the same language as the rabbis. So, when we fight against a rabbi who has been abusive, we speak about "*lo ta'amod al dam reyecha*" – that you can't just stand by the suffering of another.

We publish a lot of books and articles about these issues.

Women in Israel, maybe not haredi, but religious Zionist women, today are part of the halachic discussion and write halachic books, responses. Now in Israel we have women who are real scholars in Torah.

What do you see as the best way to create change for women in the haredi world?

I don't know. In the haredi world it will take time, though it has started.

When we first started Kolech, even to say the word 'feminist' among religious women was forbidden, taboo. Every religious woman had to say she was not a feminist. But now, it's not a forbidden word and a lot of young women say they are. There are a lot of interesting processes in the haredi community now having to do with rabbis, yeshivot, political parties. I think that in 10 years, we will see a different society.

I know in modern Orthodox society in Israel, it's also a dynamic process. We have a lot more egalitarian synagogues now in Israel than we did a few years ago. Women are taking part in more duties, like davening, reading Torah. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

We must safeguard our legacy

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN

Spending a day in Manhattan recently, I was reminded of the power of seduction. The stately, grand Metropolitan Museum was showcasing a small but stunning exhibition of paintings by El Greco, perhaps the most influential artist in history. The Jewish Museum had a tribute to Helena Rubenstein, a formidable woman who had a major impact on women's cosmetics and the role of women in business. I saw the 9/11 memorial, a striking demonstration of human will and the determination to memorialize loss while affirming life. The venues, the culture, the pulse of one of the great cities of the world are seductive.

It is not hard to see why people spend their whole lives captivated by this culture. In the past, Jews who had the opportunity to leave their cloistered existence – during the *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) or the ghettos of eastern Europe – left their religious life and Jewish identity behind to enter the exciting and promising world of whatever culture it was that surrounded them.

This was true in every age. If they had to choose between Greek culture or Judaism, many chose Greek culture. In modern times, it was Polish or German or Hungarian culture over Jewish culture. You had to choose, so many took the path of secular culture. It was either/or. The price of a passport to fame and fortune was shedding your Jewish identity: British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, German poet and essayist Heinrich Heine, the list is endless.

The story has it that Queen Victoria asked Disraeli, whose father converted to Christianity to enter English society and who raised his son in the church, whether he was Jewish or Christian. He is said to have responded, "Your Majesty, the King James version of the Bible has the Old Testament, then a blank page, and then the New Testament. I am the blank page."

That was then and this is now. Something completely new has arisen in the modern world. No longer is it necessary to choose. That seductive culture, whether American, Canadian, English or other, is no longer inaccessible to the Jew as Jew. For the first time in history, there is no need to choose. Jews can be as observantly Jewish as they like and participate in the culture of their country. This is unprecedented.

Jews don't have to abandon their ancient and venerable past to be fully and completely modern. They can study their source texts of wisdom literature, practise any form or denomination of their religion and still work and live in the same mental and physical space as their fellow citizens of different heritages and religions.

(It is a delicate balancing act for the modern Orthodox Jew who keeps Sabbath and kosher but it can be done. In fact it is being done, by countless thousands across our country and many other countries.)

So the inevitable question imposes itself. In an era when Aboriginal Peoples, African-Canadians and Americans, French-Canadians and others are exploring and asserting their identity and dedicated to preserving it, why are Jews abandoning theirs in droves?

Are the rabbinic and lay leaders of the Jewish community not doing their job? Are the attractions of secular culture so great that they overwhelm the religious culture even when the one need not preclude the other? Has the long reign of religion in Western society run its course?

We ignore this question at our peril. We risk becoming Disraeli's blank page. Jews constitute 7/10 of one per cent of the world. With low birth rates and low rates of affiliation, a minuscule Orthodox community (10 per cent of Jews at best) will represent the future of a people that has given enormously to the world: everything from ethical monotheism to ground-breaking scientific discoveries, from a unique brand of humour to breathtaking business acumen and philanthropy. We owe it to ourselves and to the world to safeguard our legacy. As John Ruskin wrote: "Our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves what shall be true for the future." ■

Paul Socken is distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Waterloo.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Patricia Goodman	Feb 22/15	212 Stonehenge Drive
Vivian Levine	Feb 22/15	554 St. Clements Avenue
Sam Iscoe	Feb 22/15	1500 Steeles Avenue W.
Arthur Kravitz	Feb 23/15	784 Centre Street, # 325
Murray Barrett	Feb 21/15	3560 Bathurst Street
Sybil Geller	Feb 23/15	240 Heath Street West
Edgar Lloyd Brodey	Feb 22/15	31 Tichester Road
Hana Singer	Feb 23/15	33 Savoy Crescent
Sam Blaug	Feb 23/15	15 Ames Circle
Gisele Silver	Feb 24/15	5100 Clarendon Avenue
Larry Charney	Feb 24/15	86 Purdon Drive
Stanley Farber	Feb 23/15	236 Crestwood Road
Dov Altman	Feb 25/15	32 Westoverill Road
Abram Ogniewicz	Feb 26/15	866 Sheppard Avenue East
Joe Bloom	Feb 26/15	18 Rollingwood Drive
Frances Grossman	Feb 27/15	378 Highcliffe Drive
David Paice	Feb 27/15	319 Richview Avenue

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Solomon, Hymie Jack	Feb. 2, 2015	104Freshmeadow Dr
Cousins, Jean	Feb. 4, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Saul, Toby	Feb. 4, 2015	Private
Pekar, Sofia	Feb. 4, 2015	Private
Dobbs, Yetti	Feb. 4, 2015	1101 Steeles Ave W
Velvart, Germaine	Feb. 5, 2015	505 Cummer Ave
Burton, Riva	Feb. 6, 2015	4 Stonedale Placeway
Sadomsky, Raisa	Feb. 6, 2015	Private
Konchtyk, Alla	Feb. 6, 2015	6030 Bathurst St
Rosenthal, Saul	Feb. 6, 2015	Private
Naster, Morry	Feb. 6, 2015	7 Townsgate Dr
Wank, Tamas	Feb. 7, 2015	Private
Dobrovoldkaia Kaushansky, Natalya	Feb. 7, 2015	18 Mortimer Crt
Dascalo, Efraim	Feb. 7, 2015	110 Promenade Circle
Kessel, Joseph Theodore	Feb. 8, 2015	66 Gypsy Roseway
Kates, Leilah	Feb. 9, 2015	2 Buchan Crt
Ezerzer, Jeanette	Feb. 10, 2015	Private
Borden, Minnie	Feb. 10, 2015	Private
Zelman, Wolf	Feb. 10, 2015	3879 Bathurst St
Aizikov, Roza	Feb. 11, 2015	Private
Snitman, Sandra	Feb. 11, 2015	133 Torresdale Ave
Badat, Hana	Feb. 12, 2015	3700 Steeles Ave W
Spigelman, Helen	Feb. 14, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Romberg, Aileen	Feb. 14, 2015	163 Faywood Blvd
Blutstein, Sonia	Feb. 16, 2015	Private
Nemirovsky, Paul Wayne	Feb. 15, 2015	160 Oakwood Ave
Goldreich, Saul	Feb. 16, 2015	7440 Bathurst St
Ram, Mildred	Feb. 16, 2015	24 Rocksprings Ave
Ordynans, Sala	Feb. 17, 2015	880 Lawrence Ave E
Litovitz, Esther	Feb. 17, 2015	3705 Bathurst St
Kuntsman, Galina	Feb. 17, 2015	Private
Millman, Ettye	Feb. 18, 2015	7440 Bathurst St
Nir, Zvi	Feb. 18, 2015	27 Shieldmark Cres
Winberg, Martin	Feb. 19, 2015	Private
Feldbloom, Morton	Feb. 20, 2015	Private
Brill, Edward	Feb. 20, 2015	425 Walmer Rd
Cohen, David	Feb. 20, 2015	1101 Steeles Ave W
Polyakov, Grigory	Feb. 20, 2015	5961 Bathurst St
Brown, Jules	Feb. 21, 2015	130 Tansley Rd
Benaim, Cindy Teresa	Feb. 22, 2015	57 Festival Dr
Geffen, Ada Carol	Feb. 23, 2015	28 Wickstead Way

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Inside

Has BDS been successful?

After 10 years, campaign's economic impact has been minimal, but backers claim symbolic victories. **PAGE 8**

PLUS: McGill undergrads defeat boycott motion. **PAGE 28**

Jewish groups rap Trudeau

CIJA, B'nai Brith, Wiesenthal join Tories in criticizing Liberal leader. **PAGE 12**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	7:08 p.m.	8:12 p.m.
Montreal	6:48 p.m.	7:52 p.m.
Toronto	7:11 p.m.	8:14 p.m.
Winnipeg	7:23 p.m.	8:31 p.m.
Calgary	7:31 p.m.	8:41 p.m.
Vancouver	7:07 p.m.	8:15 p.m.

After the election, what's next?

As *The CJN* went to press Monday, Israeli voters were preparing to cast ballots in the national election. Visit **cjnews.com** for all the election results, plus the latest news and comprehensive analysis.

'You don't have to be Jewish to buy this house'?

Brampton real estate agent apologizes for offensive ad. **PAGE 24**

The future of Jewish education

Day schools vs. supplementary schools: a *CJN* debate. **PAGE 30**

Pop goes the Shabbat service

A cappella singers help to draw younger congregants to Beth Sholom. **PAGE 38**

All-party support for property restitution, and kosher sex toys available

Issue unites Parliament

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO), and the Canadian Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Descendants (CJHSD) have welcomed commitments by all parties in Parliament to advocate for restitution of Holocaust-era property in central and eastern Europe. Foreign Minister Robert Nicholson last week joined foreign affairs critics Paul Dewar of the NDP and Marc Garneau of the Liberals, who both issued statements earlier this year urging Canada to press Poland and other countries on the issue. The MPs made the commitment after CIJA and the CJHSD wrote to Dewar, Garneau and former foreign minister John Baird asking for their continued support.

Rabbi helps people get their sexy on

A rabbi in Israel has launched a website where Orthodox people can buy sex toys without being bombarded by nudity and obscene language. Rabbi Natan Alexander, 34, an Australian-born rabbi living in Etzion in the West Bank, launched Better2gether four months ago. The married father of four says the site, which has 200 items for sale – ranging from lube to vibrators to pasties, and all with modest packaging – also appeals to more conservative people turned off by other sexual aid sites. It also offers access to confidential sex advice from therapists and doctors. "I've been told that people really need something like this," he told the *Times of Israel*.

Elite products may contain harmful bacteria.
CFIA PHOTO

Schmaltz herring recalled

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) issued a recall last week for schmaltz herring and spicy schmaltz herring from Elite Salads International of Toronto because the products "may permit the growth of clostridium botulinum," a bacteria that can cause nausea, vomiting, fatigue and, in extreme cases, even death. The products are in 200-gram and 454-gram sizes with best before dates up to May 8. The herring, which may not look or smell spoiled, but could still make people sick, should be returned or thrown out, the CFIA said. ■

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COVER PHOTO BY IDF SPOKESMAN/FLASH90

Gematria

$10 million

The recent donation by New York Giants co-owner Steve Tisch to Tel Aviv University to create a film and TV school.

8

The number of years since the last import of produce from Gaza into Israel. The first truckloads of tomatoes and eggplants crossed the border March 12. The decision to allow the move stemmed in part from produce shortages due to the shmittah year.

Quotable

We should all shudder to hear the same rhetoric that led to a "none is too many" immigration policy towards Jews in the '30s and '40s being used to raise fears against Muslims today.

— Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau March 9 in Toronto. Full story on page 12.

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Letters to the Editor

Holocaust memorials

It is incorrect to say that the *Wheel of Conscience* originally located at the Canadian Museum of Immigration is "the only public symbol of Holocaust remembrance in the country" ("Shoah memorial likely returning to Halifax's Pier 21," Feb. 5).

The Manitoba legislature provided a designated space on its grounds for a Holocaust memorial, which was dedicated on Sept. 6, 1990. Philip Weiss, a well-known Holocaust survivor and educator and former chair of the Winnipeg Jewish community's Holocaust remembrance and memorial committee, spearheaded the campaign to have the monument built.

The monument is in the shape of a broken Magen David and bears the names of over 3,700 victims of the Holocaust whose memory was honoured by surviving family members who resided in Manitoba.

Evelyn Schaefer
Toronto

Red Tories

My thanks to Michael Taube ("Why Jews were Red Tories," March 5) for reminding me why I am not a supporter of the current Conservative party, in spite of its welcome support of Israel.

He gloats over the disappearance of Red Tories, declaring that "statist programs dealing with collectivism, social justice and progressive taxation are, I'm pleased to say, no longer part of the Tory diet." A Conservative party that no longer includes social justice among its tenets? Taube quotes former senator Hugh Segal (a Red Tory) as saying that progressive conservatism helped the Tories (then Progressive Conservatives) become "the instrument of freedom and justice."

Is Taube suggesting that today's Conservatives are no longer interested in promoting freedom and justice? Perhaps the picture of Bugs Bunny (a Red Tory?) instead of Taube's name suggests that he is really not serious and that his column is simply a Purim shpiel!

Michael S. Cole
Toronto

Teacher's lessons linger

Yasher koach to Eli Pfefferkorn for his commentary ("New methods needed to keep memory of Shoah alive," Feb. 26), in which he rightly advises that we need to think differently about we ask questions, find out information and create an oral and written history regarding the Shoah.

Pfefferkorn, a teacher of mine, taught me long ago that we need to look at things with a long-term perspective and that looking at history strictly from a convenient perspective is dangerous in the long term. It is a lesson that I carry with me throughout my life and use on a regular basis.

We should not only thank Pfefferkorn and take his advice to heart, but also implement the changes based on his perspective as a survivor, a fighter for the State of Israel and a teacher to hundreds of Jewish students.

Jessica Pelt Kronemer
Silver Spring, Md.

Dissent is not anti-Semitism

Jewish people can do better than this. Repeatedly using the ad hominem fallacy to argue against critics of Israel is unintelligent, unethical and ultimately counter-productive to Jewish interests.

When Palestinians speak up against Israeli injustices, it cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered the irrational hatred that is anti-Semitism. Saying it is so is tantamount to legitimizing anti-Semitism as a respectable human rights value.

Intelligent debate does not call something a "lie" without offering any evidence. It does not denounce opinions that are not welcome as "hatred" without evidence of racist intent.

Gil Troy's article ("Apartheid slur driven by hatred and lies," March 5) is a shameful continuation of this very un-Jewish practice of arguing with fallacies instead of reality and logic. It shames Jewish people and is more likely to generate anti-Semitism in people who are tired of having their intelligence insulted by this unethical argumentation.

Terry Greenberg
North Vancouver, B.C.

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RABBI·2·RABBI

Are no dues good news?

Risky voluntary fee models make synagogues prove themselves worthy of membership, but shuls already rely on donors who see their value to the community

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Finegold: Pesach, centred around the seder, is one of the holidays that even minimally affiliated Jews tend to celebrate. However unlike the High Holidays, Pesach does not compel people to flock to synagogues in the same numbers.

I was reminded of this when speaking to someone recently about the new phenomenon of synagogues that choose to not charge dues, relying instead on the value they provide to their congregants and assuming that their congregants will respond by donating accordingly. I must admit that this model is attractive to me, because it seems to force congregations to prove themselves worthy of membership beyond High Holidays and life cycle events.

Have you considered this model at all in your congregation, and if you have, how would you create value around Pesach, an apparently home-centred holiday?

Rabbi Scheim: I have also been interested in the voluntary-dues model that some synagogues have adopted, obviously not without risk on their part.

It's not clear to me, however, that those who contribute generously when the amount is left to their choice are doing so because of value they are receiving in return. Many of my most generous members, who donate well beyond set dues levels, are sporadic attenders of synagogue events. Were they contributing in response to direct, personal benefit that they were receiving, they would likely redirect their generosity elsewhere, rather than to the shul they frequent a few times each year.

They contribute beyond required levels because they believe a community to be stronger with religious institutions that educate, that (hopefully) uplift, and that provide the option of a minyan, of communal prayer, that some, if not all, will need on any given day.

In terms of Pesach, the synagogue and its community can be the vehicle that motivates intensified home observance, and seders that go beyond the Four Questions and dinner. Synagogue can also provide worshippers a venue on the morning after the seder to share their experiences of the previous night's ritual, allowing the home experience to penetrate the community consciousness.

Rabbi Finegold: I would prefer to be optimistic and view the donor who attends infrequently but donates extravagantly as someone who has gained much value from a smaller interaction.

My understanding about voluntary dues is that synagogues are often surprised by how much more most people are willing to give when they're offered the discretion to choose the amount. I would advocate for a model that originates in the opening of the seder, that of "*kol dichfin yetei v'yeychol*" – let all those who are hungry come and eat.

We invite everyone without considering whether they are wealthy or not, and virtually all congregations follow this model when it comes to dues, sometimes asking for proof of need, but more often than not trusting that one's word is one's bond.

Still, someone needs to pay for the needy, whether it be for a seder meal or the right to communal membership. The ones who pay much more do not do so because they get minimal value from the few times they attend, but because, as you say, they get maximal value from allowing others to attend as well.

Their choice of congregation is a vote of confidence in that community and its leadership, a testament to how much they want others to experience what they have experienced themselves. It's not simply a generic donation to a community with a morning minyan and a nice cantor.

Rabbi Scheim: Being in full agreement with you, and in hoping that even non-voluntary dues-based congregations will show flexibility, enabling those unable to pay full dues to affiliate, I would add another type of synagogue supporter to our roll of honour.

There are those who generously support synagogues they will never attend (often shuls far to the right of their level of practice), sometimes out of guilt – a feeling that they should be more observant – but more often because they value communities of Jews who pray and learn together, even if they themselves have yet to reach the entry point of participation.

As we draw close to Pesach, we recognize those who choose to support and maintain synagogues, and congregations sensitive and responsive to the needs of economically challenged Jews. They understand the significance of "*kol dichfin.*" ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Ostrovtzer Synagogue opening

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

Yehosuva Yekl Barsht with children's orchestra at the opening of the Ostrovtzer Synagogue, Toronto, 1921. Identified in this photograph in back, second from left, is Tommy Speisman. In back, second from right, is Moishe Turk.

SeeJN | Young Israelis in Toronto

Toronto City Coun. James Pasternak welcomes a group of young Israeli leaders from the Connecting Leaders in Communities (CLIC) project to city hall on March 11. The program aims to create meaningful relationships between Jews and non-Jews. On this trip, the group, from diverse backgrounds, helped refute the myths spread during Israeli Apartheid Week on campuses. They met with Pasternak and Mayor John Tory and were recognized during a City Council meeting.

From Yoni's Desk

Some good advice for politicians of every stripe

The CJN goes to press at noon on Mondays. Most weeks, we work on putting the paper together until the last possible minute, in order to ensure it's as up-to-date as possible. But sometimes, major news happens in the time between when the paper is printed and it gets delivered to your door (though readers can cut down on that lag by logging on to the digital edition of *The CJN*).

This is one of those weeks.

As I write, Israeli voters are preparing to cast their ballots in a national election; by the time you read these words, however, the election will most likely have been decided. In coming editions of *The CJN*, we'll have lots to say about the outcome of the election – what it means for Israelis and for the Jewish Diaspora. But for now, we encourage you to visit cjnews.com for up-to-the-minute news and commentary about the election.

• • •

Meanwhile, back here in Canada last week, the Jewish community found itself in the middle of a political debate as this country's major parties geared up for their own election campaigns. The dispute centred around the propriety of invoking the Holocaust when referring to events other than the genocide of European Jewry.

On March 9 Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau caused a storm when he told an audience at McGill University, "We should all shudder to hear the same rhetoric that led to a 'none is too many' immigration policy towards Jews in the '30s and '40s being used to raise fears against Muslims today."

Trudeau was ostensibly reacting to two recent incidents: the first was Conservative MP John Williamson's abhorrent comments, just two days earlier, regarding Canada's temporary foreign workers program – that "It makes no sense to pay 'whities' to stay home while we bring in brown people to work in these jobs." (Williamson quickly apologized.) The second was the Harper government's ongoing effort to make it illegal for Muslim women to cover their faces during citizenship swearing-in ceremonies.

A day after Trudeau made his Holocaust reference, Public Security Minister Stephen Blaney offered one of his own. During a hearing regarding Bill C-51, the government's proposed anti-terror legislation, Blaney sought to juxtapose jihadist incitement with propaganda disseminated by the Nazis in the 1930s. "The Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers," he testified. "It began with words."

As *The CJN*'s Paul Lungen reports, Jewish groups were quick to criticize Trudeau for comparing the exclusionary tactics once adopted by the Canadian government to present-day immigration policy. Those same groups, Lungen notes, were not vocally critical of Blaney's comment – though, to be fair, others have previously used the same terminology, and the recent terror attack at a kosher supermarket in Paris indicates that hateful words can lead to tangible danger for Jews.

Still, it's probably best if politicians avoid making comparative references to the Holocaust altogether. As CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel told Lungen, "politicians run an obvious risk when they invoke the Holocaust in policy debates, and we generally think that such references are best avoided, as they distract from the issues at hand."

That's good advice, for politicians of every stripe. ■ — YONI

FEATURE

Feel guilty about reading this? Blame your parents

Deborah Kotz
JTA

In designing and testing theories on how the body programs its 19,000 genes, Moshe Szyf, a geneticist and molecular biologist at McGill University, has expanded the notion of Jewish guilt.

Sure, we might feel bad about passing along hereditary genes that raise our baby's future risk of breast cancer or depression. But now, thanks to Szyf's research, we must contend with the possibility that our experiences early in life could shift how those genes are expressed for generations to come.

Thus young stockbrokers who escaped from the tumbling towers of 9/11 might be raising preschoolers a decade later who are prone to panic when they smell fireplace ash. Those who crash dieted during teenage years might wind up with grandchildren with slower metabolisms designed to better handle starvation.

Researchers studying the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors have found that they have higher rates of post-traumatic stress after enduring car accidents, possibly due to modifications in their stress hormone system inherited from their parents.

Szyf, however, prefers to take an optimistic view of his field, called behavioural epigenetics.

"With a deterministic genome, we can't decide what kinds of mutations we pass on, but if experience is important in building a healthy genome, it gives us a feeling of some level of control."

He says he is interested in identifying early markers of adversity to see if they can be altered with lifestyle interventions or drugs.

Born in London and raised in a family of observant Jews, Szyf went to dental school at Hebrew University. While working on his doctoral thesis with an Israeli epigenetics researcher in the late 1970s, he found his real passion and says he has never regretted his decision to abandon dentistry.

For the past two decades, Szyf and his McGill colleagues have been studying methyl groups that attach at various points to strands of DNA. Szyf refers to these groups as "punctuation" that mark genes to determine how they work to help cells manufacture proteins – akin to changing the meaning of a sentence by swapping out an exclamation point for a period.

"These methyl groups make out the language of our DNA, and if they go awry, you're in trouble," Szyf says.

Epigenetics researchers initially believed such changes in genetic programming occurred only during fetal development. But recent landmark studies conducted by Szyf and others suggest that methyl groups could be added to DNA in adulthood – at least in rodents – due to changes in diet or environmental toxins. Those additions could be passed on to future generations, causing permanent changes in gene function.

In a study published last year in the journal *Nature*, researchers from the Emory University School of Medicine found that mice exposed to a particular odour along with small electroshocks developed a fear of that smell and later gave birth to offspring that also had a high stress response whenever they were exposed to the odour. The researchers also found methylation changes in a smell receptor gene in both the mothers and offspring.

In other experiments, Szyf and his research group examined the DNA of rat pups raised by mothers who neglected them. They found that genes controlling the production of stress hormone receptors had high levels of methyl groups attached to them compared to genes from pups raised by attentive, nurturing mothers. Pups raised by inattentive mothers also acted skittish in response to stress.

Moshe Szyf MCGILL UNIVERSITY PHOTO

The researchers then studied another litter of rat pups from the same mothers, but this time they had the nurturing mothers raise pups from inattentive mothers and vice versa. They found that the extra methyl groups were again added to the pups raised by the neglectful mothers and that these pups had an overactive stress response.

Both sets of pups with the extra methyl groups passed them on to their offspring.

"While the genome can take centuries to change, with epigenetics the physiological response can be immediate but also with lasting effects," Szyf says.

That's unless an intervention is found to shift things back. Szyf and his colleagues found such an intervention in the form of a drug designed to remove methyl groups. Szyf was able to reverse the extra methylation in rats born with it and also change their behaviours back to placid tendencies.

Just how much such epigenetic changes impact human behaviour remains largely unknown, researchers acknowledge.

"We certainly know that human experiences affect how our genes are expressed," says Rachel Yehuda, a professor of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, who has performed epigenetic studies on Holocaust survivors. "But we don't know for sure how this process works and how strong a contributor epigenetics really is compared to other things like genes."

Life experience is capable of shaping perceptions and reactions even without touching DNA. In recent studies Yehuda found that children of Holocaust survivors have altered stress response systems and differences in methylation on the gene that regulates the number of stress hormone receptors. She also found that these alterations were complex and dependent on a mother's age when she went through the Holocaust and whether a father experienced it, too.

"Do uniquely Jewish experiences from the past – like the pogroms our great-grandparents escaped – affect the way we behave today? I think that's a valid question," Szyf says.

"Jews that left Europe were highly self-selected for their survival skills and perseverance," he adds, which might have been due to their genetic tendencies rather than epigenetic changes.

In the end, though, it may not matter whether inherited genes or inherited methylation of those genes or plain-old nurture plays the dominant role.

"Jews have always tended to lead lives that emphasized education, family structure and religious values," Szyf says. So it should come as no surprise that these values have been passed on. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Has the BDS movement been effective?

LILA SARICK
lsarick@thecjn.ca

A protester carries a pro-BDS poster. Most agree that the movement has not had much impact on Israel's economy or its academic institutions. FILE PHOTO

On the face of it, both sides of the movement to boycott, sanction and divest from Israel have to admit the decade-old movement has chalked up few concrete wins in Canada.

On university campuses, where the BDS campaign, as it has come to be known, is most active, a number of university student groups have passed motions sanctioning Israel, which have been quickly dismissed as merely symbolic by university administrations.

In the malls, shoppers have remained largely immune to the call to boycott products made in Israel, on either side of the Green Line. Meanwhile, economic and academic ties between Canada and Israel grow annually.

Tyler Levitan, campaigns co-ordinator for Independent Jewish Voices, which supports sanctions against Israel, agrees that it appears as if BDS has made little headway in Canada. But that may not be the campaign's aim.

"At the practical level of threats to the Israeli economy, it hasn't reached that level," he said. "Education-wise, it is very effective. It gets people to talk about the issue, how Israel is violating Palestinian human rights."

The BDS movement in Canada remains decentralized, with no overarching co-ordinating body or charismatic leadership. (Among the groups that promote BDS are Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East, which declined an interview, and the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid, which did not respond to requests for an interview.)

But while the movement seems to be loosely organized, it has been able to drive and dominate debate, especially on university campuses, which leaves Jews and Israel's supporters infuriated.

"We can be really cynical [and think] it's the first step, to use propaganda to really boycott Israel or is it simply a PR campaign to create anger about Israel," said Meryle Kates, executive director of StandWithUs Canada, an Israel advocacy organization.

"Thousands of students leave university not knowing anything about Israel except that it must be terrible because the student union boycotted it," Kates said.

Sara Saber-Freedman, executive vice-president of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, agrees that BDS has not had much impact on Israel's economy or its academic institutions.

"It's really a propaganda tool to give their rank and file something concrete to do. It allows them to make a lot of noise that is very disturbing to the pro-Israel and Jewish community."

BDS first emerged as a strategy at the now infamous UN anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. It was formally endorsed by dozens of Palestinian unions and human rights groups in 2005.

Jewish and Israel advocacy groups have unequivocally opposed the campaign, arguing that peace needs to be negotiated by Israel and the Palestinians, without outside pressures, and they say the campaign delegitimizes the very existence of the State of Israel.

In Canada, the campaign has mainly been promoted by university student groups, unions and churches.

In 2012, the United Church of Canada made headlines when it voted to ask its members to boycott goods produced by three companies with factories in the West Bank. Church leaders have been at pains to point out that while the ongoing campaign, called Unsettling Goods, called for an economic boycott, it was not a blanket call for sanctions against Israel.

The boycott was one prong of a campaign that asked church members to lobby the Canadian government to require that Israeli goods made in the West Bank be labelled as such and to engage in "courageous conversations" about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, said Patti Talbot, the United Church's team leader for global partnerships.

The campaign will be re-evaluated at the church's general conference this summer, but even within the liberal confines of the United Church, Canada's largest Christian denomination, it has been slow to catch on.

"It's taken much longer than anticipated to get a sense of what individuals and congregations need and what's helpful," Talbot said.

As a result, the church has introduced new materials for its members to combat "deeply held stereotypes," among them that the boycott call is anti-Semitic, Talbot said.

But the greatest impact has been on university campuses, where BDS votes have been approved, often under disputed circumstances, at 11 universities.

University administrations, however, have been quick to dismiss the votes as meaningless. In the summer of 2013, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada signed a five-year agreement strengthening research ties with their Israeli counterparts.

"We fight it [BDS] by encouraging university presidents to visit Israel, by encouraging investment, by encouraging trade agreements," Saber-Freedman said.

On the funding front, BDS advocates are at a distinct disadvantage, Levitan noted.

"Universities have strong ties to Israel, in part due to lobbying efforts of pro-Israel advocates on the administration," he said. "Student clubs get some funding, there's some money in the community, but it pales to funds available from Israel lobbying groups. It's not a level playing field."

Still, the noisy campaigns on campus are disquieting at the very least, often using violent imagery and making Jewish students feel vulnerable. Meanwhile, pro-Israel groups need to tread carefully as they combat BDS campaigns, lest they be accused of violating freedom of speech or trampling on academic independence, Saber-Freedman said.

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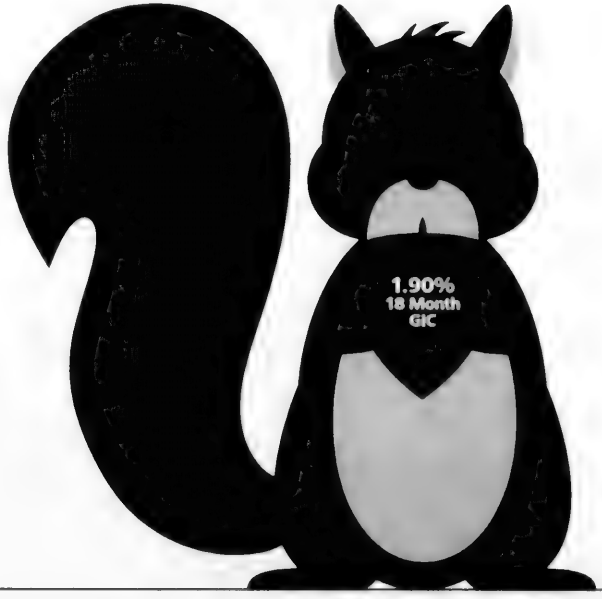

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Standing up for inclusion of all

Justine Apple

It was welcome news for our Kulanu Toronto community when, at the end of February, we heard that Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) had disbanded.

The gay Pride Parade was created 45 years ago as an inclusive event that would be welcoming and accepting of everyone. Since 2008, QuAIA has hovered like a dark cloud over the Pride Parade, turning the event from a celebration of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) rights into a vehicle to deliver anti-Israel propaganda. QuAIA's hateful banners and signs demonizing Israel served to abandon Pride's inclusive philosophy. They created divisiveness and tarnished the good reputation of the parade.

Since QuAIA's arrival on the scene, many Kulanu Toronto members have felt excluded from Pride, fearing they would be harassed and singled out for supporting the State of Israel. Suddenly, Pride no longer felt safe or welcoming. Isn't it ironic that Israel, the only democracy for LGBT people in an otherwise hostile Middle East, was singled out by QuAIA? They could have played a meaningful role if their members had focused their energies on speaking out against actual abuses against our LGBT community, such as in Iran, where people are executed for being gay.

From the start, QuAIA's divisive mantra became a huge source of contention for members of the Jewish and LGBT communities. For six years, Kulanu Toronto and our allies worked diligently to further marginalize them at the parade. Each year, QuAIA members found themselves placed further and further back in the parade lineup. Last year at World Pride, they were one of the last groups to march. They were removed from the spotlight, and no one was paying attention to them. Their small contingent was met with silence.

As QuAIA's presence at Pride shrunk and ultimately withered away, Kulanu Toronto has been standing up for Israel. We succeeded in galvanizing hundreds in the Jewish community – straight and gay – to march with us. In 2010, we had an overwhelming 500 people march in our contingent, including families and synagogue members from Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal and Ottawa. We marched together to demonstrate our unwavering support for Israel as the only gay-friendly, pluralistic democracy in the Middle East. We marched to ensure that anti-Semitism would not be tolerated. The support and good wishes from our community were incredible, and we thank everyone who has stood at our side over the years.

Kulanu Toronto is not at all surprised that QuAIA disbanded. They garnered far more attention than they ever deserved. Over time, they became irrelevant, and their hate was drowned out by messages of inclusivity and celebration.

We must be cautious, however, when celebrating the disbanding of QuAIA. Sadly, people so obsessed with hating Israel never really go away. We all know that these anti-Israel activists are this generation's face of viral anti-Semitism and intolerance. No matter what your affiliation in the Jewish community or how you identify in the LGBT community, we all need to stand together in solidarity against them.

Unlike QuAIA, Kulanu Toronto is here to stay! Last year, at World Pride, we had 150 people in our delegation, including a group of LGBT Israelis. We danced to the beat of an Israeli DJ who played on our Tel Aviv beach-themed graffiti float. In the spirit of inclusivity and acceptance, we held Jewish and pro-Israel signs that said, "Israel: world leader in gay rights" and "Tel Aviv: gay capital of the Middle East." Receptive spectators clapped and cheered as they read our Kulanu signs that said, "One in every minyan" and "I knished a girl and I liked it."

We can't wait to march at Pride Parade again on Sunday, June 28. We invite all of you – straight, gay, families and individuals – to join us as we stand up for diversity, respect and acceptance. ■

Justine Apple is executive director of Kulanu Toronto, kulanutoronto.org.

Should we unmask poverty?

Daniel Held

By late Purim afternoon, I had heard the megillah, distributed mishloach manot baskets and eaten the Purim meal. The final mitzvah to be done was matanot le'evyonim – gifts to the poor. Purim is the only day of the year on which we are specifically required to give charity to the poor. The requirement that the money be received by the poor on the day of Purim itself means that our usual ways of giving charity to the poor – through contributions to UJA Federation, Mazon or local food drives – do not suffice.

Normally on Purim, I make a donation to a collective pot in shul, which someone then distributes later that day to those in need. This year, because it was so late in the day, we were concerned we had missed our opportunity. As we began considering how we could distribute the charity ourselves, we realized just how sheltered we are from poverty. While we occasionally see someone asking for money on a street corner, living in the suburbs poverty is hidden.

But poverty does exist on Bathurst Street. In Toronto, more that 24,000 Jews or 12.9 per cent of the community lives under the low income cut-off (LICO) – a Statistics Canada-determined income rate pegged at $35,000 for a family of four.

It's a beautiful thing to give anonymously. Distancing the donor from the recipient benefits both. For the recipient, it offers shelter from the embarrassment of asking for and receiving help. For the donor, it enhances the altruistic act of giving, forcing charity to be for the benefit of the recipient rather than the giver. We teach young children the value of this form of giving through Maimonides' ladder of tzedakah, which values the anonymity of giving and receiving.

As a classroom teacher, I knew there were students in my classes who lived on the edge of poverty. In addition to tuition assistance, the community provided them with books, the cost of trips and supplies and, for some, with shoes for gym class. But I never knew who was on the list. For our classrooms to operate and for the benefit of the social and emotional learning in our schools, it was critical that we treated these issues with anonymity. The mask of poverty allowed these students to flourish.

At the same time, the mask can be harmful to our community, diminishing the perceived need and hindering our ability to enact change. It's easy to feel passionate about a cause that you can see, touch, feel and understand. TV ads for starving children in Africa are prime examples, tugging at our heartstrings and encouraging us to give. Because we mask poverty, it's easy for it to become a set of numbers and statistics, devoid of humanity, character, and impact.

Between 2001 and 2011, the number of Toronto Jews living under the LICO line grew by four thousand individuals. Each has his own name and story, but will likely remain anonymous. If we knew their stories, would we feel more passionate and more motivated to end poverty in our community?

On Purim afternoon, after wondering where I could give charity directly to a poor person, I found someone who added my money to the communal pot. I pooled my charity with that of others, safeguarding my anonymity and that of the recipient, but at the same distancing myself from the face and reality of poverty.

I don't know the answer. On one hand, I believe that anonymity of giving raises the quality of the charitable act. At the same time, however, I believe we won't be able to make headway on the growing issue of poverty until we are able to more intimately see the face of the issue. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Israel's gap in Judaic studies

Jean M. Gerber

Rabbi David Golinkin, renowned halachist and president of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, is a man with a mission: bridge the chasm between *dati* (religious) and *chiluni* (secular) in Israel. He began as a pulpit rabbi in the Conservative movement in Israel, but experience soon changed his life goal.

Recently in Vancouver, he explained what started him on this quest, and how he is going about it. He began with a story.

Standing in the security line at Ben Gurion airport, he showed his ID to the young woman standing guard.

"What kind of professor are you?' she asked.

"Talmud," he replied.

Her answer: "What is Talmud?"

The woman had gone through the Israeli secular school system, yet never heard of Talmud. Had she studied any Jewish material in school? Yes, but it "wasn't important. Who remembers?"

These and other encounters led Rabbi Golinkin to realize that from the pulpit, he could do little to change this imbalance. Young secular Israelis who had matured in the secular school system knew nothing of Jewish religion, culture or Bible, let alone Talmud.

"And whose fault is this?" he asked our congregation rhetorically. The founders of the state! Golda Meir, David Ben-Gurion, had allowed exemption for haredi yeshiva students from the army, and at the same time, created two school systems, the secular and the religious.

Since then, even the small amount of time in the secular schools devoted to Bible has been cut in half.

In an online interview with him I continued the discussion.

What to do? First came the TALI schools with enhanced Jewish studies programs, now 94 schools and 166 preschools, reaching 40,000 children – over 10 per cent of the public elementary schools and five per cent of preschools. But still, how many children can you reach outside this system, especially given the meagre level of government support.

So, Rabbi Golinkin has begun to train teachers and administrators who will go on to work in the public system.

The Schechter Institute's master's program for Israeli teachers has more than 600 students and 1,360 graduates. They spread out across the country, working to influence, or infiltrate, if you will, the secular system from the inside.

What is the biggest hurdle? Money. The funding for TALI has always been an issue. It is now one million shekels ($250,000), only 10 per cent of TALI's budget. Needless to say, every minister in charge of education, no matter the party, has had to be convinced that such an odd duck as TALI should receive equitable funding.

I note here that the late Zevulun Hammer was impressed with what TALI is doing, although his successors have been less friendly – to say the least.

What, I asked, are the chances that a new Israeli government, *any* new Israeli government, would be more favourable to increasing support for this endeavour?

"Very doubtful," he replied. "Likud and Labor do not care about pluralistic Jewish education. Yesh Atid (Yair Lapid's party) cares, but it's not clear if they will be in the government."

Over the years, we have lived in and visited Israel. We have seen first-hand a growing antagonism between sectors of Israeli society: the resentment, not to say hatred, of the secular who serve in the army toward the haredi who sit at home; the antagonism of the haredi for modern Orthodox; results of this total separation of systems, which continues to widen the gulf; a society that seems unable (or unwilling) to mediate among the factions.

Why should we care? What we need now, Rabbi Golinkin writes, is a "'Jewish revolution,' and that revolution must adopt itself to the Israeli reality."

He quotes Holocaust survivor Aharon Appelfeld: "A society without true roots is a society without a future." If the secular Israeli does not, cannot know about the rich culture of Judaism, what will anchor the society such ignorance creates? ■

Liberal democracy cannot be imposed from outside

Paul Michaels

Why is it that just about everything the United States tries in the Middle East turns to dust?

With the region – from Libya in North Africa to Yemen in the Arabian Peninsula – undergoing cataclysmic upheavals, can the United States, over the past decade or even longer, point to one policy achievement?

Its policy failures are not just President Barack Obama's, but became evident under president George W. Bush with his 2003 invasion of Iraq, motivated by the misconceived – if idealistic – notion that the U.S. could bring democracy to that country and beyond.

That policy was an abject failure in human lives, those of both American soldiers and Iraqi civilians, in the waste of more than a trillion American dollars, and in the vivid proof it provided that implanting genuine liberal democracy (more than mere elections) is simply illusory.

By displacing the Sunni-led dictatorship of Iraq's Saddam Hussein, the Bush-led U.S. inadvertently opened the door to Shia Iranian influence in that country. This process has recently accelerated dramatically as American armed forces, now under Obama, have formed – denials notwithstanding – a tacit alliance with Iranian forces and Iranian-backed Shia-dominated Iraqi forces to fight the Islamic State (ISIS).

In enabling Iran to extend its tentacles deep into Iraq at a time when Tehran has aggressive designs on the region – from Lebanon to Yemen – the U.S. has, however unwittingly, opened a Pandora's Box, inflaming the historic conflict between Sunnis and Shia – much to the alarm of Sunni Arab states, mainly Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which are America's traditional allies.

Following Obama's 2009 speech in Cairo, when he attempted to re-set anti-American attitudes in the Arab and Muslim world stemming from Bush's failed war in Iraq, Obama was determined to prove that his country was not at war with Islam.

Accordingly, when the "Arab spring" first emerged in 2010-2011, Obama placed his cards with the Muslim Brotherhood, which had prevailed in the Egyptian elections. The administration assumed that, because the Brotherhood had been "democratically elected," it would govern democratically under President Mohammed Morsi. That was yet another failed assumption. Morsi proved not only incompetent but also even more repressive, anti-democratic and intolerant of minorities' rights than former president Hosni Mubarak and his military-backed regime.

Let's not forget that it was "liberal" Egyptians at the forefront of overthrowing Mubarak, who subsequently demanded that the army remove Morsi from power – although, unfortunately, they, too, went on to suffer under Egypt's new military strongman Abdel Fattah al Sisi.

America's traditional allies in the region were dismayed by what they saw as American naiveté in putting faith in the Brotherhood, even as the Saudi monarchs support puritanical Wahhabi religious authorities from whom groups like ISIS derive inspiration.

With the possible exception of Tunisia (at least for now), the "democracy deficit" in that region, whether governed under monarchies, the military or Islamic rule, is something that only the Arabs themselves can change, and that will mean challenging deeply entrenched patriarchal, tribal and Islamic-dominant traditions where there's no real separation between "mosque and state." Liberal democracy is not something that can be imposed or even infused from the outside

In the meantime, with its high birthrate, increasing "youth bulge" and extremely poor economic development, the Arab world lurches toward more instability where extremist Islamists like ISIS, Al Qaeda, and others fill the gap, offering disaffected youth both job prospects and a sense of purpose.

The United States aims to "defeat" ISIS but even if it manages to achieve this, what comes after? Yet another radical Sunni group in its place?

Arguably far more dangerous, if less "frightening" on the surface than ISIS, Iran gains more influence in the entire region, to say nothing of what its pursuit of nuclear weapons and ensuing proliferation means – for both Israel and the Gulf States.

As this column appears, one day after the Israeli elections, it will be interesting to see how the Jewish state – the rare island of stability surrounded by havoc – manages to safely navigate its way. ■

News

Jewish groups rap Trudeau for 'none is too many' remarks

PAUL LUNGEN
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Jewish community groups say federal Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau went too far in invoking Canada's Nazi-era exclusionary immigration policies when he criticized the Harper government's citizenship swearing-in policy.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) called the remark inappropriate and inaccurate, while B'nai Brith Canada and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) also chided him.

His political opponents in the Conservative party weighed in as well, with Defence Minister Jason Kenney calling Trudeau's comments "outrageous and beyond the pale."

Trudeau ignited the attacks in a speech to McGill University alumni in Toronto March 9 when he compared Canadian Muslims to the Jews of the 1930s, slamming the Harper government for what he called a policy of exclusion and of sowing fear.

"We should all shudder to hear the same rhetoric that led to a 'none is too many' immigration policy towards Jews in the '30s and '40s being used to raise fears against Muslims today," Trudeau said.

Later in the speech, he attacked the Harper government for appealing a court decision allowing a Muslim woman to wear a face-covering niqab during a citizenship swearing-in ceremony. Harper had said most Canadians would consider it offensive that someone would conceal their identity at the moment they become a citizen.

It's not the business of government to tell women what to wear or to restrict their religious freedom, Trudeau stated in his speech, whose theme was liberty.

"It is a cruel joke to claim you are liberating people from oppression by dictating in law what they can and cannot wear. We all know what is going on here. It is nothing less than an attempt to play on people's fears and foster prejudice, directly toward the Muslim faith. This is not the spirit of Canadian liberty, my friends. It is the spirit of the Komagata Maru. Of the St. Louis. Of 'none is too many.'"

The Komagata Maru incident took place in 1914 when a Japanese ship sailing from India with prospective Asian immigrants was turned away from Vancouver.

The SS St. Louis was a ship sailing from Germany in 1939 with 937 refugees fleeing the Nazis. It was refused entry to Canada, the United States and Cuba. It returned to Europe. It's estimated that 254 passengers were killed in the Holocaust.

"None is too many" refers to a statement by a senior Canadian immigration official in 1945 commenting on the number of Jews that should be allowed into the country.

CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel said that in arguing against racism and prejudice, "Mr. Trudeau invoked a dark chapter in our history," but he added: "The comparison is unfortunate, distracting from the important message he was trying to convey. We view this comparison as inaccurate and inappropriate, and we will communicate that sentiment to Mr. Trudeau's office.

"Canada's decision to restrict Jewish immigration prior to the Holocaust was the product of an era in which Jews faced extensive social and institutional discrimination in Canada ...In contrast... discrimination today is rightly countered – rather than fostered – by the vast majority of Canadians. This includes discrimination experienced by Muslims who, like all minority groups, unfortunately face a degree of prejudice from some elements of Canadian society."

Justin Trudeau WIKIPEDIA PHOTO

Fogel noted that the government "has appropriately and consistently distinguished between marginal, extreme, terrorist elements of the Muslim community and the broader Muslim community."

Kenney told *Maclean's* magazine that comparing "anti-Semitic immigration restrictions during the Holocaust to a request that people take the public citizenship oath publicly demonstrates a grotesque lack of judgment ... The facts profoundly belie everything [Trudeau] said... This is a government that has maintained the highest immigration levels in our history since coming to office – almost 300,000 Muslims have immigrated to Canada."

He called the reference to the Holocaust "bizarre and contemptible."

B'nai Brith Canada CEO Michael Mostyn also called those remarks "inappropriate and offensive," adding: "Such language is divisive... We must find the balance between freedom and security without resorting to inaccurate historical parallels that have no bearing on reality."

FSWC CEO Avi Benlolo said that "tossing the Holocaust into a political debate is concerning. It was a careless metaphor that could easily lead to divisiveness and friction between communities."

None of the groups censured remarks, however, by Public Security Minister Stephen Blaney, who on March 10 invoked the Holocaust to support the government's proposed anti-terror bill. Appearing before a committee studying the bill, he said "the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chamber, it began with words," and that the proposed law would protect Canadians from a "jihadist threat."

NDP MP Randall Garrison called the comment "overinflated rhetoric" and said "there is no equivalence to anything we're talking about here today to the Holocaust."

Fogel later defended Blaney, to a point.

"Considering the genocidal statements issued by [Iran] calling quite literally for a new Holocaust targeting Jews, and the actions of ISIL along with their pronouncements, any discussion about the rationale for legislation that would address such language and its potential toxic influence is not entirely out of place," Fogel said. "That said, politicians run an obvious risk when they invoke the Holocaust in policy debates, and we generally think that such references are best avoided, as they distract from the issues at hand." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Canada, Israel join forces to aid Ukrainian agriculture

PAUL LUNGEN
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Rafael Barak

Christian Paradis

Canada and Israel are relying on a Mennonite NGO to deliver agricultural know-how to Ukraine in a multilevel project that builds on a strategic partnership launched last year during Prime Minister Stephen Harper's visit to Israel.

Late last month, representatives of Canada and Israel met in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to assist farmers and small and medium-sized business owners in a "Ukraine Horticulture Business Development Project." The signing was witnessed by Okeksiy Pavlenko, Ukraine's minister of agrarian policy and food.

According to the Israeli Embassy in Ottawa, the project will see the provision of equipment and training by Canadian and Israeli experts to assist local Ukrainian farmers. Other aspects of the project include the establishment of credit facilities to help farmers access capital to grow their investments, assistance to Ukrainian agricultural institutions to develop courses in "efficient and environmentally sustainable management of small farms," as well as sharing expertise in growing, storage and marketing of agricultural products.

The project is also designed to help train gardening professionals and, according to the Israeli Embassy, "special attention is paid to female farmers and small entrepreneurs who face challenges to the technical development of their businesses due to a lack of funds."

The project will deliver agricultural expertise in four regions of south Ukraine – Zaporizhya, Mikolaye, Odessa and Kherson – all of them fairly close to the breakaway Crimean peninsula.

"Canada is steadfast in its commitment to helping advance democracy, strengthen human rights and support sustainable economic growth in Ukraine," said Christian Paradis, minister of international development and La Francophonie.

"Our support for this project, in collaboration with the government of Israel, will help Ukrainian farmers and small and medium sized businesses move from poverty to prosperity," Paradis said.

"This agreement is another example of how Canada and Israel can leverage mutual expertise to help make the world a better place," said Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak. "International development is one of the key areas of co-operation – in addition to energy, security, scientific research and academic ties – that were highlighted in the Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership MOU signed last year during Prime Minister Stephen Harper's historic visit to Israel."

At the time the agreement was signed in January 2014, Harper touted the MOU as laying out "a strategic direction for stronger future relations between our two countries in commerce, innovation, energy, security, international aid and development, and the promotion of human rights globally."

Canada is allocating more than $19 million to the project, from 2014 through 2021. As many as 30,000 Ukrainian farmers are expected to benefit.

A key partner in project implementation will be Israel's Agency for International Development Co-operation, MASHAV, which will provide the experts in project training and capacity-building activities while supporting the development of an apprenticeship program for Ukrainian agricultural college students.

The project is being implemented by MEDA, the Mennonite Economic Development Associates of Canada. MEDA is an international economic development organization founded in 1953 by Mennonite business professionals whose mission is to create business solutions to poverty. ■

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Ontario Court orders fake "doctors" of Chinese medicine to stop practising

The Ontario Superior Court has ordered unlicensed practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine to stop practising, ruling they broke Ontario's health laws.

The unlicensed practitioners also set up a number of organizations which they illegally held out to be provincially-mandated regulatory bodies. **The only legal regulatory body in Ontario is the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario, (CTCMPAO).**

The ban makes permanent an interim injunction that ordered the unlicensed practitioners to cease practising in June, 2014. In a multi-page decision released February 6th, Mr. Justice Mew wrote:

"The respondents are, or have been until restrained by the interim injunction, breaking the law. They must stop doing so. Whether they like it or not, the College is carrying out a regulatory function under statutory authority. The Divisional Court has decided that the regulations which the College seeks to enforce…are constitutional."

The ruling means that patients who choose traditional Chinese medicine have the right to be treated by only those practitioners licensed and qualified to practise the profession in Ontario.

"The ruling is clear: it means that obeying the laws that govern health professionals in Ontario is not optional. It means that professional standards and licensing rules apply to practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine in Ontario, just as they apply to physicians, dentists, nurses, psychologists and all the other regulated health professions in the province", says College Registrar Cristina De Caprio.

The colleges that govern regulated health professions have been established to ensure that properly licensed members adhere to standards of care in the interests of public safety.

"The issue here is protection of the public. We welcome the court decision against these medical 'outlaws', who have been brazen in falsely holding themselves out as qualified doctors of traditional Chinese medicine", adds the Registrar, who urges members of the public to check the College's public registry to ensure they are seeing a licensed practitioner, at http://tcmpao.asicanada.net/imis15/registry .

The individuals in question have knowingly refused to meet the standards required for Chinese medicine practitioners in Ontario, have illegally referred to themselves as "doctor" and have repeatedly ignored the law.

In addition, some of the individuals have established and are associated with various organizations that have illegally pretended to be legitimate regulators of traditional Chinese medicine, and they have established a bogus registration process that falsely purports to authorize individuals to practise traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture in Ontario.

"All of this is illegal, and has been declared so by the court. We will continue to seek out and prosecute, in the interests of public safety, any unqualified, unregistered individuals who refuse to obey the health laws of Ontario as they apply to traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture", concludes De Caprio.

Contact: **Tom Curry, Lenczner Slaght**
416-865-3096

Read the Court's Reasons For Decision from the following link:
http://goo.gl/8eZKEB

To report an illegal practitioner or to file a complaint against a registered practitioner, please call 416-238-7359 and select option 5, or by email at: complaints@ctcmpao.on.ca or by fax at: 416-214-0879

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Health inspection finds problems at Baycrest

PAUL LUNGEN
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A series of Ontario Ministry of Health inspection reports conducted at the Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged, more commonly known as Baycrest, found instances of physical abuse of residents, wheelchairs and sling lifts tainted with feces, unlocked medication carts and various other violations of health standards.

Responding to the reports, William Reichman, president and CEO of Baycrest, said they reflect isolated incidents that have been addressed and that do not detract from the centre's overall high standards and aggregate top performance as a long term care (LTC) facility.

The ministry reports date from August and October 2014, as well as February 2015. The most recent inspection report is also the most extensive. Issued on Feb. 4, it came after 15 days of inspections by three ministry employees. It reported that on multiple occasions, Baycrest failed to comply with Ontario's Long Term Care Homes Act (LTCHA).

In one case, "resident No. 23" was repeatedly abused by their spouse.

The inspectors also found "two other residents who were not protected from abuse by a staff member," and the report referred to a previous compliance order dated Aug. 25, 2014, meant to prevent further abuse.

The Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged GOOGLE STREETVIEW PHOTO

The Aug. 25 report found several instances of physical abuse by a Baycrest employee, which were witnessed by a colleague. The report states that "staff member A" physically abused a resident "by pulling his/her arms behind his/her back in a restraining manner and forcing the resident to walk to his/her bedroom without the resident's consent."

Inspectors were told that staff member A on other occasions abused a resident during care by getting on the resident's bed and placing "his/her knee on the resident's hand to prevent the resident from punching him/her."

That same staffer put their knee on another resident's leg "in a forceful manner to prevent him/her from kicking him/her."

The resident was afraid of staff member A, and when the resident "became tense and resisted care, staff member A aggressively shoved the resident to sit forward in the wheelchair when the resident was leaning back in the chair," the report stated.

A different Baycrest employee, identified as "staff member D," also reportedly abused a resident. A third staff member reported concerns to the charge nurse but "nothing had been done about his/her concerns," the inspectors reported.

The inspectors issued a compliance order in August requiring Baycrest to implement a plan to protect its residents from abuse, develop a process to monitor and evaluate the care it provides and ensure that all staff are re-trained in the home's policy of zero tolerance of abuse of residents.

The inspectors noted that Baycrest had been in non-compliance of previous orders to report abuse following inspections in May 2014 and November 2011.

In the February report, inspectors ordered Baycrest to prepare protocols to ensure residents are protected from abuse.

The August 2014 report included a finding by inspectors that wheelchairs were soiled with feces, and a body sling was also soiled with human waste. It reported that an incontinent resident was found with fecal matter on their body.

Reichman acknowledged that on occasion, Baycrest failed to live up the standards it has set for itself.

"These particular events I believe are isolated episodes. That doesn't make them unconcerning, because we dropped the ball in these episodes. But we don't have evidence to suggest they are emblematic of systematic problems at Baycrest," he said.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Reichman said the staff member identified as abusing a resident was let go, as was another staffer who witnessed the incidents, but failed to report it.

"Any time we fail to meet our standards for excellence, we're disappointed in ourselves," he said. "That is a consistent belief system here at Baycrest. Improving and achieving the standards of excellence that the community is entitled to and expects is what drives us. We take these things incredibly seriously. Individual episodes such as those that get documented by compliance reports, by survey visits, by our own collection of data, we put all this together into an aggregated picture of how we are performing as an organization. So we need to be careful when isolated incidents are identified. We need to be careful why they happened, what we can do to prevent them from happening again, and to what extent they might be representative of larger systems issues.

"When you evaluate an organization's performance like Baycrest, you have to look for information from a whole variety of sources. This particular source is important, but it should never be viewed as the sole source."

Reichman pointed to the Senior Quality Leap Initiative, a consortium of 12 high-performing organizations in Canada and the United States that co-operate to improve quality of care for residents.

A 2013 report he provided looked at care outcomes among seven nursing home members. Baycrest was rated second overall in composite score, which looked at elements including mood worsening, pain worsening, proportion of residents who are physically restrained and changes in behaviour.

Reichman said these reports are "the gold standard for how you measure quality in long term care."

There have been shortcomings in performance by individual staff members, he acknowledged, but "that should not be taken as representative of how all staff members perform their jobs. That's as true for Baycrest as for any organization that relies on people.

"We're not perfect. No other organization in health care or probably in any other human endeavour is perfect.

"When something like these events happens... we evaluate why this happened and we take the necessary steps, as we did with the staff member who was a little too physical."

According to Ministry of Health spokesperson David Jensen, the February inspection report found that Baycrest had at that time not yet complied with the ministry's order of August 2014, "and a new compliance order was issued."

"The non-compliance in this case relates to specific residents who were not protected from abuse by a staff member employed by the LTC home," he added.

Responding to that allegation, Reichman said, "If the ministry has arrived at the conclusion that we've been non-compliant with a previous order and we determine that they're correct in that, then we try to best understand why. So what did we miss, what did they ask us to do that we didn't do, and how are we going to make sure that next time this doesn't arise as an issue. And we train our staff, we make sure they fully understand what the compliance orders are, what the rules are and we equip them to be successful."

"I wouldn't draw the conclusion that we ignore ministry compliance orders and that this is systematic. This is one episode.

"We've done a lot of staff training since," he added.

Addressing the issues of cleanliness, Reichman said, "The cleanliness issues were largely ascribed to one staff person, where there were performance issues."

Baycrest is not the only LTC facility to run afoul of statutory requirements. The ministry's inspection program under the LTCHA looks at the facilities and responds to specific complaints. It conducts inspections in 629 LTC homes.

A random sampling from the ministry's website revealed that an inspection of another Toronto seniors home, managed by one of North America's leading providers of seniors accommodation, found issues of cleanliness, though mostly of grime and food splatters, in a January inspection.

A July 2013 report found an instance of a resident complaining that they had been "handled roughly" and hit on the back and that the home's written policy on abuse did not identify programs of training and retraining on the issue.

A September 2012 inspection of another home in Toronto found a resident claimed they had been slapped when they refused treatment.

Other inspections focus on issues such as a written plan of care for each resident, bathing protocols, steps for treating pressure ulcers, safety issues and resident-staff communication systems in place.

Reichman said Baycrest is equipped to readjust its procedures when shortcomings are brought to its attention.

"What's important is that we have a climate here at Baycrest that if we make a mistake, we know we made a mistake, we investigate thoroughly why we've made the mistake, and then we take appropriate action to minimize the risk of the mistake occurring again.

"I am very comfortable, if you look at all the sources of information that talk to us about how Baycrest is doing, that Baycrest is an exceptional organization. But you need to look at all of the data, not just the outlier events that are reported to the ministry under the legislative framework." ■

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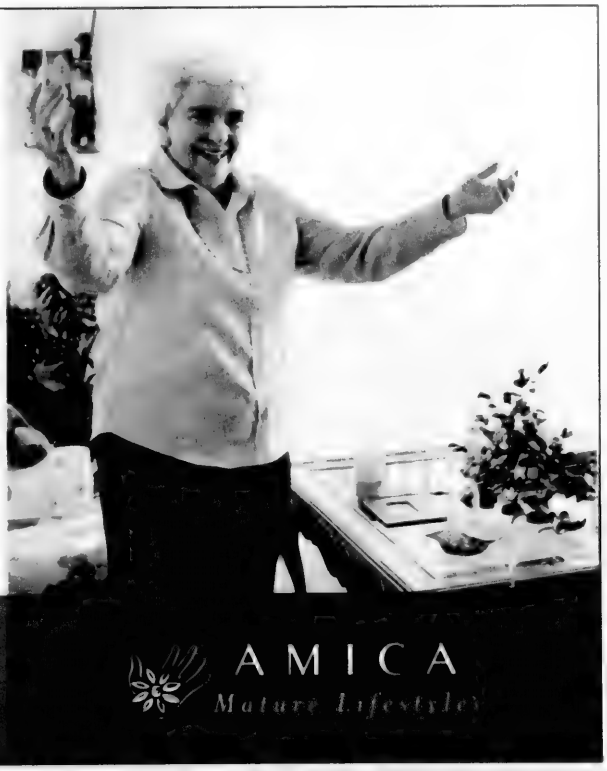

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Family seeks funds for five-year-old's leukemia medicine

SHERI SHEFA
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Following the devastating news that her once active, full-of-life, five-year-old granddaughter was diagnosed with cancer, Lana Lewis turned to her community to help fund the costly treatment.

In February, Mya Lewis, a Jewish Russian Community Centre preschool student was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL).

Speaking on behalf of Michelle Lewis, her daughter and Mya's mother, because she was still too emotional about the situation to speak to *The CJN*, Lewis said in the weeks since her granddaughter was diagnosed with ALL, she started a fundraising campaign through a crowd-funding website called Go Fund Me to help Michelle cope with the loss of her job and the added expenses related to caring for her ailing daughter.

Lewis explained that her 32-year-old daughter, who has been raising Mya without support from Mya's father, had to quit her job as a legal assistant in a crown attorney's office to be able to care for her daughter, who will be undergoing aggressive chemotherapy treatment for the next 3-1/2 years.

Because Michelle's job was a temporary position, she wasn't eligible for a paid medical leave or medical benefits.

In the weeks since Mya was diagnosed with cancer, she's been pulled out of school and admitted to the Hospital for Sick Children, where she is currently undergoing the first stage of her chemotherapy treatment.

"She's very moody, she's very weak. From a very active child... she's just lying down. She's so lethargic," Lewis said.

Lewis said that it wasn't until the end of December that her granddaughter began exhibiting symptoms that doctors had trouble diagnosing.

"About the third week of December, she started complaining about a pain in her ankle," Lewis said.

But when she was taken to a medical centre to be X-rayed, there was nothing abnormal.

"Mya's pain became intermittent... We thought maybe she slipped and hurt her ankle, or bumped into something," Lewis said.

"Then she started complaining that her elbow hurt."

Following an X-ray of her elbow, a doctor told her it was fractured in two places and put a cast on her.

Mya Lewis

"A week later, she complained about pain in her other ankle and other elbow... My daughter thought, something is up. I'm taking her to Sick Kids."

Lewis said the doctors at Sick Kids determined Mya's elbow was not, in fact, fractured and removed the cast.

Even an MRI provided inconclusive results about her condition and doctors suggested she might have a form of arthritis that can afflict children as a result of a virus.

After she was given a prescription anti-inflammatory, in the hope her pain was the result of arthritis, the pain continued to worsen.

It wasn't until Mya had a bone marrow test that she was finally diagnosed with ALL.

"It felt liked they dropped a bomb on us," Lewis said.

Mya started her chemotherapy treatment soon after her diagnosis.

Lewis said that although chemotherapy is covered by OHIP, the additional drugs she is prescribed are not covered without a drug plan.

"The trips alone to the hospital – it's parking, it's driving there and if there are no complications, it's at least 60 trips [to the hospital] in the first year."

The Go Fund Me site that Lewis created in February – called Fighting to Save Mya's Life, www.gofundme.com/md9gj4 – has raised about half of its $50,000 goal.

"Our main goal is to save Mya's life and we are desperately trying to do that. Any help is greatly appreciated," Lewis wrote on the site. ■

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Exhibit features art by young adults with special needs

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

DANI's second annual Art and Music Night invites the community to experience an exhibition of artworks by young adults with special needs inspired by Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The March 24 event, to be held at the DANI Centre in Thornhill, will consist of an audio-visual art gallery experience followed by a musical jazz performance. There will also be a silent auction of participants' artwork and light refreshments.

In 1874, Mussorgsky composed his famous *Pictures at an Exhibition*, based on 10 drawings and watercolours produced by his deceased friend, architect and artist Victor Hartmann. Most of the works that inspired the composer have been lost, destroyed or have yet to be discovered.

The gallery will feature a traditional art exhibit.

"We are turning the centre into an art gallery setting where members of the community will be able to participate in an authentic art gallery viewing," said Ashleigh Molinaro, programming co-ordinator and community connections lead.

Ashleigh Molinaro, left, and Anna Gruzman, art department heads at DANI, hold an auction item from last year's art show, a hand-designed and hand-sewn quilt. Each participant created a square.

The exhibit will have a French theme, with a fountain placed in the centre and booths surrounding it.

DANI is a not-for-profit organization that provides support to young adults with developmental disabilities including autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and global developmental delays. It teaches life and social skills while offering a stimulating and fun educational environment.

> *We spend a few months creating a beautiful quilt where each patch belongs to one participant and the representation of their feelings on the piece of music*

The 25 participating students, all in their 20s, will be sporting French artist outfits to showcase their artwork. They've been working on their pieces in a weekly two-hour class since last September.

"We call it an art and music class. I try to involve and incorporate as many life skills topics that I can. It is a very interdisciplinary class," said program co-ordinator Anna Gruzman.

The exhibition will be divided into 10 "movements," similar to how a long piece of music, such as a symphony or concerto, is divided into movements.

"Every movement is dealing with a different theme, painting, setting, and country. We talk about different cultures and languages. We also learn musical concepts, including musical terminology. Activities include dancing to the music and discussing how it makes us feel and why the composer chose different instruments from the orchestra," explained Gruzman.

One of the highlights of the evening will be the auctioning of a hand-made quilt.

"We spend a few months creating a beautiful quilt where each patch belongs to one participant and the representation of their feelings on the piece of music," Molinaro said.

"A lucky person gets to take it home. It usually sells for hundreds of dollars and is one of our best-sellers, with proceeds going directly to DANI for future art programming."

Cost for the evening is a free-will donation, similar to many other art galleries, with a suggested donation of $5. ■

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***Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman** is President of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and the Director of its iEngage Project. He has a Ph.D. in Jewish philosophy from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a Master of Arts in political philosophy from New York University, a Master of Arts in religion from Temple University, and Rabbinic ordination from the Shalom Hartman Institute*

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JCT event honours Oliver

SHLOMO KAPUSTIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Finance Minister Joe Oliver, second from right, received an honorary degree at the gala. With him, from left, are Simmy Zieleniec, CEO, Canadian Friends of JCT; JCT president Chaim Sukinek; and former foreign affairs minister John Baird. HUDSON TAYLOR PHOTO

An Israeli school that integrates ultra-Orthodox Jews into the workforce held its primary fundraising event of the year last week in an evening that saw Finance Minister Joe Oliver receive an honorary degree.

"We are here tonight to support a revolutionary economic and social change," said Larry Krauss, chair of the Canadian Friends of the Jerusalem College of Technology (JCT), at the March 12 fundraiser, at Toronto's Ritz-Carlton hotel. "This is the most significant story unfolding in Israel today."

JCT, sometimes known by its original name, Machon Lev, has about 5,000 students in six programs. While its offerings run from business to nursing, the school's high-tech tracks have garnered special acclaim. In recent years, the Orthodox school's programs for haredim, or the ultra-Orthodox, have drawn attention for reducing their social and economic marginalization.

More than 400 guests attended the event, where in addition to Oliver's honour, three Toronto women received Awards of Merit: philanthropists Toby Feldberg and Honey Sherman, and Judith Shamian, president of the International Council of Nurses.

David Anisman, a longtime supporter of the group, was also honoured, in time for his 100th birthday next month.

The female-dominated award slate reflected the evening's fundraising goal: a campus for one of JCT's women's programs, Machon Tal (Tal Campus). Currently renting facilities in Givat Shaul, it will move to permanent quarters in Bayit VeGan, near the school's main campus in neighbouring Givat Mordechai, all in Jerusalem.

The event raised almost $1 million for the 4.5-acre campus, which is a "five-year project," said Friends CEO Simmy Zieleniec.

Advancement of women is a key goal for the technology-focused institution.

"When STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] education for women was not yet in vogue, JCT pioneered engineering and management programs for women that have advanced a generation of women into leadership positions in many sectors of the Israeli economy," JCT president Chaim Sukenik told the audience.

Last year, the school launched TVUNA, which grants degrees in computer science to Yiddish-speaking haredi women. And two weeks ago, 30 women received their MBAs from the school's Lustig Institute, which serves the haredi community.

At times, the evening resembled a reunion of the Conservative party. Laureen Harper, wife of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, was scheduled to speak, but cancelled at the last minute. Defence Minister Jason Kenney, who had previously received an honorary degree from JCT, toasted Oliver, as did John Baird, who recently stepped down as foreign minister.

Baird, who received his own honorary degree in 2012, introduced Oliver, but he also reminisced about being given the opportunity "to change" Canadian policy in the Middle East. He departed the podium as a montage of pro-Israel and pro-Jewish photos flashed on the screen, accompanied by Bruce Springsteen's song *Glory Days*.

Oliver, who is Jewish, acknowledged Baird's pro-Israel bona fides by recalling a conversation with Baird on a flight home from China. "John was facing me, with a large pile of newspapers on his tray… As he scrolled through the papers, he pointed to a picture of himself standing beside a distinguished rabbi, an Israeli politician, a group of yeshiva students," Oliver recounted.

"'See? There's John Baird. He cares. Where is Joe Oliver? I guess he doesn't care.' On and on it went, until finally he came across my picture – a paid ad."

Ribbing aside, Oliver burnished his own pro-Israel credentials, linking the Jewish state's battles with its neighbours to Canada's struggles with militant Islam.

"Israel is on the front line, the vanguard of civilization against the barbarians," he said. "The friendship between Israel and Canada has thus never been more important."

Domestically, he pointed to Bill C-51 and to his request that the House of Commons finance committee study terrorist financing as examples of the government's commitment to fighting terrorism.

He also echoed the response of Jewish groups to Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, who last week referenced Canada's "none is too many" policy on Jewish immigration during the 1930s and '40s while criticizing the government's attitudes toward Muslims.

"To believe that our stand against terrorism is even remotely comparable to the anti-Semitic policies of a former Liberal government… is an insult to the memory of the victims, to Holocaust survivors and to their families," Oliver said. "I condemn his comments unequivocally." ■

Cyclist honours his mother with cross-country trip

JODIE SHUPAC
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Jordan Freedman will bike from Toronto to Halifax to raise money and awareness for the illness that took his mother's life.

To raise awareness about the disease that severely weakened his mother's muscles and later took her life, Jordan Freedman, 22, wanted to do something that would "push [his] body to its limits."

"People with rare diseases, with cancer, don't have the chance to do this type of activity," he said of the roughly 2,200-kilometre, month-long bike trip from Toronto to Halifax he'll be embarking on this spring.

Freedman, the youngest of three siblings, lives in Thornhill, Ont., with his father and older brother and studies civil engineering at the University of Toronto.

He is calling the trip Journey for Janice, for his mother Janice Freedman, who died in April 2012. She suffered from polymyositis, a rare, chronic inflammatory disease that causes muscle weakness.

The purpose of Freedman's trip, which will take place from May 24 to approximately June 16, is to honour his mother's memory and raise both awareness of and funds for polymyositis and other neuromuscular disorders.

"She first got sick in January 2011 and was in the hospital until about March before they could figure out what she had," Freedman explained. "That's part of the reason I want to get the word out about these diseases."

All donations will go directly to Muscular Dystrophy Canada, a national voluntary agency committed to eliminating neuromuscular disorders, which will help Freedman by setting him up with jerseys that read "Journey for Janice" and connecting him to people working with the organization along the way and in the Halifax area.

Freedman's best friend, Hartley Ruch, 21, will be accompanying him to Halifax by car, and their plan is to clock an average of 115 kilometres each day, doing four consecutive days and having a rest day on the fifth.

"The plan is that every five to 10 kilometres we'll meet up," Freedman said. "We'll have a two-way radio set to make sure we're on the same route, and when I catch up to him, I'll either give him the thumbs up that I'm good to keep going or thumbs down that I want to stop and will grab some water and food from the car."

To further support the cause, Ruch will be running an average of 5 km each day, with the ultimate goal of completing 100 km.

The Journey for Janice project is profiled on the Muscular Dystrophy Canada website, where it is soliciting donations. The trip has already raised $3,000, with the ultimate goal of reaching $25,000.

To help with food, gas and accommodation costs en route, Freedman has found several companies willing to sponsor him.

Throughout the trip, he and Ruch will stay with friends of friends or people they connect to through online communities like Warmshowers.org, a free, worldwide hospitality exchange for cyclists on the road.

And, just in case, they'll be bringing camping gear, Freedman said, and will consider the odd night in a motel or hotel, "to get a few good sleeps."

The two will be seeking donations in cash, cheque or through their website, and will use social media, as well as a daily blog, to let people know where they are and how they're doing.

Freedman has spent the last few months training at an indoor facility, but once the weather warms up, he will begin training outdoors. He noted that he's gotten a lot of positive feedback about the trip so far, and that people are extremely impressed by what he's taking on.

"People sometimes don't hear me and think I'm just going to be biking *in* Halifax," he said, "but then they're kind of in shock when they hear the distance [I'm actually biking]."

Freedman has always been a passionate cyclist, and has long been interested in biking for charitable causes. In the last few years, he's biked from Toronto to Niagara Falls as part of the Ride to Conquer Cancer.

Though she wasn't herself a cyclist, before his mother got sick, Freedman said, she would often take evening walks with his dad or with friends.

"There are many reasons why this trip came together," he said. "I wanted to do something special for my mom and her rare condition, and at the same time, I wanted to embrace my passion for biking and complete something great. So naturally, I came up with this idea." ■

To donate, visit http://muscle.ca/events/journey-for-janice/.

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Nefesh B'Nefesh aliyah fair helps smooth immigration

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Rent or buy? Change careers? What about schools? Health care? Salaries and pensions?

The questions – and answers – were many at the annual Nefesh B'Nefesh aliyah fair March 10, where some 120 residents of Toronto and environs came to the Novotel Hotel in North York to explore the prospect of moving to Israel.

They came to pick the brains of experts on housing, taxes, financial planning, retiring and myriad other details on easing into life in Israel. The annual fair hosted vendors from Israeli universities, law firms, real estate agencies and even an Orthodox retirement community.

Even though moving to Israel is, for many, the fulfilment of a dream or ideal, it can be daunting, according to the breakout workshops and seminars.

Marc Rosenberg, the 38-year-old U.S.-born director of pre-aliyah for Nefesh B'Nefesh, says "fear of the unknown" is the biggest obstacle facing prospective olim (immigrants).

"Most of them have visited Israel before and know it's a wonderful place to live. They know the weather is great and the people are great," said Rosenberg, who made aliyah 13 years ago.

"What they're wondering is what their life is really going to be like when they go to the supermarket [or] when they send their kids to school. We want to be honest about what's in store for them."

He avoids ideology when selling Israel.

"Weather and lifestyle are definitely a big attraction," Rosenberg told *The CJN*, "and obviously the Jewish atmosphere."

For Canadians, "a natural shift" is seen in Israel's national health care system, he added. Part of the package greeting olim is free basic health care for the first year; financial assistance worth from $5,800 for singles to $19,000 for a family of five; free university tuition for a bachelor's or master's degree, if eligible; rent and day-care subsidies; free Hebrew language instruction; tax holidays; and a host of other goodies.

But moving to Israel can be challenging, he said, as the country shifts from traditional labour toward a skills-based economy.

"It's difficult to transfer jobs, but not skills," Rosenberg told a session on building your career in Israel. "You have to not see yourselves in rigid categories."

Some 120 people came out to learn about immigrating to Israel. RON CSILLAG PHOTO

He counsels networking, flexibility and learning Hebrew.

On average, it can take six to eight months to land a job in Israel, he said, though some newcomers do it sooner, he said.

The CJN attempted to interview several attendees at the fair. All declined, saying their plans were not yet finalized and they did not want to tip off employers or loved ones.

Founded in 2002, Nefesh B'Nefesh, in co-operation with the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency for Israel, is dedicated to revitalizing aliyah from North America and Great Britain "by removing or minimizing the financial, professional, logistical and social obstacles."

To date, the organization has helped more than 42,000 newcomers immigrate to Israel and sees retention rates of more than 90 per cent.

Last year, 399 Canadians made aliyah, up from 384 the year before. From Toronto, 111 moved to Israel in 2014, an increase from 108 in 2013.

In 1990, at the height of post-Soviet Jewish emigration, 200,000 immigrants came to Israel. By 2013, that figure had declined to just 16,800, according to a recent *Times of Israel* report.

But aliyah spiked last year, with some 26,500 immigrants arriving, according to the Jewish Agency, with France and Ukraine leading as source countries.

France became the leading source of immigrants for the first time, with almost 7,000 coming in 2014, double the number from 2013, the agency stated. ■

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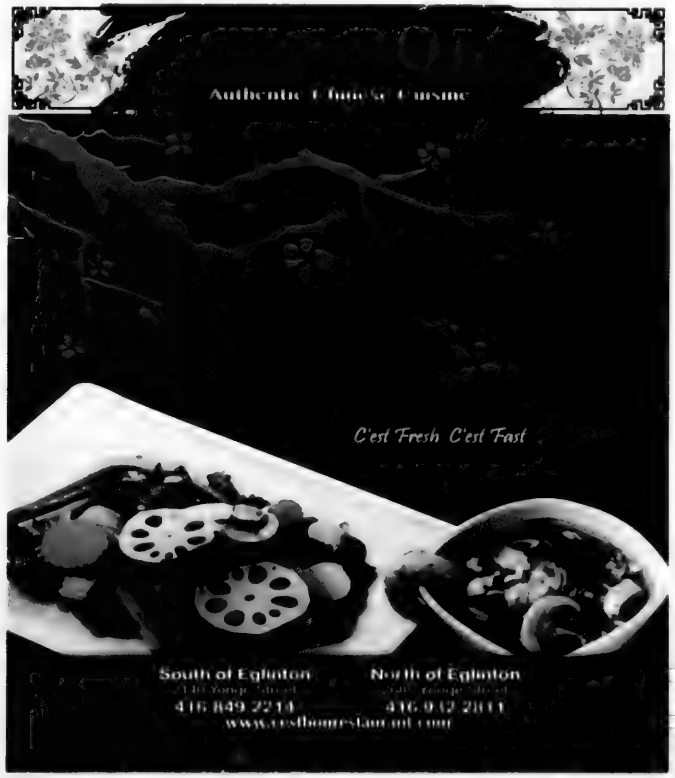

Dancers seek to raise autism awareness

SHERI SHEFA
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Inspired by her seven-year-old son who has Asperger's syndrome, Brianne Buckman-Kalechstein has co-ordinated and choreographed a flash mob dance number to be performed at the March 30 Toronto Raptors game to raise awareness about autism spectrum disorder.

"The awareness is there about autism, but there is not a lot of true understanding, and there is not a lot of acceptance yet," said Buckman-Kalechstein, a dance teacher at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

This is the third Autism Acceptance event Buckman-Kalechstein has co-ordinated in recognition of the annual World Autism Awareness Day on April 2, but the first time she has organized the event on such a large scale.

Some 150 dancers from five GTA dance studios – Roland and Romain, York Dance Academy, the Dance Zone, Spotlight Theatre Company, and Evolutions Dance – will perform at the Air Canada Centre at some point during the Raptors' game against the Houston Rockets.

The event, sponsored by Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE) and the Schwartz/Reisman Centre, has been in the works for a year.

A portion of every game ticket sold through the dance studios – by the dancers and their family and friends – will support Camp Aim, where Buckman-Kalechstein has worked for five years.

The proceeds will go to the Peers in Play program for children with Asperger's and high-functioning autism at Camp Aim, which caters to children with disorders including autism, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome.

MLSE is giving each dancer a T-shirt that says "autism acceptance" on it, and the cause has been adopted by NBA Cares, the league's community outreach initiative, which promotes important causes such as education, and health and wellness.

Last year, Buckman-Kalechstein worked with local drama and theatre schools and had students recite a poem she wrote about her son, titled *Believe In Me*. It's meant to break down the stigma associated with Asperger's and autism.

"I don't look different so you may not see, at first why I learn differently," the poem begins.

"At times my behaviour may shock you and you might think that I'm unkind, but please take a moment to enter my mind.

"I want to feel safe. I need to know you care, my behaviours are triggered when structure isn't there.

"Please be patient and discover how I learn. I want to succeed and need to feel secure."

Buckman-Kalechstein said the drama students recorded and photographed themselves reciting the poem, then posted the videos and photos on social media sites.

"This year, I said I need to reach a larger audience, because I feel very strongly about the need for acceptance. The [way the disorder is] diagnosed over the years has changed so many times, and so many children are now on the higher functioning end of the spectrum, and the negative stigma associated with it… it has to stop," she said.

"My goal is for someone to hear the word autism and be understanding."

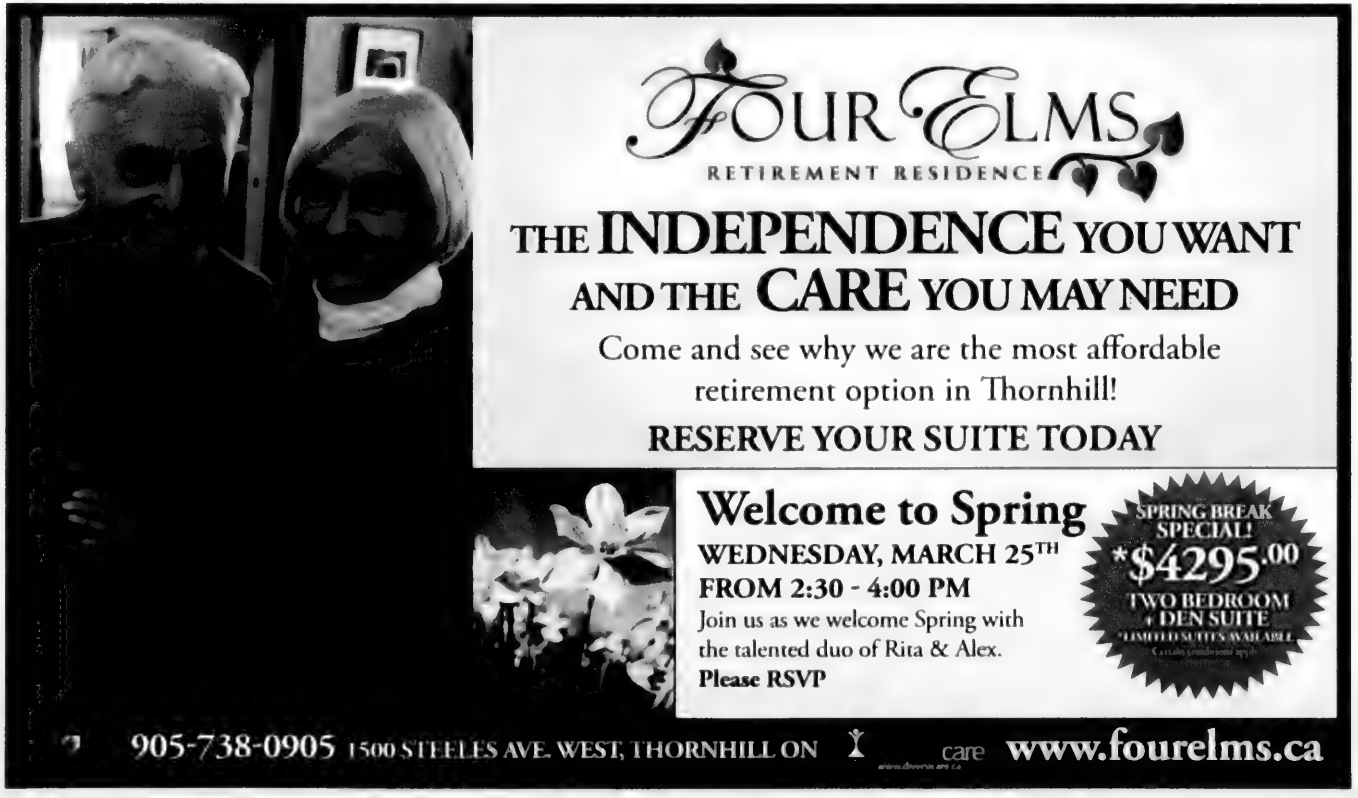
She recalled that as a toddler, her son would have public meltdowns, which she had to explain to onlookers.

During one outing to the theatre, he spoke to a woman behind the concession stand in the lobby.

The Kalechstein family

"She kept saying how cute he was. When the theatre let out, he got overwhelmed and tried to climb over the counter. I helped him down and turned to her to explain that he has Asperger's, and she greeted me with that pity smile and an 'I'm sorry,'" Buckman-Kalechstein said.

"This is why I do what I do. No 'I'm sorry' needed. My son was simply having a sensory moment. He's still the amazing, adorable kid she was interacting with moments before." ■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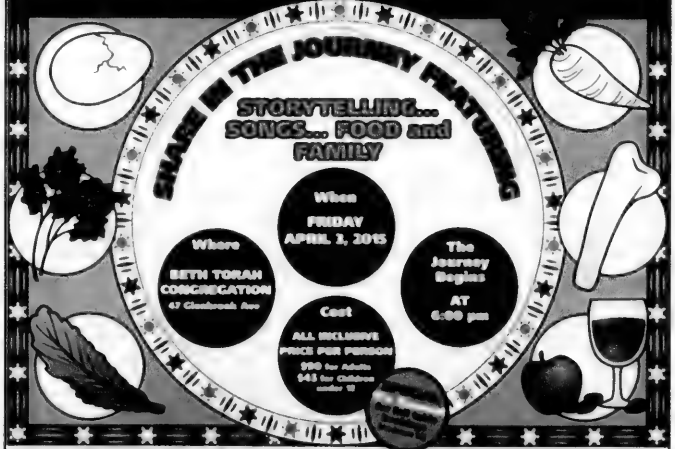

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Anti-Jewish slurs used in online real estate ads

JODIE SHUPAC
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A real estate agent whose name and company were listed at the bottom of several online ads with the taglines "You don't have to be Jewish to buy this house" and "You don't have to be Jewish to rent this house" said they were put up by a third-party company and he had no knowledge the slogans had been used.

Jazz Samra, a sales representative at Homexperts Real Estate Inc. in Brampton, told *The CJN* he does not endorse the ads, which include listings for three separate Brampton homes for sale and one Mississauga home for rent on the online classified sites Craigslist, Kijiji, Trovit and Mitula.

"I don't review every ad," Samra said. "I've never seen these before... I will make sure that doesn't happen again."

All of the ads appear to have been posted between late February and mid-March.

In a follow-up call with *The CJN*, Samra said he deleted the ads with the offensive slogans.

Although the ads appeared to have been removed from Kijiji, *The CJN* was subsequently able to find them on Trovit and Mitula, where they remained as of March 13. On Craigslist, the wording had been changed to "You don't have to be rich to buy this house."

The CJN was notified of the listings by a house-hunter who saw two of the ads on Kijiji.

Two or three years ago, a company called "Coefficients" contacted Samra to offer their ad-posting services, and they have helped him post "thousands of ads over the years," he said.

"Every week, I give them 100 or 150 homes for sale and they take the information and post ads... Sometimes, the people that post them are overseas, in India, Pakistan, the Philippines or Russia."

He said he contacted the company "to see why they did it" and, "if something is wrong there, then for sure I won't work with them anymore."

Homexpert's president and CEO, Moninder Khudal, told *The CJN* he also had no prior knowledge of the ads and was "extremely, extremely sorry on behalf of my company to all the people who were hurt by this."

He said he complained to the third-party company and is determined to "get to the bottom of it – who the company is, what happened and how."

Khudal said he always gives final approval to ads his sales representatives place in publications such as newspapers and magazines, but said it's difficult to monitor everything that's posted on sites such as Craigslist and Kijiji.

A Kijiji screenshot from March 12. Agent Jazz Samra says a Philippines-based firm posted the offensive language without his prior knowledge.

"This should not have happened," he stressed. "And in future, we'll make sure it won't happen again."

In a March 13 email to Samra from Mary Rose Somera-Cadiente, the Philippines-based managing director of Coefficients, said she wanted to apologize "about the 'accused racist ad titles' that were created by my team. We do not in any way intend to speak ill about Jewish people or create an impression through those ad titles that GTA Homexperts is racist. We do not have anything against Jewish people, and in fact, a number of our clients are Jewish, and we love dealing with them."

She blamed the ads on "our newest employee, who is still undergoing training" and "is still not yet exposed with so much cultural differences and some terms and phrases that might demean other people."

The worker was apologetic and "said that she does not in any way mean to offend our Jewish folks and she honestly thinks that the term 'Jewish' means rich people in general," Somera-Cadiente said."

She added: "Rest assured that this will not happen in the future... we are responsible for this and... GTA Homexperts has nothing to do with this mistake."

Kristina Wilson, a spokesperson for the Real Estate Council of Ontario (RECO), which regulates agents in the province, said she couldn't comment on specific cases for confidentiality reasons. But she said all agents must adhere to a code of ethics that says they must "refrain from any behaviour that could be reasonably regarded as disgraceful, dishonourable, unprofessional or unbecoming. This could include creating advertisements with potentially offensive content."

She added: "The type of situation you have identified is very uncommon, but when it does happen, we take it seriously. We will usually try to educate and work with the registrant to affect change swiftly, but on occasion, we have had to escalate matters to our discipline process." ■

Divorce coach helps keep peace through tough times

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Deborah Moskovitch

Deborah Moskovitch understands divorce, having struggled through her own drawn-out ordeal with a resolution that concluded more than 10 years ago.

The Toronto-based author and divorce coach helps clients move through their divorce more intelligently, with their families and finances intact, while at the same time saving them time and heartache.

"Choosing to leave an 11-year marriage with three young children was a very painful and difficult decision – one that developed into challenge and high conflict," said Moskovitch.

On the heels of her divorce was a legal file that remained opened for seven long years.

"I was going through two different types of divorce: the emotional divorce and the legal divorce," she said. "Once my file closed in 1997, I realized I wanted to explore divorce, understand what makes divorce difficult, tragic, and soul-destroying. Even if it goes well, it's painful and sad."

Armed with a marketing background and an entrepreneurial spirit, Moskovitch set out to write her first book back in 2005, titled *The Smart Divorce*. Published in 2007 by Chicago Review Press and now in its third printing, the resource book is a Canadian best-seller. She went on to write a second book, *The Smart Divorce Smart Guide*, which was published in 2014.

Moskovitch researched and shared proven strategies and advice from 100 of North America's top divorce lawyers, financial advisers, counsellors, rabbis and other experts to help her readers navigate the system and manage the divorce process.

Responding to the demand for "neutral" support, in 2005 she founded her company, The Smart Divorce. As a divorce coach, Moskovitch is providing informative resources, support coaching, and powerful educational tools to empower and free people during a difficult period in their life.

"Coaching is not legal representation. Coaching is to help you best advocate for yourself and your needs, and to navigate the family law system and process, including the emotional sides," said Moskovitch.

"A divorce coach can maintain peace between the individuals who are divorcing, fulfilling one of the highest ideals in Judaism, *hava'at shalom bayn ish l'ishto*, assisting and maintaining peace between husband and wife. This rabbinic reference is not just to harmony in the home during marriage, but to maintaining peace in a broader sense, even when the home itself is torn apart," explained Rabbi Yossi Sapirman of Toronto's Beth Torah Congregation.

Moskovitch's clients are often overwhelmed making decisions, while not fully understanding the process.

"I will do the investigative work for you. If you have a high-conflict case, then you want to understand about litigation and why you may or may not want to pursue going to court. Understanding where you are as a Jewish wife or husband, how observant you are or are not, so when you develop the parenting plan, you plan for that. What does mediation mean and what are some of the considerations? Custody and access evaluation is an invasive, difficult process to go through.

"I am guiding my clients through one of life's most difficult experiences and helping them heal through divorce in an holistic way to avoid the scars and pain that can emerge," she said.

Added Rabbi Sapirman: "In her role, Deborah can maintain the inherent *tselem Elokim*, the reflection of the image of God that humanity represents. This is another way of saying that all human beings contain goodness representative of our Creator, and divorce is a moment in which that representation of good is diminished, as there is never an entirely good rupture and breakup."

With the phenomenon of "grey divorce" on the rise, Moskovitch is seeing more clients in their 60s and 70s. "However for the most part my clients are 30-plus," she said.

Moskovitch works out of her midtown Toronto office and can offer divorce advice via Skype with clients throughout North America, Israel, and Europe.

Sensitive to the financial aspect of divorce, Moskovitch offers clients package options. Included is a Smart Divorce Tool Kit, which includes her two books and four CDs. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Chabad co-operated with ethics investigation, rabbi says

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Chabad rabbi at the centre of a controversy in which a federal cabinet minister was found to have violated conflict of interest guidelines says Chabad co-operated "fully" with the investigation and that its name has emerged unsullied.

In a statement released to *The CJN*, Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn, director of public affairs for the Canadian Federation of Chabad Lubavitch, said that his organization was "aware" that federal Ethics Commissioner Mary Dawson was investigating a $1-million grant to Chabad Lubavitch of Markham to make it accessible for the disabled, "although we were unaware of the specific nature of these allegations," adding, "we co-operated fully with this investigation."

Dawson's 46-page report, released March 10, found that the actions of Public Works Minister Diane Finley were "improper" and breached the Conflict of Interest Act because she awarded federal money to an infrastructure project backed by Rabbi Mendelsohn, who has close ties to prominent Conservative politicians, including Baird, in whose Ottawa riding the rabbi lives, and the prime minister.

The proposal was submitted by Rabbi Mendelsohn on behalf of the Canadian Federation of Chabad Lubavitch. At the time of the awarding of the grant in 2011, Finley was minister of human resources and social development, which is responsible for administering funding for accessibility projects.

The investigation was launched in 2012 amid media reports that Finley had overruled her own departmental bureaucrats and awarded the funding anyway.

Diane Finley

> *I did not find any evidence that Rabbi Mendelsohn was a significant contributor of financial or human resources to the Conservative Party of Canada's election campaign in March and April 2011.*

Even though there was "no suggestion" that Finley or any of her relatives or friends had a private interest in the decision to fund the Chabad centre, and no evidence that Finley and Rabbi Mendelsohn are friends or had ever met, Dawson found "that the Markham proposal clearly received preferential treatment." She found that Baird had "close ties" to the rabbi, and that Baird "made representations to Ms. Finley in support of the Markham proposal."

The Dawson report noted that Rabbi Mendelsohn "is well known on Parliament Hill," that he took part in Harper's trip to Israel last year, and that he "has developed relationships with certain ministers, ministerial staff and staff in the Prime Minister's Office whom he contacts frequently when he is seeking assistance or is planning an event."

After submitting his proposals, the rabbi "began contacting the staff of several ministers asking about the status of the proposals and seeking support for them." After contacting Baird's office in March 2011, an employee responded, "The minister got your package and was happy to mention his views on Chabad-Lubavitch to Minister Finley," according to Dawson's findings.

No one Dawson interviewed "was aware of whether the Chabad Lubavitch community provides significant financial support to the Conservative Party of Canada, but most surmised that it did not," her report noted.

"I did not find any evidence that Rabbi Mendelsohn was a significant contributor of financial or human resources to the Conservative Party of Canada's election campaign in March and April 2011."

Dawson's report "makes clear that neither I, nor anyone associated with Chabad-Lubavitch, conducted themselves in anything but a proper manner, both legally and ethically," Rabbi Mendelsohn said in the statement.

"We congratulate the ethics commissioner for having conducted such a thorough inquiry, and we thank her and her office for ensuring that the good name of one of Canada's premier faith-based community service networks remains intact."

Reached in Ottawa last week, Rabbi Mendelsohn refused to elaborate on his statement or answer questions.

His statement noted that Chabad "is a non-partisan network of Jewish community organizations serving the needs of people from a wide variety of religious, ethnic and social backgrounds. In that capacity, we liaise with elected representatives of all political stripes, and with all levels of government, irrespective of what political party is in power at any time."

In the House of Commons last week, Harper defended Finley, saying he believed she had "acted in good faith and she certainly had no personal interest whatsoever in the decision" to award the funding.

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham was ultimately awarded $1,044,000 to make the facility fully accessible to people with disabilities. But most of that money was later withdrawn because, according to Dawson, Chabad was unable to secure the necessary building permits and "there were significant increases in costs to deal with building deficiencies."

By that point, about $50,000 of the money had been spent, while the rest was returned to the program.

The CJN's calls to Chabad Lubavitch of Markham were not returned by *The CJN*'s deadline. ■

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May his memory be a blessing.
Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre

Judge made assault seem like 'bar fight,' advocate says

LILA SARICK
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The Calgary Jewish Federation is disappointed with the tone the court took at the sentencing of three pro-Palestinian protesters who pleaded guilty to assault after a Calgary demonstration turned violent last summer.

The statement of facts agreed on by both the Crown and prosecution seemed to treat the assault as a "bar fight," said Jeffrey Smith, chairman of the community relations committee of the Calgary Jewish Federation.

"This is not a bar fight. This was an assault on a peaceful group. It was almost an attack on Canadian values of freedom of expression and freedom of association."

Aziz Mohammed Madi, Arlsan Khan and Kamaal Maxamud Jaamac all pleaded guilty to one charge of assault each last week in court.

They were placed on probation for a year and fined between $300 and $500. The three men were also ordered to write letters of apology and to write essays on the Charter rights to freedom of expression and association.

A young offender who was also involved in the attack was sentenced in January to probation and community service.

Pro-Palestinian protesters attack a pro-Israel rallier July 18 in Calgary. THOMAS MOORE PHOTO

The charges stem from a rally for Gaza held July 18 outside Calgary City Hall during the Israeli incursion into Gaza.

About a dozen pro-Israel supporters were at the rally, which attracted hundreds of pro-Palestinian supporters.

The agreed statement of facts described the incident "as a minor assault during a time of heated tensions between two groups," Smith said.

"The implication is that the counter-demonstrators provoked it somehow. The pro-Gaza demonstrators came across the street and just attacked and assaulted three of the individuals physically. There's no justification for that, and it's almost justified [by the statement]."

Judy Shapiro, associate executive director of the Calgary Jewish Federation, who was an observer at the July 18 rally, told *The CJN* last summer that a group of pro-Palestinian protesters "crossed over from the demonstration to the other side of the street and literally swarmed them. They surrounded them. They were up against a building, so there was nowhere to go and they were beaten up."

One person suffered a concussion and others were punched in the face and stomach.

The Calgary Jewish Federation filed a victim impact statement with the court, but it was not admitted, because the court held that an organization could not file this type of evidence.

The three men were young and first offenders, Judge Marlene Graham acknowledged, the *Calgary Sun* reported. Still, she said, "it's aggravating that you would engage in physical altercations that would undermine our Charter values."

Smith said the judge's order that the men write about human rights "obliquely" recognized the larger issues in the case.

The Calgary Jewish Federation had no formal comment on the severity of the sentences, Smith said.

"I did not think there would be serious sentences," he added. "I did think there should be a recognition of the underlying political nature of the attack." ■

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McGill undergraduates defeat BDS motion – again

JANICE ARNOLD
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The McGill University undergraduates' association defeated a motion that urged the university to divest from companies "profiting from the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories" by a vote of 276 to 212, with nine abstentions.

The secret ballot was held at the winter semester General Assembly of the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) on March 15. The motion was put forward by the student club Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR).

The motion was vigorously opposed by another club, Israel on Campus at McGill, which launched a social media campaign called "SSMU for All Students" on Facebook and #EnoughisEnough on Twitter to mobilize students of all backgrounds to vote against the motion.

This was the second anti-Israel motion SPHR has introduced this academic year. At the fall general assembly in October, a motion to "stand in solidarity with the people of the occupied Palestinian territories" and condemning Israel's "siege" of Gaze and "illegal" settlement expansion was shelved after a 402-337 vote.

The latest SPHR motion was harsher in the view of Israel of Campus, demanding that McGill's endowment cease investing in such major international corporations as Volvo, Re/Max and Oshkosh because of their alleged complicity in the violation of Palestinians' human rights due to their business activities in the territories.

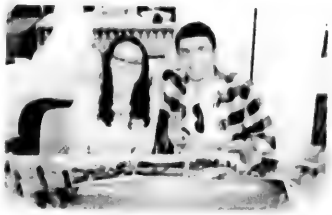
It called for SSMU, with more than 30,000 students, to join with SPHR in pressing the university administration on this issue and to "educate" the McGill community on Israel's alleged violation of international law.

The motion was at the top of the agenda of the assembly and voting took place after an airing of views by both sides on the issue.

Supporter Zara Habib said, "This motion is not contesting Israel's right to exist. It is pointing out several actions of corporations. Why would anyone be against that?"

Another student countered that denying these international corporations' right to operate in the territories would hurt Palestinians more than Israel's economy.

Opponents earlier argued that the motion took a "unilateral stance on the divisive Israeli-Palestinian conflict" and would enable SPHR to "monopolize" the issue on campus and spread its message via the SSMU's network. "By promoting one narrative over another, the passage of this motion would necessarily delegitimize all other voices on



Jordan Devon with Aliza Saskin, co-chair of Israel on Campus, at an information fair for McGill student clubs last fall.

McGill's campus... Students [would be] paying for this group to exercise sole control of the flow of information to students."

The undergraduates' decision was applauded by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and the pro-Israel group StandWithUs Canada.

"The McGill students have once again made their position clear," said CIJA Quebec executive member Rabbi Reuben Poupko. "They will not permit a polarizing and obsessive campaign designed to ostracize a group of students to have a place on campus. Inherent in the BDS [boycott, divestment and sanctions] movement is the bizarre idea that in the complex dispute between Israel and the Palestinians, one side is to blame for the failure of the peace process."

StandWithUs Canada director Meryle Kates said: "We congratulate all of the student leaders who stood up to fight against this divisive anti-peace, anti-justice motion," which she also termed racist.

"McGill's BDS campaign attempted yet again to single out one country, one people, and demonstrated clearly that their goals are racist because they target only one country in the world for condemnation."

The no campaign received broad-based support, including from both the federal Liberal party and its Quebec youth wing.

Federal leader Justin Trudeau tweeted "The BDS movement, like Israeli Apartheid Week, has no place on Canadian campuses. As a McGill alum, I'm disappointed [the motion was introduced]."

The motion came just before the annual Israeli Apartheid Week, spearheaded by SPHR, began at McGill and other universities.

The no side was also endorsed by Côte St Luc Mayor Anthony Housefather, who is the Liberal candidate in Mount Royal; Hampstead Mayor William Steinberg; the Armenian Students' Association; and the *McGill Tribune*. A number of non-Jewish students also signed an op-ed article that appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* on March 12 opposing the BDS campaign at McGill. ■

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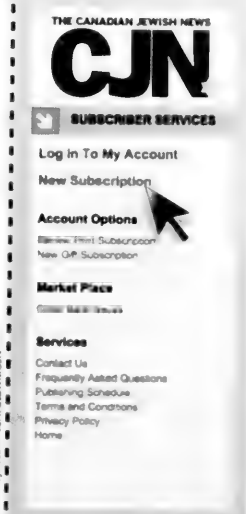

JGH head to helm regional health centre

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Jewish General Hospital (JGH) executive director Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg has been appointed president-director general of one of the new regional entities that will administer public health and social services institutions on the Island of Montreal.

As of April 1, Rosenberg will head the Centre integré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux (CIUSSS) du Centre-Ouest-de-l'Ile de Montréal. It was created by Bill 10, the major health system restructuring passed by the National Assembly last month.

This CIUSSS will run most institutions affiliated with the Jewish community: the JGH, the Donald Berman Maimonides Geriatric Centre, Mount Sinai Hospital, Jewish Eldercare Centre and Miriam Home and Services, as well as the Constance-Lethbridge Rehabilitation Centre, Cavendish Health and Social Services Centre, and the de la Montagne Health and Social Services Centre, all in the city's west end.

Rosenberg became JGH executive director in November 2013, after serving for six years as chief of surgical services.

"This is an awesome responsibility, but there is much to do. There are people in need and problems to be solved," Rosenberg said. "I look forward to moving ahead with a broadly representative management team to take advantage of the numerous opportunities to improve access, to enhance quality and to establish a true continuum of care for patients served by the CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest," one of five on the island.

While many in the Jewish community were apprehensive about Bill 10 when it was introduced by Health Minister Gaétan Barrette in September, fearing that it would jeopardize the cultural character and community control of the six institutions founded by the Jewish community, Rosenberg expressed openness from the start.

He said at the time the JGH welcomed the opportunity to partner with other institutions in the area, believing it would improve the management of health care delivery. Today, Rosenberg says the reorganization is necessary to ensure access to services and "continuity of care."

"This will be a priority, and our team will see to it that this is achieved hand-in-hand with proper management," he said. "The network must also be able to count on competent health-care personnel who are ready and willing to actively contribute to change. In order for the transformation of the network to proceed properly, the involvement of those who work in the system is crucial."

Under the new legislation, which comes into effect April 1, most institutions in the province will lose their individual boards, which have been replaced by 33 CISSS or CIUSSS. A sixth institution with historic ties to the Jewish community, the Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital, will be grouped with the CISSS de Laval.

"Throughout his career, Dr. Rosenberg has demonstrated a unique ability to combine extensive surgical expertise with an in-depth understanding of health care systems and management," JGH board president Allen Rubin said.

Rosenberg is credited with improving operational efficiency at the JGH under a program called Transformational Change that he introduced in 2011. In addition to his medical degree from McGill University and specialization in organ transplants, he earned a master's of engineering from the University of Waterloo, concentrating on knowledge management and innovation.

Rosenberg's time as JGH executive director has seen controversy. The province's anti-corruption unit investigated alleged irregularities in the awarding of contracts in the construction of the JGH's Pavilion K, the hospital wrestled with a $16-million deficit that led the government to assign a special monitor to oversee its elimination, and it has faced criticism for redirecting cancer patients from outside its territory to care closer to where they live, something the JGH said it was forced to do because its funding doesn't match the number of would-be patients

Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg

A kippah-wearing observant Jew, Rosenberg said the JGH would never abide by the previous Parti Québécois government's proposed charter of secular values, which he called "patently discriminatory."

Last year, he came out against the Liberal government's Bill 52 on end-of-life care, which will soon be implemented. He said the JGH would "explore all possibilities to opt out" of the law, which allows doctors to give a lethal injection to consenting adult patients with incurable conditions. ■

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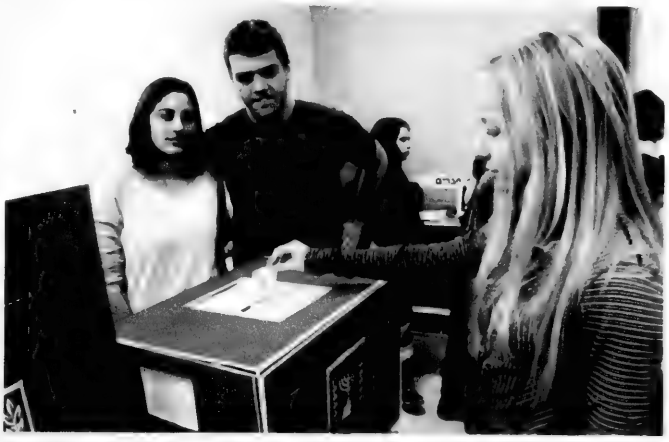

DAVID BALE PHOTO

Emily Volfson, a middle school student at the Leo Baeck Day School's north campus, casts her ballot in a mock election for Knesset seats. Overseeing the process are Noam Touati, left, and Asaf Greenshtain, shinshinim who gave a lesson on Israeli democracy and its multi-party system. Shinshinim are 18-year-old Israeli emissaries on a year of national service. Since they reach voting age this year, the two here will cast their first real election ballots from the Israel Consulate in Toronto.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

How can we ensure the future of Jewish education?

Supplementary schools can attract unaffiliated families

Seymour Epstein

One of the things I learned early in my career was to not compare day schools to supplementary settings. It is obvious that a holistic Jewish school environment which offers at least 12 hours of Jewish studies instruction per week provides a fuller Jewish curriculum than two to four complementary hours outside of the regular school day. One must approach supplementary schooling as a separate and unique educational instrument in itself.

My main reason for supporting the growth and enhancement of such schools is their potential to reach and attract families that are presently marginal to the Jewish life of the community. As synagogue members opt for day schools, and as synagogue-based supplementary schools falter and eventually close down, there is a need for alternatives that appeal to the unaffiliated and those who identify as non-religious. If a given community has only one-third of its children in day schools, the supplementary option should be available in a variety of "flavours" for the other two-thirds.

Many informed Jewish leaders have emerged from supplementary settings. A combination of a successful supplementary education, involvement in a youth group, and attendance at a Jewish-content summer camp can produce very committed Jewish identification.

But what is a successful supplementary setting in the 21st century?

It's not your grandmother's school, that's for sure!

The first change that must take place is to sever the experience from the bar and bat mitzvah, that North American ritual celebration that has done the most harm to Jewish literacy. In order to achieve its goal of an informed, identifying, and autonomous Jewish adult, all supplementary education (formal and informal) should be a continuum from early childhood to senior life. Any Jew who thinks that an emerging Jewish adult should go through life with a sophisticated and advanced general knowledge but only an elementary school level of Jewish literature, values, and history is dooming our people to abysmal ignorance. It's like walking down the street with one foot upon the sidewalk and the other in the gutter.

Another important element is the potential to mix formal instruction with different forms of Jewish life. We didn't really need John Dewey or Maria Montessori to teach us that the best instruction is life-connected – it's an essential part of our tradition. Our sages saw learning (Talmud Torah) as a mitzvah in itself, underscoring the point that learning and life are one.

In supplementary settings the terms formal and informal are interchangeable. Supplementary staff must be both *morim* and *madrichim*, teachers and guides/coaches. The potential for creativity in the formal-informal mix is overwhelming.

Another change that is needed is a re-think of the place of Hebrew. Once it is clear that one cannot learn language fluency in a supplementary setting, a decision is required that gives a place to the modern miracle of Hebrew revival in Israel and also gives those families who desire it, the ability to read the prayer book in Hebrew.

The solution is Hebrew language culture. Quickly decode the mechanical reading of a strange alphabet using games, computers, or whatever works and proceed to teach key words, songs, expressions, slang, etc. that are values-connected to the ideology of any given school.

My last recommendation for enhancement is to take full advantage of the Internet, both at school with teacher guidance and at home as family learning exercises.

Every Jewish community has families that cannot afford day school education, along with families whose Jewish lifestyle is less committed to intensive Jewish study. Supplementary schools are not an alternative to day schools; they are a complement to them in a community that values diverse forms of Jewish life. If we expand the variety of settings to attract peripheral families and creatively improve the quality of learning, supplementary schools can enhance both identity and literacy. ■

Seymour Epstein, is a teacher at York University and was the director of Toronto's Board of Jewish Education at UJA Federation.

Despite the high cost, day schools are worth fighting for

Lorraine Sandler

I was not born in a time when day schools as we know them existed. My Jewish learning was delivered by a kindly, well-meaning European *melamed*. What I learned was rudimentary, and what I didn't learn was monumental. My Jewish education was supplemented in my home and from Habonim, the Zionist Youth Movement. How I wish I had the opportunity of attending day school. Three hours a week – even three hours a few times per week – does not give one the kind of Jewish literacy I have so craved in my adult life.

When I advocate for day schools, I advocate for rich, sustained, meaningful Jewish education, which is the birthright of every single child born into the Jewish world. It is indeed the fundamental duty of Jewish parents to provide for the Jewish learning of their children. Some of us, while well meaning, do not have the requisite skills, but the responsibility is still ours.

The Jewish day school is an extraordinary environment to develop and enhance the Jewish learning of our children. The day school experience builds community spirit and belonging. Students make lasting Jewish relationships, even ones that result in Jewish marriages. A five-day-a-week school program allows for reinforcement, repetition and constant practice. This is the way children learn best.

While primary day school education is the foundation on which to build Jewish literacy skills, it is the high school experience that begins to cement that education and to embroider it with the depth and nuances of truly educated learning. One would not stop teaching a student math and English in Grade 8. Why then would one stop the teaching of Jewish material in Grade 8?

High school is where the knowledge and understanding from our teachings emerge – for understanding tolerance and respect, for a deep attachment to the Jewish people, for the emergence of leadership skills that will ultimately carry into one's life, for relationship building and the understanding of inter-dating, for one's relationship to the world and everything that is required of one to relate to it and all the peoples who inhabit it.

It is recognized that day school students become the leaders in the Jewish community. They have a sense of social responsibility to ensure Jewish continuity and the maintaining of rich Jewish life. The fact that these community activists are Jewishly literate ensures that our institutions and values are governed with respect, dignity, insight and a deep awareness for the needs of the vulnerable.

I make the case for day schools passionately. Notwithstanding the cost of a day school education, which the Jewish world must grapple with, I beg the question: "Why would parents not want their children to be competent and comfortable Jews?" The concept of facilitating Jewish ignorance in our children is very hard to stomach.

Numerous Jewish children attend private schools. Clearly cost is not the issue, since the cost of those schools is often greater than Jewish day schools. While parents might feel there are other incentives, I would challenge their motives. We need those children in our system. Our day schools must be as inviting. We cannot afford to lose one single child.

I do not for a moment negate the pressure under which parents are put, when having to make financial decisions of such proportions. It is frightening, and being middle class is punishing when it comes to having to make the choice to walk away from day school education. We need a groundswell of parents to fight for this right and to be vocal in large numbers and we need benefactors to understand that they have the future of Jewish literacy and belonging in their hands. This is a cause worth fighting for. ■

Lorraine Sandler has been a Jewish early childhood educator for over 50 years, including principal of the Holy Blossom Temple preschool. She is currently a parenting consultant with a private practice.

INTERNATIONAL

Gaza Strip reconstruction has barely begun after summer war

Palestinian children play outside their tents donated by a charity organization as temporary housing for those whose houses were destroyed last summer. FLASH 90 PHOTO

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

Eight months after the fighting between Israel and the Islamist Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip ended, reconstruction of the tens of thousands of homes destroyed or damaged in the densely populated Strip has barely begun. The international community has failed to pay its pledges to rebuild Gaza, Israel is dragging its feet on allowing cement into Gaza, and Egypt has kept the Rafah crossing closed most of the time, making it difficult for Palestinians to leave Gaza.

"The real reconstruction of Gaza hasn't begun yet," Adnan Abu Hasna, spokesman for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) told the *Media Line*. "The whole process is very slow and needs to be accelerated."

In October, the international community pledged over $5 billion (US) for reconstruction, but Abu Hasna says only $175 million has arrived.

Outgoing UN representative to the Middle East Robert Serry proposed a three to five year truce between Israel and Hamas to enable the reconstruction of Gaza.

"The rehabilitation of Gaza will take years and for that we need time and a commitment from all concerned parties for a long-term reconstruction *hudna* (truce) to which all Palestinian factions should be committed," Serry said. Serry, who is finishing seven years in his job, raised the proposal with Hamas officials recently. Some press reports said Hamas was interested in the proposal, but a Hamas spokesman rejected it.

UNRWA deals only with those Palestinians classified as refugees, meaning just over one million of the 1.8 million who live in Gaza. Abu Hasna said that during the heavy Israeli air bombardment last summer during the fighting 96,000 homes belonging to refugees were damaged or destroyed, along with 30,000 homes belonging to non-refugees.

He said the UN has paid for minor repairs and rent subsidies for many of these families, but 10,000 refugees are still living in UN schools in Gaza. Many have found shelter with relatives, leading to overcrowded conditions, and thousands of other families are living in their ruined homes. In January, during heavy storms in Israel, the Palestinian health services said two infants and a man died due to the cold.

"Babies should not be dying of exposure," Sari Bashi, the co-founder of Gisha, an Israeli human rights group that investigates freedom of movement said. "Israel should allow more construction materials into Gaza."

That is another issue facing Palestinians in Gaza. According to Gisha, Israel has allowed fewer than 300,000 tons of cement and other materials into Gaza since the fighting ended, compared to the five million tons needed. Israeli officials say these materials are "dual-use" meaning that Hamas could use them to rebuild underground tunnels leading into Israel that Israel destroyed during the fighting. Gisha rejects that argument.

"These materials are available in Gaza on the black market or from recycled rubble or from Hamas stockpiles," Bashi said. "Militants who want to fortify tunnels can access cement but families who want to rebuild their homes cannot."

Bashi said the slow pace of reconstruction is strengthening the black market. If it would take 80 sacks of cement to rebuild a damaged house, and a Palestinian family is given only 30 sacks, they will not start the job, and instead will sell the 30 sacks on the black market.

Unemployment is officially 40 per cent in Gaza but the actual figure is higher as there are tens of thousands of civil servants from the Fatah party who have not worked since Hamas took power in 2007. The situation in Gaza is exacerbated by Egypt's insistence on keeping the Rafah border closed most of the time. Israel does not allow Palestinians from Gaza to enter without a permit.

The mood in Gaza is bleak, says Abu Hasna, as Palestinians wait and hope the Strip will be rebuilt.

"People are frustrated, disappointed and angry in Gaza," he said. "There is a feeling of no tomorrow." ■

The Media Line
themedialine.org

Israel eases entry criteria for West Bank Palestinians

ELHANAN MILLER
JERUSALEM

Palestinian men over 55 and women over 50 will no longer need a permit to enter Israel from the West Bank, the IDF has declared. Previously, since October, men up to the age of 60 required a permit to enter Israel.

Yoav Mordechai, the co-ordinator of government activities in the territories, announced a series of Israeli measures intended to ease the lives of Palestinians both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Starting last Sunday, Palestinian labourers can apply to enter Israel as long as they are married and over the age of 22. Previously, only married labourers over the age of 24 and with children were given entry permits by Israel.

Since October, the IDF has been easing measures in the West Bank in an attempt to improve the quality of life for Palestinians. At the time, men over 60 were allowed into Israel without a permit.

The new measures in the West Bank complemented Israel's easing of the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip eight years ago, as agricultural produce from Gaza was allowed to enter Israel last week for the first time since Hamas' violent takeover in June 2007. The impetus for the move, Israel explained, was the shmittah year, during which Jewish agriculture is traditionally restricted.

According to Israeli watchdog Gisha, which deals with freedom of movement in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank accounted for 85 per cent of Gaza's export market prior to 2007. In November 2014, Israel allowed agricultural produce as well as fish and seafood from Gaza to be marketed in the West Bank.

"Gisha welcomes these steps to allow access to the Israeli market for Gaza farmers," the organization wrote in a press statement, "but cautions that much more needs to be done to ensure the real recovery of Gaza's economy, which remains a shared goal for all residents of the region." ■

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OPINION

Eva and Batya, or why Israelis deserve a bakery break

Sagi Melamed

There's something special about walking into a high-quality bakery – the aroma of baking, the stacks of breads and pastries. But more than that is the special energy of the customers. The look in their eyes as they lick their lips. The anticipation that thrills their senses. The challenge of choosing just the right delicacy from an array that delights the senses. The conscience wrestles with desires.

A nuclear Iran. Elections 2015. Senior police officers under investigation for sexual harassment. Sky-high housing prices. Trouble on our northern border. Increasing Jew-hatred around the world. So many vexations try the souls of the Israeli population. So Israelis are certainly entitled to visit a good bakery once in a while, to pamper themselves with tastes and smells.

Such were my thoughts as I entered the Eva and Batya bakery on Moshav Tzippori, which neighbours Hoshaya.

Full disclosure: I have a particular weakness for bakeries. In 1990, I fulfilled my childhood dream when I worked as a baker in the Harvest Bakery in New Haven, Conn. There's something primordial and creative about baking – mixing flour, yeast, water, salt, sugar and other ingredients, hand-kneading them and creating fragrant hot bread. When I travel, I find myself sniffing out special bakeries. I remember Paris more for its patisseries than its museums.

Betsy and I first visited this special little bakery one Friday morning about two years ago, a few days after hearing rumours of its opening. Behind the counter stood a young woman, Ma'ayan, who told me her childhood dream had been to be a cake and bread baker. After her army service, she started studying towards an academic degree, but she quickly decided that dreams should be fulfilled and switched to learning the art of patisserie.

Ma'ayan named her bakery after her two grandmothers. In the Israeli melting pot tradition, she combined Grandma Batya's fragrances of the Kurdish kitchen with Grandma Eva's refined European touch to create a unique style, tasty and aromatic, and based on locally grown products.

> *Bakeries played a unique role in the development of the Zionist enterprise in the Land of Israel*

Two years on, Eva and Batya employs seven women, two of them with special needs. The bakery on the moshav and the store in Ramat Yishai are small and intimate, but the shelves are laden with unique breads made of rye, organic spelt, whole wheat, beets and more. The little refrigerated section is full of homemade cakes: pear, strawberry, cheese, chocolate and poppy seed. On the counter is an eye-catching array of pastries, rolls, homemade granola and fancy cookies.

A Chinese proverb suggests that someone with only two coins should buy two things: bread, to live; and a flower, to have something to live for. Bread from Eva and Batya satisfies both requirements.

Starting a new business in Israel is not easy. It takes vision, determination, hard work, location, good products, and more. Ma'ayan's success in achieving her childhood dream and establishing a successful business in the Lower Galilee is, therefore, encouraging.

Bakeries played a unique role in the development of the Zionist enterprise in the Land of Israel. The annals of kibbutzim are replete with stories of hard-working kibbutzniks rising at dawn to a slice of bread hot from the oven, spread with oil and salt. This fresh-baked bread represented a little pampering for the country's founders and builders.

Like bakeries, Israel has come a long way since then, for good and for ill. But one thing remains the same: all Israelis are entitled, every so often, to go into a good bakery and pamper themselves a little. ■

Thousands rally in favour of right wing in Tel Aviv

JTA
TEL AVIV

Tens of thousands of right-wing Israelis at a Tel Aviv rally heard Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vow not to withdraw from the West Bank.

The rally on Sunday in Rabin Square, two days before election day, came one week after a 40,000-person rally in the same location advocated the right wing's defeat. Much of the crowd on Sunday appeared to be religious Zionists.

Polls last week – the last ones before the balloting – showed Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party trailing the centre-left Zionist Union.

Along with his vow on the West Bank, Netanyahu claimed that the Zionist Union's co-chairs, Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni, intended to cede eastern Jerusalem to Palestinian control.

He called for the crowd to increase right-wing turnout on election day to ensure that the right-wing parties stay in power. He also called on Moshe Kahlon, the former Likud minister who now heads the centre-right Kulanu party, to endorse him for prime minister.

Thousands gathered at a right-wing rally in Tel Aviv last Sunday. RONI SCHUTZER/ISRAEL SUN

"This effort revolves around one message: Anyone but Bibi," he said, referring to efforts to unseat him. "Ask yourselves, why are they doing this? Because they know that as long as I'm prime minister and Likud is in government, the nationalist camp is in government. And as long as the nationalist camp is in government, we won't divide Jerusalem, there won't be concessions, there won't be retreats."

Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, chairman of the religious Zionist Jewish Home party, also addressed the rally, singing the beginning of the song *Jerusalem of Gold* with the crowd. Eli Yishai, who heads the far-right Yachad party, spoke following Bennett. ■

Hyper Cacher market reopens, two men linked to gunman charged

JTA
PARIS

The kosher supermarket on the edge of Paris that was the site of a bloody hostage situation in January reopened Sunday.

Hyper Cacher, which was badly damaged in the attack, has been renovated and restaffed.

On Jan. 9, two days after the shooting at Paris' *Charlie Hebdo* magazine that left 12 dead, Muslim terrorist Amedy Coulibaly killed four Jewish hostages at the Hyper Cacher market before being killed by police who stormed the building.

The market, located in the Port de Vincennes neighbourhood in eastern Paris, is part of the Hyper Cacher chain of kosher markets in France and Italy.

Meanwhile, two men have been charged for their links to the gunman who killed four Jewish hostages there.

The men, identified as Amar R. and Said M. by the *Associated Press*, were charged for participating in a terrorist group with intent to commit a crime.

Amar R. exchanged over 600 text messages with the Hyper Cacher gunman Coulibaly between September and January. He also met with Coulibaly on Jan. 5 and 6, just days before the *Charlie Hebdo* shooting on Jan. 7 and Coulibaly's killing of a French police officer on Jan. 8.

Said M.'s DNA was found on a stun gun Coulibaly had with him on Jan. 9 when he took hostages in the Hyper Cacher market and killed four before being killed by police officers in a raid.

The prosecutor said that Amar R. and Said M. contacted each other more than 1,200 times between February 2014 and January 2015 and met regularly. They also destroyed their phone microchips on Jan. 9, the day of the Hyper Cacher attack.

Two others who had been detained earlier this week in conjunction with the new suspects were released.

Coulibaly claimed allegiance to the Islamic State in a video that surfaced after his death. The Kouachi brothers, who carried out the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings, said that the attack was sponsored by Al-Qaeda's branch in Yemen.

Coulibaly's widow Hayat Boumeddiene left a few days before the attacks in France and is believed to be in Syria. ■

60

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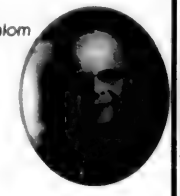

Mazel Tov and best wishes to Shlomo and Yehuda!

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Animosity doomed 2013-14 peace talks, blistering critique reports

JTA
WASHINGTON

One reason Israeli-Palestinian peace talks failed last year is that the sides were so far apart in their fundamental visions of what two states would look like. Another reason is that the two sides could barely stand each other.

Those are two of the contentions contained in a blistering critique of the failed 2013-2014 peace talks published March 2 by Ilan Goldenberg, the former chief of staff for the U.S. negotiating team and now the director of the Middle East security program at the liberal think-tank Center for a New American Security.

The 22-page paper, the most public accounting to date of the failure of the Barack Obama administration's months-long effort to broker a peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, is unusual in focusing less on the policy differences between the sides and more on the profoundly dysfunctional culture of recrimination and distrust.

Of the nine lessons Goldenberg outlines from the talks, only two focus on policy. Goldenberg's chief takeaway has to do with the mood in the room.

"Twenty years of inconclusive talks have poisoned the environment in the negotiating room, creating an atmosphere equivalent to a nasty and prolonged divorce," Goldenberg writes.

The latest round of peace talks, launched in the summer of 2013 and slated to last nine months, was the Obama administration's second attempt to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Secretary of State John Kerry engaged in intense shuttle diplomacy, meeting dozens of times with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in an attempt to cajole them into bringing decades of conflict to a peaceful resolution.

In April 2014, the talks collapsed. In their wake, Israel endured a bloody summer war in Gaza, deep wounds in its alliance with the United States and the further entrenchment of a sense of distrust that Goldenberg believes precludes a return to peace talks anytime soon. Netanyahu and Abbas simply distrust each other too profoundly to get to a deal, Goldenberg said.

"These guys can never do it together," Goldenberg told *JTA* in an interview. "That's for sure."

The nastiness was expressed in petty insults, brinksmanship and an apparent eagerness by both sides to drive the other side crazy, Goldenberg said.

Benjamin Netanyahu, left and John Kerry in Washington in March, 2014 ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

"Like any divorce negotiation, the two parties know each other all too well," Goldenberg writes. "They know one another better than the mediators know either of them. Each tends to use that knowledge to 'press buttons' on the other side to provoke and annoy."

In the interview, Goldenberg said the Israelis treated every Palestinian offer like the opening gambit in a bazaar. The Palestinians would make what they considered generous offers, Goldenberg said, but the Israelis continually insisted on more.

"When you tell the Israelis the Palestinians are not moving, the Israelis say, 'Wait, they're in the souk,'" Goldenberg said, using the Arabic word for market. "But the Palestinians really don't negotiate that way."

For their part, the Palestinians would make outrageous assertions that caused Israel to retrench. In 2014, top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat accused Israel of killing the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and of plotting to do the same to Abbas.

"He knew that was ridiculous, the Israelis knew that was ridiculous, but they get all frustrated and high and mighty in the response," Goldenberg said.

In the paper, Goldenberg outlines how atmosphere affected policy. On repeated occasions, one side put an offer on the table and the other side would counter-offer with something the other side found unacceptable, leading to the withdrawal of the initial offer.

> *"Twenty years of inconclusive talks have poisoned the environment in the negotiating room, creating an atmosphere equivalent to a nasty and prolonged divorce*

"It was a nightmare, trying to figure out what was on the table and what was not on the table," he said.

The mistrust meant that what should have been easy agreements turned into major obstacles. One example was Israel's insistence that any deal acknowledge Israel's status as a Jewish state. At the outset of the Oslo process, in 1993, the term was a given, and Arafat used it multiple times.

Israel began to insist on the phrase's inclusion during the previous round of talks, in 2007-2008, just as the international movement to delegitimize the Jewish state was gaining traction. The more the Israelis insisted, the warier the Palestinians became, fearful that the move was an attempt to delegitimize the Palestinian historical narrative. What was once a small matter joined borders, security, Jerusalem and refugees as one of the crucial issues in the talks.

Goldenberg, 37, who was born in Israel and speaks fluent Hebrew, learned Arabic during his years at the University of Pennsylvania. Even though his American-born parents returned the family to the United States when he was eight, he maintains some Israeli mannerisms, like holding his thumb to his index and middle fingers to emphasize a point.

As in many divorces, the mediator – in this case, the Americans – took some hits. Among the most painful was Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon's description of Kerry as "messianic" and his accusation that the secretary of state was hankering for a Nobel Prize. Those jibes led to further American missteps.

"One of the things we tried to do, and didn't succeed at, is not get pulled into it," Goldenberg said, citing the anonymous U.S. official who called Netanyahu "chickenshit" in October.

"We can't get pulled down into the muck of the politics," he said.

Through it all, the American Jewish community remained "highly supportive" of the effort, Goldenberg writes.

Laura Blumenfeld, a former senior policy adviser on the negotiating team whose job included strategic outreach to American Jewish groups, agreed, noting how the community overcame its internal rivalries to back the talks. She recalled a White House briefing in February 2014 that included not only young Jewish, Christian, Arab and Muslim leaders, but the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the liberal advocacy group J Street all sitting at the same table. But the relationship between the United States and Israel suffered during the negotiations.

"If there was a marriage on the rocks, it was the Israeli-American relationship," said Blumenfeld, now a scholar-in-residence at Georgetown University. "Some days, it seemed there was more bickering than brokering." ■

Jewish Life

The Napali Coast on the island's north coast is one of Kauai's great beauties.
JASON AGINSKY PHOTO

Kauai vacation: A quick tutorial before you go

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There were only a few small items in my grocery basket so when the cashier asked me for $100 I insisted on seeing the receipt. There it was, a single loaf of very ordinary brown bread – no seeds, nothing fancy – listed at $7.50. There had to be a mistake, I thought, walking the loaf to the returns department of a Kauai K-Mart. But no, I was told. That was the price. A loaf that would cost $1.99 anywhere else in the United States was $7.50 on the island of Kauai.

We'd come as a family to enjoy a week in the sunshine of the tropical island and learned quickly it would be anything but an inexpensive vacation. Our first shock was when we'd tried to book a furnished house or flat, thinking it would be a perfect way to avoid the cost of eating out every day. We checked the usual sites: vrbo.com (Vacation Rental By Owner) and airbnb.com, and the listings showed beautiful accommodations, close to the beach and within our budget.

So we booked flights and went back to the website to secure a place to stay. That's when we discovered that all those listings were controlled by agencies, and though they appeared "available" online, when you actually tried to book them, you discovered they weren't.

The "hard sell" began the moment I called the agencies. "There's nothing left on the island," the agents would say, by way of introduction. Then, after a moment's pause. "All I have left is this apartment at $350 per night." Pictures of said apartments showed rooms last updated in the 1970s, tiny places that looked entirely unappealing. We learned visitors to Kauai book their accommodation up to a year ahead, sometimes more. And they pay premium prices for their island sunshine.

After many hours scouring online we found accommodation at a modest three-star resort, where we crammed four people into a tiny room and filled the excuse-for-a-refrigerator with snacks, lunch and breakfast foods. Still, the mostly lousy dinners we were forced to eat out cost an arm and a leg and were memorable only for their pitiful quality.

Kauai Vacation Lesson 1: Book early, ensure you have a kitchen, then visit Costco in Lihue and stock up.

Price sticker-shock aside, we were quickly bowled over by Kauai's lush beauty. Drive around the island and there are exquisite beaches around every corner, the palm tree-lined stretches of sand you see in the brochures lapped by warm water that make swimming pure pleasure. We had brought boogie boards and snorkel gear, and spent our days exploring beaches on different parts of the island.

In Poipu, the island's busiest beach, we snorkeled over the shallow reefs, while in Port Allen we marveled at a massive monk seal, stretched in languid repose on the shore. In Wailua the kids surfed for hours, riding small, but strong, waves onto the beach before venturing back for more. And in Princeville we watched a massive turtle swim leisurely, oblivious to the swimmers and snorkelers nearby. With sunscreen and a picnic lunch in hand the hours spun by beneath the Hawaiian sun, a perfect tonic after the grey, cold winter back home.

Kauai Vacation Lesson 2: The beach is all you really need.

"You have to see Waimea Canyon," folks told us. We had good intentions of visiting the "grand canyon of Kauai" but when we started out and learned it would be close to two hours each way, four kids fighting in the backseat, the canyon felt a whole lot less appealing. Instead, we contented ourselves with a hike up Nounou Mountain, through a forest of Norfolk Pines with ringed trunks that felt straight out of a magical fairytale. The hike was exhilarating and muddy, taking us past locals' backyards where orange trees hung heavy with ripe fruit. Never has fruit theft felt more appealing – though we kept our hands to ourselves.

Later, at one of Kauai's farmers' markets, we had ample opportunity for tasters. We purchased $5 coconuts from one young man who wielded a machete and expertly sliced them so we could drink the sweet milk before devouring the soft interior. And we gratefully accepted samples of colourful rambutan, miniature apple-bananas, massive avocados and Kauai-made chocolate spreads, jams and honey.

There's a farmers' market somewhere on the island every day of the week and when you find one, it's a great opportunity to interact with locals and stock up on fresh local fruit and veggies. Just don't even think about bringing them home. Produce export is strictly monitored at the airport and we even witnessed the confiscation of a small container of peeled mango someone had tried to save for the flight.

The only time we opted for a group excursion with a local tourism vendor, we wished afterwards that we hadn't. The kayak tour mentioned a paddle upriver and snorkeling in a secluded cove. What it didn't mention was that the river was very unremarkable, and that we'd need to commute an hour each way to reach the excursion. The disappointing outing robbed us of a precious day on one of the island's better beaches and our dinner later that night, at a Hanalei restaurant, represented a new low in our island eating experience.

Kauai Vacation Lesson 3: Rent a car, buy a guide book and explore on your own. ■

Teen to play for Germany in European Maccabi Games

JANICE ARNOLD
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Almost 70 years after his great-grandparents fled Nazi Germany, 14-year-old Montrealer Jacob Fraenkel will return to that country this summer to play soccer in the European Maccabi Games – for Germany.

Canadian-born Fraenkel, who was selected last June by the Maccabi Munich team, has German citizenship through his father, Sharon Fraenkel, who was born in Israel to German parents. They returned to Germany – to Munich – when the elder Fraenkel was a child.

Sharon, who has lived in Montreal since 1997, retains his German nationality. His mother and younger brother still live in Munich.

"I'm tremendously proud, it's very hard to put it into words," said the father, who emphasized this was Jacob's choice. "It's like things have come full circle."

Jacob's grandparents are also ecstatic.

Jacob says being able to play for Germany in the Jewish games makes him proud, too. "That is who I am," he said. "That is my heritage." Besides, he points out, soccer in Germany is "light-years ahead of that in Canada."

The quadrennial regional Maccabi games, to be held in Berlin from July 27 to Aug. 5, are the first-ever on German soil. One of the venues is the Olympic Park, site of the controversial 1936 games. These games have additional significance because it is 70 years since the end of World War II, and the 50th year of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel and the re-establishment of Maccabi Germany.

Jacob is the only dual citizen on the German U16 Maccabi soccer team and, to his knowledge, on any of the German teams.

"Half the players on his team are the sons of people I grew up with in Germany. We all belonged to the same Zionist youth organization and went to its camp," said Sharon.

Over 2,500 athletes, coaches and other officials are slated to attend from 30 countries. Because of the exceptional nature of these games, non-European countries were invited: Israel, the United States and Canada are among those sending athletes, although there is no Canadian soccer team.

Jacob, a Dollard des Ormeaux resident who attends John Rennie High School's Sports-études program, has been playing soccer since he was four. He was an outstanding goalkeeper for the Club de Soccer Mont-Royal-Outremont league last year. Currently between seasons, he is being courted by two teams in the Quebec premier league for his age group.

Jacob Fraenkel, 14, with father, Sharon, is the great-grandson of Jews who fled the Nazis.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

His sights, however, are set on playing professionally in Europe, preferably Germany. He hopes scouts at the Maccabi Games notice him. He'll spend the summer in Germany to advance that dream. His idol is former German star goalie Oliver Kahn.

Last year, Fraenkel tried out with three professional Munich teams, including famed Bayern Munich. Europe drafts players as young as 16. Jacob turns 15 during the Maccabi games.

Sharon's mother, Ernestine, was born in a displaced persons camp in Vilshofen, Germany, in 1946, to Polish parents who survived a Siberian labour camp. The family remained in Germany, settling in Munich.

His father, Eli, who now lives in Mahone Bay, N.S., was born in 1944 in Israel, where his newly married parents fled in 1936. Sharon's father met his mother in Israel when she was on a visit. They married in 1968 and Sharon was born in 1970.

In 1974, the family moved to Germany. Sharon made aliyah in 1995. He visited Montreal soon after and met his wife-to-be, Jacob's mother, Moroccan-born Nicole Guigui, here, married and stayed.

Jacob admits his identity often baffles non-Jews his age. "If I say I'm Jewish and German they don't know how that can be because they think German automatically means Nazi or Jew-hater," he said.

He has taught himself German over the past year, with the help of his father and by correspondence with his grandmother, and is now close to fluent. ■

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

HUSBAND & WIFE TEAM REPRISE ROLES IN *TAMING OF THE SHREW*

Julia Nish-Lapidus, who with her husband **James Wallis** runs the theatre company Shakespeare BASH'd, plays Kate the Shrew to her husband's Petruchio in a raucous remounted production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the earlier version of which was named Best of Fringe at the 2012 Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival.

When they first took on the roles for the Fringe, they were only engaged, not yet married. "On our first date, James joked that we should play these parts," Nish-Lapidus recalled. "Tackling them for the first time just months before our wedding was incredible, but I'm so excited to revisit this controversial relationship now that we've been married for almost three years. We've got a new perspective on the relationship and can't wait to share it with an audience."

Soon after graduating from theatre school, she received some of her early training at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, where her mother was then principal. Invited to create a Shakespeare festival at the school, Nish-Lapidus worked with the students on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, then *Macbeth* the following year.

The Taming of the Shrew, directed by **Alex Johnson**, runs April 9 through 12 at the Monarch Tavern, 12 Clinton St. just south of College. Tickets $18, available at www.shakespearebashd.com or at the venue before each performance. Check the website for showtimes.

• • •

Another Fringe Play Returns: *Time Stands Still*, the hit play of last summer's Toronto Fringe Festival written by Pulitzer Prize winner **Donald Margulies**, is currently on a Toronto stage for a limited run. James and Sarah, a war correspondent and injured photojournalist, return from the Iraq War to their home in Brooklyn to try to figure out what "normal" means for them now.

Jordan Merkur directs a cast featuring **Carleigh Beverly, Kirstin Rae Hinton, Jason Jazrawy** and **Sam Rosenthal**. $22 to $38. At Theatre Passe Muraille, 16 Ryerson Ave., until March 29. www.artsboxoffice.ca, 416-504-7529.

• • •

Immersive Musical Theatre Experience: Sheridan College's Canadian Music Theatre Project presents *Brantwood 1920-2020*, a groundbreaking immersive musical theatre experience that is being staged in a school slated for redevelopment, and which presents 11 storylines, one for each decade of the school's history, plus a look into the future.

The project was created and directed by **Mitchell Cushman** and **Julie Tepperman** and produced by **Michael Rubinoff**, Sheridan's associate dean of visual and performing arts; features a cast of 40. $35. Sheridan College, 1430 Trafalgar Rd., Oakville; patrons will be transported by school bus to Brantwood School. Tuesday April 14 to Sunday May 3, 7 p.m. www.sheridancollege.ca

• • •

Arts in Brief

•*Star Trek with Live Orchestra* offers a screening of the 2009 film with a performance of **Michael Giacchino's** score performed by the **Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony**. The evening will also feature a special tribute to **Leonard Nimoy.** $47 to $97. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, Saturday March 21, 7:30 p.m. www.sonycentre.ca

• Opera educator **Iain Scott** continues his series on Opera and Shakespeare. $18 drop-in. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday March 23 (*Othello*) and March 30 (*Merry Wives. Falstaff*), 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

• **Joseph Kertes** discusses his new novel *The Afterlife of Stars*. Free admission. Miles Nadal JCC, March 26, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

• Canadian rock 'n' roll legend and CBC radio host **Randy Bachman** performs a benefit for the Canadian Friends of Israel Guide Dog Centre for the Blind. The sixth annual Evening of Miracles features Bachman performing many of his hits from the past 30 years. Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. Thursday June 9, 7:30 p.m. $90, $70, $55. $180 VIP package includes cocktail reception. www.rcmusic.ca, 1-855-985-2787. ■

Randy Bachman

Schulich Children's Plays
THE DIARY OF
ANNE
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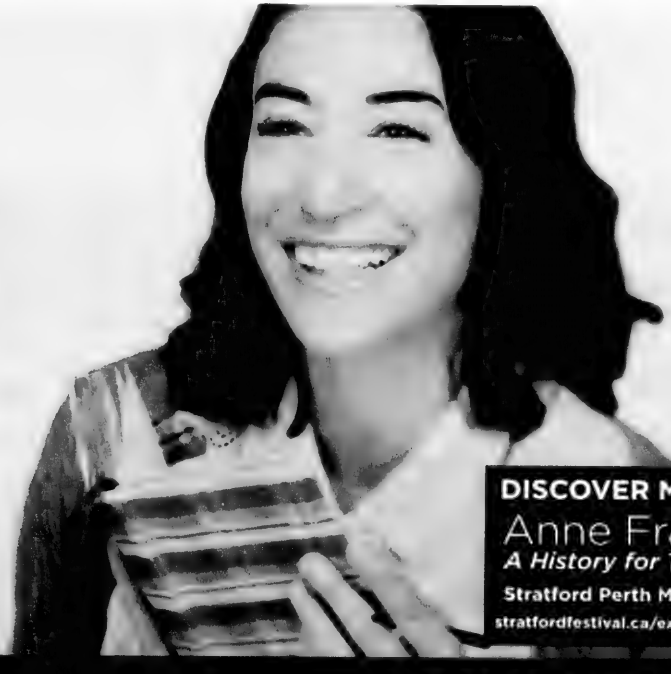

Sara Farb. Photo: Don Dixon

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Beth Sholom Ruach Singers help draw younger congregants

JODIE SHUPAC
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Aaron Jensen (left) does the musical arrangements for the Ruach Singers. J-M Erlendson (standing against the window) helped put the choir together and to his left, Beth Sholom's Cantor Eric Moses and Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich (far right, behind chair) give input.

For nearly a decade, Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich of Beth Sholom Synagogue has been aware that younger people aren't attending synagogue in the same numbers as what he called the "entrenched older cohort."

He's aware the issue isn't specific to Beth Sholom, but that it speaks to "a larger problem throughout North America."

After brainstorming with Beth Sholom's Cantor Eric Moses about ways to give the Shabbat morning service "a new sound," the two landed on a cappella as a possible solution.

In 2013, a Google search lead Rabbi Flanzraich to an article written in *The CJN* about J-M Erlendson, a member of Toronto pop/jazz a cappella singing group Countermeasure.

Inspired, Rabbi Flanzraich and Moses approached Erlendson and Aaron Jensen, Countermeasure's composer and arranger, and asked if they'd be interested in helping to develop a choir.

"It was a perfect fit," Erlendson said. "We worked with them to produce the Ruach Singers, which now has a home at Beth Sholom."

Comprising a core group of eight singers whom Jensen and Erlendson either know from Countermeasure or the local music community, the Ruach Singers have been incorporated by Rabbi Flanzraich into a special, monthly Shabbat morning service that he established last spring.

Dubbed "Shabbat Beth Sholom," the service's purpose is to help congregants of all ages and backgrounds better connect to prayer and to their faith.

It is, therefore, shorter, more condensed and, as Rabbi Flanzraich put it, "crisper" than a traditional Shabbat service.

Only two hours long – compared to the usual three and a quarter – and beginning at 9:45 a.m. instead of 8:45, the halfway point of the service is marked by the Ruach Singers entering the sanctuary and performing traditional Hebrew liturgical songs with a unique, contemporary twist.

Using their voices to create an instrumental sound, the Ruach Singers use melodies informed by contemporary music, as well as integrate samples from existing songs and cross genres, ranging from pop to beat box to folk.

Their repertoire includes part of the *Kedushah* set to the song *One Day*, by Jewish rapper Matisyahu, and a rendition of Adon Olam to the tune of *When I'm Gone*, from the movie *Pitch Perfect*.

"There's quite a range of artists that we draw inspiration from, and we've used samples from anyone from Mumford and Sons to Kelly Clarkson," Jensen said.

Though Jensen does the arrangements, the process is collaborative, with both Rabbi Flainzraich and Moses contributing their visions.

"They'll approach me and say, 'Can we treat this piece in this particular way?'" Jensen said. "Or they'll send me samples of songs that capture a certain spirit, and then I'll hole up at home, work on something and send it back to them."

He maintains that it's this partnership, as well as the Ruach Singers' innovative sound, which make the group one of a kind.

"Musically speaking, I'm not aware of any other ensemble that's taken such musical chances in terms of re-envisioning this body of songs," Jensen said.

Rabbi Flanzraich noted that liberal congregations in the United States are increasingly using musical groups, equipped with instruments, to draw young people to shul, but the Ruach Singers are special insofar as they simulate the sound of instruments with their voices.

"No one's doing anything like this," he said, "weaving an a cappella group's singing into the liturgy and tfillah itself. It's very unique and unprecedented."

The feedback, he added, has been extremely positive, and people in their 20s and 30s, both Beth Sholom congregants and guests who've heard about the service through word of mouth, are increasingly attending Shabbat Beth Sholom.

The turnout on these Shabbats has ranged from 250 to 700 people, he said, whereas the typical Shabbat service usually has anywhere from 150 to several hundred people.

"When the Ruach Singers are performing, there's a lot of swaying, clapping, smiling," he said. "There's a real engagement with it."

The Ruach Singers are in the process of recording an album that will feature Moses on some tracks.

"We're so excited to…take this revolution in Jewish music and make something we can show to people at other synagogues," said Erlendson, "to others interested in putting a twist [on traditional liturgy.]"

Rabbi Flanzraich stressed that this evolution in Jewish music reflects people's "urge to pray, access and worship God. That hasn't changed, it's how we do it that has, and will continue to change."

The next Shabbat Beth Sholom will take place April 18. ■

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Mordecai Richler made an honorary citizen of Montreal

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

A saga that probably would have amused, rather than annoyed the creator of the likes of *Solomon Gursky* came to a satisfying conclusion on March 12 when the City of Montreal at last found a fitting way to immortalize one of its most illustrious sons.

Writer Mordecai Richler was posthumously declared an honorary citizen of Montreal – where he was born in 1931 and died in 2001 – by Mayor Denis Coderre, who called him "an outstanding cultural ambassador." It was also announced, as expected, that Bibliothèque du Mile End, the public library on Park Avenue, is being renamed Bibliothèque Mordecai-Richler.

Richler's widow Florence and sons Noah and Jacob, who in recent weeks have expressed frustration and disappointment with the city's foot-dragging, are happy with the choice.

"How proud Mordecai would have been," said the gracious Florence. "I'm so elated; it's so apt, isn't it?"

More apt, almost everyone agrees, than the renaming for Richler of the dilapidated gazebo in Jeanne Mance Park, on Mount Royal's eastern slope, which the previous Gérald Tremblay administration had proposed in 2011, the 10th anniversary of the author's death.

"We are profoundly grateful," said Jacob. "It [the library] is a far more elegant solution," adding that he is thankful this has happened in his 85-year-old mother's lifetime.

The gazebo project was to have been completed in 2012, but to this day no work has begun on the structure that dates back to 1928. Coderre said it will be renovated this summer, but without the Richler tag.

Florence Richler is delighted as Mayor Denis Coderre unveils the plaque for the Mile End library renamed in her husband's honour. At right is son Noah Richler. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

While paying homage to Richler, neither Coderre nor Luc Ferrandez, opposition leader at city hall and Plateau Mont-Royal borough mayor, ignored that fact that Richler remains a controversial, if not reviled, figure. Jacob observed that even some city councillors today are opposed to this tribute.

Nationalists, who perceived Richler as anti-Quebec, were fiercely opposed to any honour for him when the idea was championed by Coun. Marvin Rotrand in 2011. Plateau borough officials were also against naming anything for him at the time, even though Richler made his childhood neighbourhood world famous.

As Coderre said, Richler was uncompromising in speaking his mind, whether it was about francophone Quebecers or his own Jewish community. "He saw challenging the established order as part of his job as a writer."

In addition to his artistic merit, the citation of honorary citizenship speaks to Richler's prickly politics: "Criticism was a key element in the writing of this purposefully provocative polemicist, who never shied away from controversy."

No one, however, denies Richler's deep attachment to Montreal, which he returned to in the early 1970s after living in London for 20 years.

"Make no mistake," said Jacob, "my father loved this city, foibles and all, and perhaps because of its foibles…He was committed to getting Montreal exactly right, and that is why he came back to it."

His credo was that "painful truths" should be aired and not allowed to fester under the surface, Jacob said. Noah thinks if he were alive today his father would speak out against the prejudice directed at Muslims.

Ferrandez noted how characteristic it is of Montreal's sophistication that a predominantly French library in a former Anglican church be named for a Jewish writer, who grew up in the district.

Richler, he said, abhorred "small-mindedness and provincialism" and that is "why he took such shots, swinging in all directions, and almost always hitting the mark.

"No matter how complicated his relationship with Montreal and Quebec was, he was always of it."

Michael Levine, Richler's literary executor, said the writer disliked hypocrisy and xenophobia, and "always spoke truth to power."

However, Levine admitted their relationship began as an adversarial one.

Levine was the lawyer of a person who wanted to sue Richler for one of his works, but as soon as Levine met the defendant he was thoroughly charmed. "I became Sancho Panza to his Don Quixote.

"When he died, we faced a dilemma because this country has a tradition of burying its authors and forgetting them."

Montreal's homage is the beginning of a series of artistic projects and activities over the coming year to commemorate Richler, in which Levine has had a hand.

Among them are a reissue of French translations of five Richler novels by Edition du Boréale starting with *Solomon Gursky* (originally *Solomon Gursky Was Here*) this month; a new musical adaptation of *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, featuring a score by eight-time Oscar-winning composer Alan Menken, in June, and audiobooks of his novels recorded by leading Canadian actors like Colm Feore and Martha Henry. There'll even be a Mordecai Richler snooker tournament in Montreal later this year. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

A soft-hearted novella of a bitter time

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When the Montreal writer A.M. Klein visited Israel in 1949 he was nonplussed by its nascent literary scene. The "poets of the settlement," he wrote, "were milder, kinder men," who wrote verse with "lyric sentiment" influenced by such 19th century models as Heinrich Heine and Alexander Pushkin.

Either Klein missed the major, young voice of Yizhar Smilansky, who wrote under the pen name S. Yizhar, or he decided that provocative work like *Khirbet Khizeh* was beyond his ken because it was offered in prose.

Yizhar is one of Israel's best-known prose writers, whose early work, including the newly reissued novella *Khirbet Khizeh*, provided a prominent literary mirror in which the state viewed itself.

As Klein traversed the country, developing a report he would take back to the Canadian Jewish Congress, and working on his own literary portrait of Israel, he must have encountered the provocative discussions raised by Yizhar's portrayal of the events of the country's War of Independence.

Khirbet Khizeh, along with Yizhar's other novels, played a central role in the development of modern Hebrew literature, but his work has only recently found its way to an English language audience. In 2008, the first full English translation of *Khirbet Khizeh* appeared from Jerusalem-based Ibis Editions, a non-profit, activist publisher dedicated to bringing out "Levant-related books of poetry and prose" in translations from Hebrew, Arabic, French and other languages of the region. A British edition of *Khirbet Khizeh* appeared in 2011. Farrar Straus and Giroux has recently reissued the English translation for a North American audience.

Reviews of *Khirbet Khizeh* inevitably recount its slender plot line, which focuses on a single day's activities undertaken by a company of young Israeli army men whose "operational orders" are to clear the last of an Arab village's population in order to level the area and prepare it for new Israeli settlement.

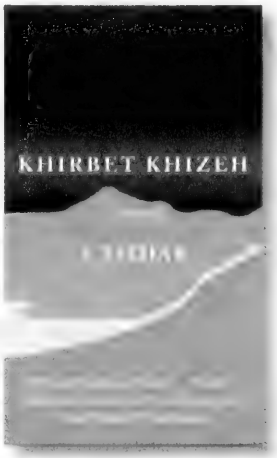
Yizhar's narrator is deeply divided over the orders he must follow, and he argues with his comrades, however fitfully, over the rightness of the plan to expel the remaining populace of *Khirbet Khizeh*.

His argument regarding why "it's not right" to do so is met with the challenge, "So what do you suggest?" The narrator's reply – "I just don't know" – is demolished by a cynical but practical-minded response: "If you don't know – then shut up."

This he more or less does, while offering the reader an aching and inward monologue considering the acts and likely fate of the new country he serves. "And so it happened," he tells us, "as we set out that clear splendid winter morning, cheerfully making our way, showered, well fed, and smartly turned out; and so, in the light breeze, we got out at a certain point close to a village that wasn't yet visible."

Yizhar was in his early 30s when *Khirbet Khizeh* appeared. Born in Rehovot, his family had arrived in Palestine from Kiev at the turn of the 20th century. His literary mentors were James Joyce, William Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe. But part of his uniqueness arose from the challenges associated with founding a modernist Hebrew voice among Israel's first generation of native Hebrew speakers.

(Klein found "new life" being given to the "antique speech" in the realm of business advertising; dry cleaning shops were called *Kesheth*, for the rainbow, a brand of Israeli sausage, *Bashan*, paid tribute to the land of a giant king in the Bible).



Khirbet Khizeh
S. Yizhar
Trans. N. de Lange and Y. Dweck
(Farrar Straus and Giroux / Ibis Editions)

Biblical imagery and allusions remain a key element in Yizhar's modern Hebrew voice, and translators have struggled to convey this straddling position between the ancient Jewish view of the land and its contemporary character. This paradoxical position informs Yizhar's narrator's sense of being not-at-home as events unfold.

As the platoon waits, upon a hilltop, to descend to the terraced lands of Khirbet Khizeh, our guide wishes he could leave what's about to be done to others: "If someone had to get filthy, let others soil their hands. I couldn't. Absolutely not."

> *Khirbet Khizeh, along with Yizhar's other novels, played a central role in the development of modern Hebrew literature*

Aspects of the book are prophetic. Yizhar conveys, with great emotional impact, an Arab boy being sent away from his home, and the narrator arrives at an awareness that "what was happening in the heart of the boy . . . could only become a viper inside of him." By way of the author's appreciation of exile, the narrator wishes he could discover an Arab "Jeremiah mourning and burning, forging a mouth of fury in his heart, crying out in stifled tones to the old God in Heaven, atop the trucks of exile."

Responses to the reissue of Yizhar's novella routinely read it as an expression of one side of the events that took place with the creation of the State of Israel. But *Khirbet Khizeh* strives to see the events leading up to and following 1948 from many sides – both Arab and Jewish. It's potential for education and the creation of dialogue is great. Whether its newfound readers will rise to the occasion is an open question. ■

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COMING SOON:
Look for our annual literary supplement in the April 2 PASSOVER edition of **The CJN**

PASSOVER FOOD

A taste of Peru – something new for your Passover menu

NORENE GILLETZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Passover is the biggest Jewish holiday for entertaining, as families gather around the table for all or part of the eight days. Cookbook author Paula Shoyer offers up some deliciously different recipes for your Passover table in her latest best-selling cookbook, *The New Passover Menu* (Sterling, 160 pp). Shoyer combines the nostalgic pleasure of family favourites with contemporary creations. Her innovative recipes will provide a fresh approach to the upcoming Passover holiday.

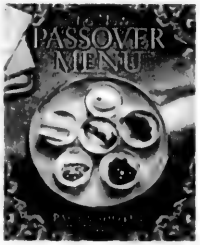
The New Passover Menu contains 65 recipes organized into eight different menus, featuring easy, beautiful, contemporary food and desserts. Shoyer suggests using the menus as they are, or you can mix-and-match them.

Paula shares some of the customs from their family's seders: "My husband, Andy, leads the seder surrounded by a pile of Haggadahs and commentaries and shares readings from them. A major part of our seder is the Exodus story told in the form of a play written by Andy. We incorporate both Andy's Romanian tunes and those from my childhood. Our children share insights they learned in school, and we talk about our own struggles and how we can overcome them as the Israelites did theirs."

Shoyer continues: "Our favourite tradition takes place during the song *Chad Gadya*. Everyone gets to be a character from the song and has to develop a sound to represent it. We go around the table and each person makes the sound on cue. We love to hear the grandfathers make sounds like a dog or goat, and somehow there's always someone who can create hilarious sounds for fire and water. Everyone at the table laughs and laughs."

The New Passover Menu contains fabulous menus for the seders and all week long, including nostalgic family favourites as well as Italian, French and barbecued dishes, along with some delectable dairy dishes. There are new, updated twists on traditional recipes, such as Banana Charoset, Fresh Salmon Gefilte Fish Loaf with Arugula, Avocado, and Mango Slaw, or Chicken Soup with Chicken Meatballs and Zucchini Spaghetti. Innovative salads include Seder Plate Salad and Kale Caesar Salad. You'll find international main dishes such as Peruvian Roast Chicken with Salsa Verde (below), and Moroccan Spiced Short Ribs.

The breakfast chapter includes Fruit and Nut Granola and versatile Gluten-Free Waffles or Pancakes. There are also some new fabulous desserts, which are Paula's specialty, many of them gluten-free: Pistachio and Strawberry Roll, Easy Fruit Cake, Opera Cake and Triple Chocolate Biscotti.



Shoyer says: "Armed with this book and the bonanza of Passover ingredients that are available today, you can enjoy delicious, elegant, and inspired holiday meals – and create new Passover food memories at the same time."

Here are two eye-catching, stellar recipes to include on your new Passover menu. Enjoy in good health!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Passover
Food Drive

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complete seder dinner

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25.99 per person - 10 person minimum

Choose 1: Cabbage borscht with flanken or housemade matzo ball soup.

Choose 1: Coleslaw or baby spinach salad with red onion, toasted almonds, Mandarin oranges and citrus vinaigrette.

Choose 2: Brisket au jus, BBQ chicken, baked salmon with orange miso glaze or grilled salmon teriyaki.

Choose 1: Garlic mashed potatoes with caramelized onions, vegetable farfel or herb roasted mini potatoes.

Choose 1: Green beans with caramelized onions and toasted almonds or candied roasted root vegetables topped with toasted pecans.

Desserts: Gourmet fresh fruit and Passover biscotti.

à la carte

Minimum order 10 people per selection.

Seder Plate 6.99

Salt and Pepper Gefilte Fish 4.99 per piece

Chopped Liver 6.98 per pound

Matzo Ball Soup (serves 12) 34.99 per gallon

Matzo Chicken Fingers 17.99 per dozen • 2 dozen min.

Mini Latkes 12.99 per dozen • 2 dozen min.

Mini Latke Sliders 24.99 per dozen • 2 dozen min.

Brisket au Jus 15.96 per pound

BBQ Satays (4 dozen) 75.99 Each additional dozen added to the platter 18.99

Chicken Supreme (prepared 3 ways) 8.99 per piece

Fresh Atlantic Salmon (prepared 3 ways) 8.99 per piece

Maple Nut-Crusted Salmon Salad 14.99 per person

Crunchy Broccoli Salad (serves 10-15) 17.99

Garlic Mashed or Herb Mini Roasted Potatoes (serves 10-15) 24.99

Candied Roasted Root Vegetables (serves 10) 24.99

Green Beans (serves 10) 19.99

Veggie & Mushroom Farfel (9" round) 11.99

Parisienne Potatoes 3.99 per pound

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Passover outside the box

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I have said it before and I will say it again: Passover does not have to taste like Passover. Think outside the box and use as many fresh ingredients as you can in your main courses, sides and desserts. Try to stay away from too many dry, packaged ingredients, like matzah and farfel. At any rate, you will be eating enough matzah with your meals. Instead, look to fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts, herbs and even jams to jazz up your Passover meals.

Roasted Beet Salad

A simple yet elegant start to your seder meal.

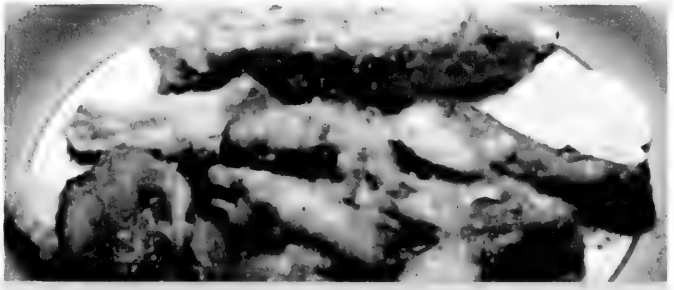
- ❑ 6 medium beets
- ❑ lettuce of your choice, washed and torn
- ❑ English cucumber, sliced
- ❑ grape tomatoes
- ❑ mini carrots
- ❑ whatever other salad vegetables you like, sliced

Dressing

- ❑ 2 tbsp. white vinegar
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. pepper
- ❑ 1 tsp. dried tarragon
- ❑ 1/4 cup olive oil

Preheat oven to 425. Wash beets well and wrap in tin foil. Bake for 45 minutes, remove them from the oven and let cool. Remove the tin foil, slide off the skins and cut away any remaining stems. Slice beets into julienne strips.

In a small bowl, mix the dressing ingredients, then plate the salads and drizzle with dressing.



Honey Clementine Chicken Breasts

Tender and juicy, Honey Clementine Chicken Breasts will be a deliciously different change to your Passover seder.

- ❑ 1 cup matzah meal
- ❑ 2 tbsp. grated clementine rind
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. pepper
- ❑ 6-8 chicken breasts, boneless and skinless
- ❑ 1/2 cup clementine juice
- ❑ 1/4 cup chicken stock
- ❑ 1/4 cup honey

Grease a 9x12-in. Pyrex baking dish with oil. Combine matzah meal, clementine rind, salt and pepper in a flat bowl. Place clementine juice in a second flat bowl. Wet a chicken breast in the juice and then place it into the crumbs, covering completely with crumbs. Place in the Pyrex dish and continue with the rest. Reserve the clementine juice and discard any remaining crumbs.

Combine 1/4 cup of clementine juice, chicken stock and honey. Pour mixture around the chicken. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 60 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. ■

Peruvian Roasted Chicken With Salsa Verde

Prep time: 10 minutes for chicken, 30 minutes for sauce
Cook time: 1 hour for chicken, 25 minutes for sauce
Advance prep: Chicken may be made 1 day in advance; sauce may be made 1 week in advance.

For many years, our family has been blessed with Betty Supo, a wonderful do-it-all nanny. Among her many talents, she is a terrific cook and has introduced our family to flavourful Peruvian dishes. Her best is Arroz con Pollo with Salsa Verde (chicken with rice and a luscious green chili sauce.) Here is the version that Betty and I cooked up so the world could enjoy a taste of Peru during Passover. If you like really spicy food, include the jalapeno pepper seeds in the frying pan along with the peppers.

For the roasted chicken:

- ❑ 1 large whole chicken, cut into 8 pieces
- ❑ 4 tsp. ground cumin
- ❑ 1 tbsp. paprika
- ❑ 2 tsp. garlic powder
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt, plus more as needed
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. black pepper, plus more as needed
- ❑ 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- ❑ 1 head garlic, cloves separated, not peeled

For the salsa verde:

- ❑ 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- ❑ 4 cloves garlic, cut in half
- ❑ 1 medium onion, cut in half and sliced
- ❑ 2 jalapeno peppers, halved (remove seeds for a milder flavour; keep seeds for more heat)
- ❑ leaves from 1 large or 2 small bunches of fresh cilantro
- ❑ 1/4 cup water
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. kosher salt

To make the chicken:
Preheat oven to 400. Place the chicken pieces in a large roasting pan. In a small bowl, combine the cumin, paprika, garlic powder, salt and black pepper. Drizzle 1 tbsp. of the oil over the chicken and rub to coat. Shake the spice mixture onto the chicken and rub all over.

Place the garlic cloves in a small bowl and add the remaining 2 tbsp. of oil. Season with salt and pepper; toss to coat. Scatter the garlic cloves and drizzle the oil over the chicken pieces. Bake, uncovered, for 50 minutes to 1 hour, or until well browned and the juices run clear.

To make the salsa verde:
Heat the oil in a medium frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the onion and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, or just until they soften. Add the jalapeno halves, open side down, and cook for 1 minute. Turn them over and cook for another 4 minutes over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the jalapenos are fork-tender.

Let cool for 20 minutes. Place the jalapeno mixture in a food processor, add the cilantro leaves, water and salt, and process until pureed and smooth. Cover and store in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Serve the chicken on a platter and the salsa verde in a bowl alongside. Serves 4-6. ■

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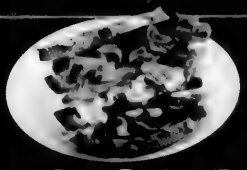

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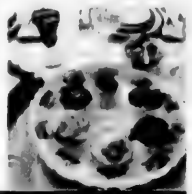

~ PASSOVER MENU ~

~Appetizers~

Sweet or Savoury Gefilte Fish (made from salmon and white fish) ..... $3.50 per slice
garnished with carrots and horseradish
Mushroom Crepes accompanied with mushroom sauce ..... $4.00 per piece

~Soup~
(1 litre serves 3-4 people)

Bubies Traditional Chicken Soup (clear soup with diced carrots and celery) ... $8.95 per litre
Butternut Squash Soup ..... $8.95 per litre
Potato Leek Soup ..... $8.95 per litre
Matzo Balls ..... $12.95 per dozen
Home Made Egg Noodles ..... $12.00 per litre

~Salads and Side Dishes~
(10 inch by 12 inch pan serves 10 people)

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Oven Roasted Herb Potatoes $20.00
Roasted Root Vegetables $22.00
Carrot Tzimmes $15.00
Potato Kugle $18.00
Sweet Matzo Farfel Kugle $18.00
Fresh Seasonal Vegetables $22.00
Mixed Green Salad with cherry tomatoes (small bowl serves 3 to 4) $14.50
Cucumber Salad (1 liter serves 4) $10.00
Coleslaw Salad (1 liter serves 4) $10.00
Potato Salad (1 liter serves 4) $10.00
Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing (1/2 liter) $5.00
Creamy Garlic Dressing (1/2 liter) $5.00

~Fish Entree~

Miso Glazed Salmon (6oz) $13.25
Moroccan Style Tilapia (6oz) $14.25
Grilled Salmon with Mango Salsa (6oz) $13.25

~Meat Entree~

Oven Roasted Chicken (1/2 piece per person) $12.50
Oven Roasted Chicken (1/4 piece per person) $8.50
Whole Roasted Chicken (cut in 1/4 pieces) $24.50
Boneless Chicken Piccata in Lemon Sauce (6 oz) $12.25
Herb Crusted Chicken Breast with white Wine Mushroom Sauce (6 oz) $12.25
Chicken Fingers With Plum Sauce (One Dozen) $22.00
Roasted Sliced Turkey White Meat (6 oz) $10.50
Roast Brisket of Beef With Red Wine Gravy (1/3 pound per person) $7.50
Beef Kebab (6oz per person) $10.50
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Herb Crusted Filet of Beef (1/4 pound per person) $12.50

~Extras~

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Seder Plate $20.00
Extra Gravy (Chicken/beef/turkey,1 liter) $8.00

Last Day for All Orders: March 24, 2015
Pick Up Date: Friday, April 3, 2015
(Between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm)

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Midweek Passover meals with a Sephardi flavour

SYBIL KAPLAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

After the seders, by midweek, you may be looking for some interesting, creative ideas for Passover dinners.

Here are some ideas I frequently use.

A mina is a traditional Sephardi savoury, layered pie that's great for leftover chicken. In Spain and Turkey, it's called mina; in Egypt, it's called maiena or mayena; in Algeria, it's meguena; in Italy, it's scacchi. The pie is also popular among Jews from the Island of Rhodes and Yugoslavia.

Chicken Mina

- ❑ 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken
- ❑ 1/2 cup chopped scallions
- ❑ 1/2 cup chopped Italian parsley
- ❑ 1/4 cup chopped mint
- ❑ 1/4 cup chopped dill
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 6 matzahs
- ❑ chicken soup
- ❑ olive oil
- ❑ 3 eggs
- ❑ 1/2 cup tomato sauce
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a rectangular or oval baking dish. In a bowl, combine chicken, scallions, parsley, mint and dill. Add 2 eggs and blend.

In another bowl, combine 3 eggs, tomato sauce and nutmeg.

Place matzahs in bottom of a deep dish. Pour in enough chicken soup to soften, about 3 minutes.

Place 2 matzahs in greased baking dish. Brush with olive oil. Spread half the chicken filling on top. Add 2 more matzahs, brush with oil and spread rest of chicken filling on top. Top with remaining 2 matzahs.

Pour tomato sauce on top. Bake in preheated oven 45 minutes. Cut into squares to serve. Makes 6-8 servings.

Chicken Tagine

A tagine is a North African, slow cooked savoury stew, named after the earthenware clay cooking pot it's traditionally prepared in. The base is flat and circular with low sides. The cover is cone or dome shaped, which traps the steam and returns the condensed liquid to the pot, thus requiring very little liquid when cooking. In a chicken tagine, vegetables or dried fruit, nuts and spices are added.

- ❑ 1 cup matzah meal
- ❑ 8 pieces of chicken
- ❑ oil
- ❑ 4 cups chopped onions
- ❑ 2 cups chicken soup
- ❑ 1 1/2-3 cups prunes, apricots or other dried fruit
- ❑ 2 tsp. cinnamon
- ❑ 1 tsp. ginger
- ❑ 1/4 cup lemon juice
- ❑ 2 tsp. lemon peel
- ❑ 1 cup slivered almonds

Place matzah meal in a shallow dish. Dip chicken pieces in the meal.

Heat oil in a soup pot. Add chicken and brown. Add onions, chicken soup and dried fruit and simmer until chicken is cooked. Add cinnamon, ginger, lemon juice, lemon peel and almonds. Simmer another 20 minutes. Makes 8 servings. ■

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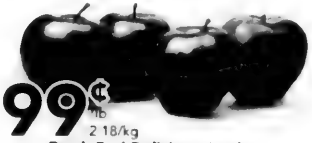

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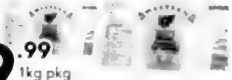

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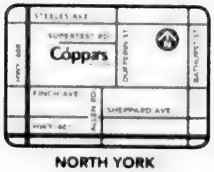

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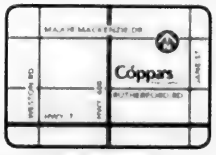

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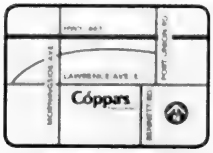

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Cookbook created with heart

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Flo's Kitchen, a collection of recipes assembled over some 40 years, was launched in early February by author Shari Naimer.

The endeavour began as a mother/daughter project compiling all of the late Florence (Flo) Naimer's too-many-to-count recipes collected from books and age-old binders filled with magazine and newspaper clippings.

The initial concept emerged from Flo's granddaughter Erin, now 22 years old. Several years ago, Erin's upcoming bat mitzvah inspired her mother, Shari, with a desire to give her daughter and their guests the gift of a treasured cookbook.

"I asked Mom 10 years ago to bring together her favourites in each category. I photocopied 500 blank recipe sheets and gave her a huge binder. It soon became clear the project was going to take much longer than one year to complete. Mom started writing and writing – even when she got sick," Shari recalled.

"During the more than two years she was in and out of the hospital, I would sit with her and edit the recipes. We talked about what the book would look like and where the proceeds would go. She knew it would be completed. Mom succumbed to leukemia in 2010.

"Our journey of writing, organizing and editing was filled with reminiscing, crying and laughter, and *Flo's Kitchen* was born," Shari said.

Montreal-born Flo was fearless in the kitchen. Experimenting with recipes was her trademark.

"Many of the sources of the recipes in the cookbook are unknown but include 'Flo Adds,' which are commentaries my mother wrote down when writing out the recipes. You can spot them in the book with a little character sketch of her," said Shari.

Flo's granddaughters remember their Bubbie.

"From a young age, we learned from our Bubbie that cooking was synonymous with love. Bubbie always put so much effort and meticulous care into everything she made. She would slave away in the kitchen for days preparing for even the smallest of family dinners," Lauren Greenglass said.

"She taught us that nothing brought a room full of people together better than a plentiful table of savoury treats and delicious sweets," Erin Greenglass added.

"My mother was all about integrity and family. She never wavered from that, ever," Shari said. "I think that's the lesson she left me and she has most certainly left my daughters, Erin and Lauren, who were very close with their Bubbie and have brought these lessons into their own life."

All proceeds from *Flo's Kitchen* will support the Travel for Treatment Fund, started by Flo to assist families who have been accepted for treatment at the Hospital for Sick Children.

Flo's Kitchen is available at select stores in Toronto and Montreal. For more information, contact Shari at sharinaimer@rogers.com or message her via Flo's Kitchen Facebook page.

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CHAG SAME'ACH from YITZ'S

Gefilte Fish Patties

These are in the fish chapter.

- ❑ 2 tbsp. oil, or more
- ❑ 3 lb. ground fish (mixture of whitefish, pike, pickerel)
- ❑ 3 eggs
- ❑ 2 onions, grated
- ❑ 2 carrots, grated
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. white pepper
- ❑ 3 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 tsp. sugar
- ❑ 3/4 cup water
- ❑ 1/4 cup matzah meal, or more

Preheat the oven to 450 or 475. Spread the oil over two nonstick baking sheets

Combine the fish, eggs, onions, carrots, pepper, salt, sugar, water and matzah meal in a large bowl and mix well. Wet your hands in cold water and make small patties from the mixture. Place the patties on the prepared baking sheets.

Place in the oven and, watching carefully, bake until the bottoms look brownish, about 20 minutes. When the bottoms are browned, turn them over with a spatula. If the baking sheets are dry, spread with a little more oil. Bake for another 5 to 10 minutes, or until the patties are done. Remove from the oven and transfer the patties to paper towels. Let cool and get that horseradish ready! Yield: 20 to 24 patties that freeze well.

Flo Adds: I have the butcher or fishmonger mince the fish for me.

Use a minimal amount of oil when making this recipe.

My family would rather have the patties than the traditional cooked fish balls.

For the holidays, I buy 13 pounds of fish. Everybody takes home a "care package."

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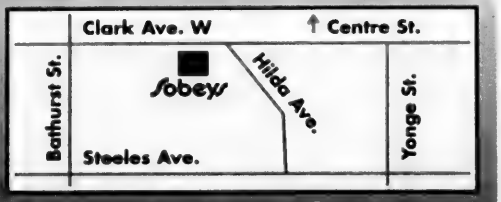

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Gnocchi for Passover? It is possible!

JUDY BART KANCIGOR
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Passover is the most celebrated Jewish holiday. The culinary climax of the holiday is the two seders. But after they fade into memory, the additional matzah-filled days of Passover loom before us.

No bread for a week? No problem! A new cookbook, *Meatballs and Matzah Balls* from Marcia A. Friedman, has a chapter dedicated to Passover.

Italian by birth and Jewish by choice, Friedman has amassed a feast filled with nostalgic reflections from both traditions.

"It always feels like a brainteaser to create menus for the Passover seders and the remaining days of the holiday," she said, "but it's made me creative."

She has adapted Italian dishes like Chicken Cacciatore and Potato Gnocchi, as well as desserts like Banana Marshmallow Tart.

But gnocchi for Passover? "The first time I made it, no one could believe it's kosher for Passover," she said. "And what a rare pleasure to eat something chewy and pasta-like during the no-bread holiday." ■

Passover Gnocchi With Pepper And Toasted Garlic

- ❑ 2 lb. Yukon gold or butter potatoes, unpeeled, cut into large pieces
- ❑ 3/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups matzah cake meal, plus more as needed
- ❑ 1/2 cup potato starch
- ❑ extra-virgin olive oil
- ❑ 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes, or to taste
- ❑ 6 large garlic cloves, sliced lengthwise into thirds
- ❑ 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Boil potatoes until just tender, about 20 minutes. Drain. Cool, peel, discard skin. Press potatoes through potato ricer or mash into large bowl. Stir in salt and pepper.

Whisk together matzah cake meal and potato starch; fold into potatoes. Knead 1 minute until dough is smooth but still slightly sticky. Add a little cake meal if too moist or sprinkle with water if too dry.

Bring large pot of salted water to boil. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

Roll small handful of dough into rope about 1/2-in. thick. Slice into 3/4-in. pieces. Gently pinch each piece between your finger and prongs of fork for ribbed texture. Place on prepared parchment. Repeat with all dough. Gnocchi can now be refrigerated or frozen for later use.

Place a thick (about 1/3-in.) layer of olive oil in wide, shallow bowl (or a few pie plates) and set aside. Gently stir half the gnocchi into boiling water. After about a minute, dumplings will start rising to surface. Cook 40 seconds more until al dente, and quickly remove with slotted spoon or small strainer to bowl with oil, stirring gently to coat to prevent sticking. Repeat with remaining gnocchi.

Heat olive oil in large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in red pepper flakes and some garlic; place as many gnocchi as will fit in one layer in pan. Cook until both sides are golden brown and crisped, 6 to 10 minutes (remove garlic sooner if too brown). Remove to warmed platter; top with cheese, if using. Repeat with remaining gnocchi. Serve immediately. Serves 4-5. ■

Source: Meatballs and Matzah Balls *by Marcia A. Friedman*

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When the kids crave sweets at Pesach...

DAPHNA RABINOVITCH
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

I happen to love matzah with butter and jam. I eat it during the entire holiday of Passover and never, ever feel like I'm missing anything. Not so with my son and his buddies. Eight days seem interminable to them and to their appetites, so I indulge and bake, as I do every other day of the year. I've tried to keep chemical leaveners to a minimum, to keep with the spirit and the integrity of the holiday. For the blondies, bake them just until they start to form that paper-thin skin on the surface. And the meringues speak for themselves, coffee flavoured, melt in your mouth tender and really good keepers.

Coconut Pecan Blondies

These bars, made rich with butter and brown sugar, should be chilled before they are cut into bars. Feel free to substitute the semisweet chocolate chips with milk chocolate chips or the pecans with almonds or the coconut with caramel bits. The base is more like a canvas, eagerly awaiting the personal inclinations of your brushstroke.

- ❑ 1 1/3 cups potato starch
- ❑ 1/2 cup fine matzah cake meal
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 cup unsalted butter or margarine, softened
- ❑ 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ❑ 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- ❑ 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ❑ 1cup semisweet chocolate chips
- ❑ 1 cup chopped pecans
- ❑ 1 cup shredded coconut

Preheat the oven to 350. Grease a 13x9-in. cake pan. Line the pan with parchment paper, so that there is a 2-in. overhang on the long sides.

Whisk together the potato starch, matzah cake meal, soda and salt in a bowl; set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer using the paddle attachment, or using hand-held beaters, beat the butter for 1 minute. Add the brown and granulated sugars; beat for 3 minutes or until light and fluffy. One at a time, beat in the eggs, beating well after the first addition before adding the second. Remove the bowl from the stand.

Using a wooden spoon, stir in the potato starch mixture. Stir in the chocolate chips, pecans and coconut. The mixture will be quite sticky.

With wet hands, pat the mixture into the prepared pan. Bake in the centre of the preheated oven until the blondies look light golden and a cake tester comes out with a few moist crumbs clinging to it, 30 to 33 minutes.

Let the blondies cool in the pan on a wire rack for at least two hours. Cover with plastic wrap and then foil to store at room temperature for up to 4 days. Makes 28 blondies.

Espresso Stars

These meringues should be slightly crisp on the outside and meltingly tender on the inside. Bake them just until they start to crisp on the outside. They'll harden as they cool and then get soft again when you store them at room temperature. For an extra-special touch, dip the bases of the meringues in melted bittersweet chocolate.

- ❑ 3 egg whites, at room temperature
- ❑ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ❑ 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- ❑ 1 tsp. vanilla sugar
- ❑ 1 tbsp. instant espresso powder or granules

Preheat the oven to 300. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper; set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, or using hand-held beaters, beat the egg whites with the salt until soft peaks. Very gradually add the sugar, in a thin stream. Beat until stiff but supple, glossy white peaks appear. Remove the mixer from the stand. Fold in the espresso powder, leaving streaks.

Transfer the meringue to a large pastry bag fitted with a star tip. Pipe stars onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake both sheets in the upper and bottom of the preheated oven, rotating their positions halfway through baking, until their surface is just crisp to the touch, about 30 minutes. Cool the meringues on their pans on a wire rack. Meringues can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days. Makes 28 meringues.

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8 am to 10 pm
Monday to Saturday
8 am to 8 pm Sunday

SPECIALS ARE IN EFFECT FROM MARCH 20 TO APRIL 12, 2015. CLOSED GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3RD. www.yummymarket.com

What's New

MARCH 19 - MARCH 26

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, March 19

ISRAELI SCIENTIFIC INNOVATIONS
Rabbi Stephen Wise, author of *Israel - Repairing the World*, discusses "Israeli scientific innovations," 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion. $3/$6.

ORAYNU ADULT EDUCATION
Rabbi Eva Goldfinger discusses "Realization and disillusionment in Israeli and North American stories/poems," 7 p.m., Borochov Cultural Centre. $20. RSVP **Roby** 416-385-3910.

Sunday, March 22

CALVACADE OF STARS
Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue presents an evening of Jewish music. Proceeds go to Jews for Judaism. Concert starts at 6:30 p.m. Tickets, $25/$39.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO
Club Chaverut presents **David and Kenny,** 1:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. RSVP 905-764-8141.

THE GREEN PRINCE
Congregation Darchei Noam shows the documentary film *The Green Prince*, 7:30 p.m. $10.

SCROLL AND SPADE
Shawna Dolansky discusses "Scroll and spade: Where the Bible and archeology do and do not intersect," at a dinner lecture at Beth David Synagogue, 6 p.m. $36. RSVP www.bethdavid.com.

Monday, March 23

TORAH & SUSHI
Rabbi Micah Streiffer leads a discussion on Jewish ethics at Sano Sushi, 8143 Yonge St., at noon. RSVP rabbistreiffer@kolami.ca.

Tuesday, March 24

JEWS IN SPORTS
Charles Novogrodsky discusses "Jews and baseball," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. RSVP 416-781-3511.

JOB FAIR
JVS holds a job fair, 3-5 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St. Pre-registration required with resume at lebovicjobfair@jvstoronto.org

HEALTH TIPS
"Top 10 health tips: healthful or harmful?" is the topic at Temple Har Zion's speakers series, noon. 905-889-2252.

PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION
DANI presents an arts and musical evening on the theme of "Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky", 7 p.m., DANI Centre, 501 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill.

Wed., March 25

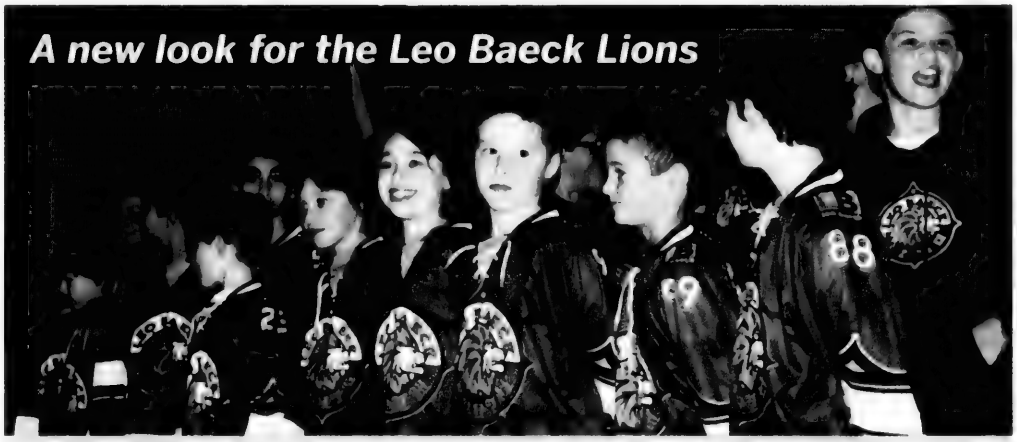
JEWISH SYMBOLOGY
Rouhama Danto discusses "Jewish symbology in the works of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel," 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

Thursday, March 26

NASH AND DRASH
Cantors David Edwards and **Eyal Bitton** hold a musical pre-Pesach nash and drash, noon, Beth Emeth Synagogue. $15. RSVP by March 20, 416-633-3838.

BOOK TALK
Evan Fallenberg is the writer-in-residence at Holy Blossom Temple. He speaks tonight at 7:30 p.m. on writing and the themes of his books; on March 28, following kiddush, on the art of translation; March 29, he conducts a writers' workshop, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Koffler Centre of the Arts, 180 Shaw St.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of April 2 is March 23. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**



Leo Baeck Day School officially launched its redesigned mascot and school emblem last week. The new design was revealed at both campuses in rallies that brought out the school's athletic teams outfitted in their new uniforms.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
Drivers are needed March 29 to deliver food hampers for NCJW's Passover food drive. Call 416-633-5100.

Circle of Care needs volunteers to deliver meals to Holocaust survivors. Call **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext. 496.

Baycrest is looking for volunteers (over 13) to assist with palliative care, meals and special events. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

PASSOVER SEDERS
Chabad Markham hosts a seder April 3. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Oraynu Congregation hosts an adult/teen seder April 3. RSVP by March 27, 416-385-3910.

Congregation Habonim hosts a seder April 4. Free but donations welcome. RSVP 416-782-7125.

Ve'ahavta, Holy Blossom Temple, Habonim and the aboriginal community host a seder April 5. RSVP 416-964-7698, ext. 225.

AN EVENING WITH JOSEPH BOYDEN
Author **Joseph Boyden** speaks at Temple Emanu-El, 7:30 p.m., March 30. Free, donations accepted for Camp Onakawana, a camp for First Nations youth. RSVP 416-449-3880.

LITERARY BRUNCH
Author **Liz Pearl** speaks at Beth Emeth Synagogue, March 29, 10 a.m. RSVP by March 25, 416-633-3838.

SOCIAL ACTION SHABBAT
Authors **Marjorie Gann** and **Judie Oron** are the guest speakers March 28 at First Narayever Congregation.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com

- Let's Be Blunt: An evening forum for parents on teens and drug use, March 24, 7:30 p.m.
- Looking Ahead: A 6-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals, starts March 26, 7 p.m.
- Widow/Widower under 65: A 6-session group for people under 65 who have recently lost a spouse, starts March 31, 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Passover celebration, April 2, 1:30-3 p.m. Register by March 20. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, April 15; Spa day, facials, manicures, barber, hairdresser, April 2, 10 a.m. Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. March 24, **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Forbidden desires: The films of Alfred Hitchcock," 10 a.m.; March 26, **Denise Hynes** discusses "Fire and life safety," 1:30 p.m.
- **Wagman Centre.** 416-785-2500, ext. 2268. March 25, **Deborah Lappen** discusses "Promoting urinary and bladder health," 1:30 p.m.
- New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- Shaar Shalom. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- Beth Emeth. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
- Temple Har Zion. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- Beth Tzedec Synagogue. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- Chabad of Markham offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabad-markham.org.
- Beth Sholom's seniors group meets for lunch and exercise every Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com
- Learn to play mah-jong, starting April 15, 1 p.m. or 7 p.m.
- Daytime and evening ceramics classes start the week of April 13.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "El Greco," Tuesdays, April 14-28, 1 p.m.
- **Janet Klein Slavin** teaches "Moving meditation," Thursdays, starting April 30, 10:30 a.m.
- **Sadko Hadzihasanovic** teaches "Pastel painting," April 21-June 9, 9:30 a.m.
- Dance and yoga for young adults with an intellectual disability, April 14-June 16, 6:15 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- The gallery celebrates its 10th anniversary with a group exhibition of past artists until April 6.
- **Iain Scott** teaches a course on "Opera and Shakespeare," March 23, 30, 1:30 p.m.
- *Circus Berserkus*, presented by Lookup Theatre, is a circus show about mental health and recovery. March 19, 8 p.m., March 20, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., Al Green theatre. www.algreentheatre.ca
- Sign up for Winter Wellness Workshops: MELT training for runners, March 23, 6 p.m.; MELT for neck and shoulders, March 29, 10:30 a.m.; MELT decompression of the spine, March 29, 1:30 p.m. Email fitnessguru@mnjcc.org or ext. 574.
- Canada improv games, Toronto regional finals, are held at the Al Green Theatre, March 24-28, 7:30 p.m.
- Bring your lunch and learn day, March 26. **Joseph Kertes** discusses his new novel, *The Afterlife of Stars*, 11 a.m.; **Zahava Lambert** discusses "Passover customs reflected in Judaica," 1:30 p.m.
- Israeli family Kabbalat Shabbat, March 27, 5:30 p.m. Dinner, games and kids activities in Hebrew. Ext. 321.
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, March 29, 1 p.m. Ext. 521.
- Katka Team (grades 2-6) presented by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, March 29, 1 p.m. Email: Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com.
- Passover arts and activities, presented by the MNJCC, Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School and PJ Library at Avenue Road Arts School, 460 Avenue Rd., 2:30-4:30 p.m. Ext. 136.
- Invitation to Dance: film, panel and mixed abilities dance event, March 22. Film 2-4 p.m., dance 4-6 p.m. Email inclusion@mnjcc.org or ext. 330.
- Shabbat family party (ages 0-4 with an adult), Fridays at 11:15 a.m. Shabbat club (ages 3-5), Fridays 12:30 p.m. Free Passover-themed Shabbat family party open house, March 27, 10 a.m. RSVP anniem@mnjcc.org.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Tinghir-Jerusalem: Echoes from the Mellah*, March 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Yigal Nizri.** Box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Register now for the Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singer's edition, July 13-17, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Theatre edition, Aug. 17- 21, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- Day and evening ceramics classes start April 12.
- Learn to play bridge, Thursdays, 7 p.m., starts April 30.
- **Dr. Joey Shulman** discusses "Balance hormones, boost energy and burn fat naturally," April 16, 7 p.m.
- **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m.
- Vendors wanted for Israeli market, April 23, 5-9 p.m.
- Paint your family history from realism to abstraction, Fridays 1 p.m., starts April 17.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental mix media," April 22-May 13, 7 p.m.
- Silk painting on scarves starts April 24, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

MARRIED WITH KIDS

My daughter, the cheerleader

Lauren Kramer

When my daughter announced she was giving up gymnastics for cheerleading, I admit I was crushed with disappointment. Gymnastics. Now, that's a time-honoured sport with a place in the Olympics and a reputation for demanding discipline and commanding respect. It's hard to say the same thing about cheerleading.

Truth is, I don't get the point of cheerleading. While it requires similar levels of agility and athletic skill to those of gymnastics – at least at the 12-year-old level – cheerleading is often an overtly sexualized dance routine with the purpose of supporting or representing a men's sports team. Rather than focus on athleticism, it's all about sex and beauty.

Ever seen an ugly cheerleader performing at one of those big games? Neither have I. So what's the objective behind cheerleading, what message does it send to the kids and why are so many parents sending their little girls to cheer classes? Who, exactly, are they preparing to cheer?

When your kid badly wants to do something and you know that philosophical reasoning doesn't stand a chance of reaching her, you acquiesce. At least it will keep her fit and active, I reasoned. If she ever wanted to compete at varsity level or beyond, well, that would be the moment to extrapolate my ideological discomfort with cheerleading.

That's how I found myself volunteering at a Mardi Gras-themed cheerleading extravaganza last weekend, as my kid excitedly competed against other cheer groups from all over British Columbia. Thousands of parents and grandparents paid $10 each to join the throngs of onlookers and applaud their kids' teams. I know because I helped man the door and collect the cash.

In my breaks, I watched little girls as young as six strut their stuff, hips thrust to the side as they moved through their choreographed routines. Instructors sat before them on the mats, counting to keep the girls in time and gesticulating with their hands to remind the youngest gals what they were supposed to be doing.

When it was my daughter's group's turn her face lit up with excitement, her heavily eye-shadowed eyes focused in concentration as she kept time and synchronized her moves with those of her teammates. Together they hoisted girls into the air, struck poses, did cartwheels and back flips and performed a complex routine that had been carefully rehearsed for months. Clearly, there were enormous quantities of teamwork, co-operation and mutual support in the air, and when they came first in their level, they were filled with exhilaration.

I'm happy to see her in a supportive environment, one where a group has to work together to achieve success. In a world that's become ever more ego-driven, learning to work together is a crucial skill to nurture. I'm also relieved that in her particular cheer squad there is less emphasis on sexual movements and more on skill, agility and athletic choreography.

Still, I can't help but wonder: what's the definition of success when it comes to cheerleading? A university scholarship based on cheering achievement? A mini-skirted position championing a national sports team and serving as its eye candy? This isn't the kind of future I had in mind for my bright-eyed daughter.

So why am I working the door at a local cheer extravaganza, I asked myself more than once. Because it makes her happy right now, and that's important, too. There's still time to work through the philosophical implications of her cheerleading, and hey, the door to gymnastics won't close for a few more years at least. Maybe when she's a bit older, she'll start thinking philosophically about her after-school activities and questioning what they stand for. Until then, I'll be cautiously applauding from the sidelines. ■

Family Moments

Happy birthday Theresa from your loving husband.

Happy 40th (ruby) anniversary to Michelle & Lawrie Apple! We love you very much.
Love, your adoring children and grandchildren.

Jessica & Ben Greisman welcomed Leona Claire Jan. 13. Granddaughter of Robbie & Harold Wexler, Henry Greisman & Elizabeth Greisman. Niece to Michael Wexler, Maude Greisman!

Marc, Ayten, Jacob and Jasmine:
We are so proud to have received our citizenship.

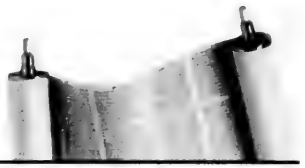
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב

Parshah

Vayikra | Leviticus 1:1 - 5:26



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier argues animal sacrifices can help heal our bodies and souls
Rabbi Denise Handlarski reflects on the difference between intention and action
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen says we can learn humility from the Passover matzah

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

What does animal sacrifice have to do with loving your neighbour? We're proud that laws such as loving your neighbour and not stealing are found in our Torah. Sometimes, though, we may feel the impulse to skip over the lengthy sacrificial details in the book of Leviticus as it is challenging to relate to laws of animal sacrifice.

One common explanation is that these ritual laws resonated in the ancient world, as this was a way to make animal sacrifice holy. While this may be true historically, Nachmanides (in 13th- century Spain) offers an explanation that transcends time and makes the study of sacrifices a positive educational exercise.

He suggests that the sacrifice was a way to counteract the misdeed. Sins, he says, are "created by our thoughts, speech, and action." Nachmanides explains that specific parts of the animal are burned, representing the parts of our body that lead us to sin, such as the innards that represent our thoughts and desires. Finally, he explains, the blood is sprinkled to show that we have damaged our body and soul with sin.

This approach is at the core of the self-improvement objective inherent in repentance. The offering provides the tools to acknowledge our misguided speech and provides a structure within which we can do self-examination and begin the process of cleansing our body and soul of wrongdoing.

The offering, then, is a tool to heal our body and soul.

Perhaps there is a way to bridge the gap between the archaic, visceral ritual with the sensible communal values found later in Leviticus. Both the ritual act and communal-minded legislations are concerned with our body and soul. It's easy to understand how being honest and providing for the poor can make you a better person. Upon closer examination, one can also understand how offerings can make us better people, as they serve as a model of a healthy body and mind. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

Whereas the books of Genesis and Exodus are comprised mainly of narrative, in Leviticus (Vayikra), the text begins to read more like legal code and less like literature (of course, Torah is all this and much more).

Our challenge is to find the narrative behind the legal text. What are these laws meant to accomplish? Whose power is enshrined? What do we know about a society that needed these laws and/or followed them?

The text gives us clues as to how our ancestors lived and the society they hoped to build. For example, in this parshah, we have details about how to perform ritual sacrifices made to ameliorate wrongdoing. The text makes a distinction between wilful acts and accidental ones. Offerings are required in either case, but the distinction is important.

To give a contemporary example: if we are driving a car and cause an accident in which someone is hurt, we may experience guilt and sadness. There may be things we can do to address the hurt we've caused, such as pay for the damage to the other car, ensure that if medical help is needed, it is provided, etc. We are still responsible for hurt we cause by accident, but the hurt is not a reflection of our morality or humanity.

If, however, we hurt someone intentionally, such as by gossiping about them, stealing from them, etc., then we are accountable for that in a different way. We are responsible to repair the damage but also to consider how we might learn a moral/ethical lesson and how we might change ourselves to better reflect our own humanity.

Although the text does not say all of this, the distinction it draws between intention and action should drive us to contemplate its implications in our own lives. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

The highlight of the month of Nisan is Pesach. We clean our homes of any bread, to be kosher for Pesach. Not an easy task.

Bread, being puffy, represents ego and arrogance. So let us sweep and clean out all our spiritual chametz, any negative character traits that we have. Let's be like the matzah, flat and humble.

Let's help our spouses patiently for Pesach. But Pesach is all about the kids, so let's involve them in the Pesach experience.

I love these longer days of Shabbat, so I can tell my kids true stories of our Torah leaders and about Pesach. Judaism and Pesach are so real to them. Thank God for the Cheder Chabad School, where my kids live Judaism. Our kids need to live Judaism at home too, by seeing us as living examples of Torah Jews.

The kids begin the seder with the four questions. The word haggadah comes from the word *vehigadeta*, as the verse says, "*Vehigadeta lebincha*" ("And you shall tell your child").

As parents and grandparents, let's learn more Torah so that we can have the right answers to their sincere and innocent questions.

I recommend a great website: Chabad.org, loaded with great information on everything about Judaism. Attend a Torah class! Most of our larger cities have Torah classes.

Living Judaism, and especially Pesach, is not easy, but it is the most beautiful and fulfilling thing in the world – real freedom! So let's prepare for Pesach by learning about Pesach.

Let's ensure that every Jew attends two seders. Let's reach out to every Jew, ensure that they have hand baked matzah for the seder, the preferred mitzvah.

Then we can properly say a "Happy and Kosher Pesach!" May we merit true freedom and joy, with Mashiach in our days! ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is at Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto. Email: yirmicohen@sympatico.ca.

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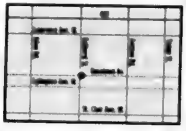

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Nimoy's Spock remembered at orchestral screening

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A screening of *Star Trek (2009) With Live Orchestra* in London, England

Both the late actor Leonard Nimoy and his most famous character Mr. Spock will be remembered at the film screening of *Star Trek (2009) With Live Orchestra* taking place March 21 at the Sony Centre For The Performing Arts.

The film will be presented on a large screen with composer Michael Giacchino's score performed live by the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, conducted by Erik Oschner.

On stage, a tribute to Nimoy and his impact on Star Trek will be given by Giacchino and others to the audience in introducing the film.

"I am particularly touched to have this concert honour the memory of Leonard Nimoy. He was a prolific artist and a generous human being who will continue to inspire us though his iconic portrayal of the ever fascinating Mr. Spock," said Giacchino.

"To Leonard Nimoy,who is the heart and soul and inspiration of *Star Trek*, I say this: even a man as insightful and brilliant as you could never know how much we miss you," said J.J. Abrams, director of the 2009 *Star Trek* reboot in which Nimoy had a cameo role.

Although Nimoy acted in other roles in film, stage and television, Mr. Spock is perhaps the most beloved character of the original *Star Trek* films and television series.

Born in 1931 to Jewish immigrants in Boston, what is less widely known about Nimoy is the influence Judaism and Jewish culture played in his life and that he played many overtly Jewish characters over his career.

Some of Spock's most famous lines, such as "live long and prosper" and "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few"and the Vulcan salute, stem from Nimoy's Jewish faith and upbringing.

Nimoy created the salute himself, based on childhood memories of the way the kohanim hold their hand while giving the blessing from Numbers 6:24-26 that is heard weekly at synagogues and temples.

After beginning his stage career as a teen with minor roles in Yiddish theatre in New York, Nimoy's first major role on stage at age 17 was playing a Jewish child in *Awake And Sing* about the story of a Jewish mother and her children struggling to survive in the Great Depression. In 1971 he played Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* on an eight-week theatrical tour.

Nimoy was nominated for an Emmy Award in 1982 for his portrayal of Golda Meir's husband in the made for television film *A Woman Named Golda*.

Nimoy also produced a 1991 film in which he played a Holocaust survivor in *Never Forget*. The story pitted Nimoy's character in a lawsuit against a group of organizations engaged in Holocaust denial.

His most controversial work in the Jewish community came when Nimoy published a photography book *The Shekhina Project* in 2002. The work examined the feminine aspects of God's presence, inspired by Kabbalah. ■

Star Trek (2009) With Live Orchestra, featuring a tribute to Leonard Nimoy, is on March 21, 7:30 p.m. at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto. For tickets and further information, call 1-855-872-7669 or go to www.sonycentre.ca

Movement may be running out of steam

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Measuring the impact of BDS by the number of people who show up for a press conference or boycott goods is misleading, said Levitan. A better gauge of the movement, which in Canada is still in an "awareness-raising" phase, is the number of groups that have adopted some aspect of the campaign.

"It's going to continue to grow and keep its momentum," he said.

The next focus of the BDS campaign will be Israel's multi-billion dollar security industry, which includes surveillance systems, drones and high-tech applications, some of which were refined during the recent Gaza operation, he added.

As proof of how seriously the Jewish world takes the BDS movement, Levitan points to the concerted efforts the Israeli government has taken to oppose it, both within and outside the country.

Saber-Freedman agreed that the Israeli government has devoted a great deal of time and resources to BDS, and, in fact, the Israeli consul-general in Toronto, DJ Schneeweiss, was formerly the Israeli foreign ministry's primary tactician on the issue, but Saber-Freedman thinks the movement is running out of steam.

"There's less coverage [in the media] than there was a few years ago. The temperature is not as hot as it was two to three years ago," she said.

Ultimately, Saber-Freeman said, BDS has failed to gain traction here because it offends Canadians.

"The complete failure to get anything meaningful, speaks to the understanding of most Canadians that this is not a fair or sensible approach." ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 19, 2015

Bret Stephens: 'We're giving Iran the keys to the Middle East

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Bret Stephens is a Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign affairs journalist who is best known for being a former editor-in-chief of the *Jerusalem Post* and for his columns in the *Wall Street Journal*. Stephens visited Toronto March 11 to speak at Beth Sholom Synagogue about Israel and the West. *The CJN* spoke with him in an exclusive interview.

Columnist says the United States is laying the ground for intensified sectarian conflict.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to the U.S. Congress March 3 was very impressive, although one could say it polarized relations between Israel and the U.S. even further. Did Netanyahu's speech do Israel any favours politically?

I think the verdict is still out, quite frankly. I thought it was a tremendously effective speech. I think any fair-minded person listening to that speech would have heard perhaps the most powerful single case ever made against a prospective nuclear deal with Iran, for the various reasons that I think he laid out very effectively. It's a negotiation that gives Iran an opportunity to race toward the bomb illicitly, but also gives it an opportunity to acquire a bomb at a slightly slower rate, illicitly, illegally and openly.

And I think he rubbished the conceit that intelligence agencies could know with any real accuracy that Iran was about to break out toward a nuclear capability. I think he also brought home the key point that diplomacy with dictatorships – especially a dictatorship like Iran – never works. In that sense, looking at the speech itself, it was a very effective piece of rhetoric.

The second part of the question is: what has it actually achieved? It's too soon to say. Will it sway votes in Congress? Or will it harden and bring more Democrats into the president's camp? How will it affect politics in Israel? How did it affect Israeli thinking? These are questions that will remain open.

In his speech, Netanyahu explained that more sanctions on Iran are needed to ensure a better deal. Would that realistically be enough to get Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions or stall the program?

To say the idea that sanctions, military threats and other coercive measures are antithetical to diplomacy is, I think, a mistake. They are handmaids to diplomacy. They are, in many ways, what makes diplomacy works. Diplomacy functions almost inevitably in the shadow of some implicit threat, especially when it's a diplomacy with a dictatorship. We're not negotiating a treaty with Canada or Holland, with responsible, democratic, law-abiding states. We're negotiating a treaty with a state that demonstrates, time and again, why it can't and shouldn't be trusted.

It depends on the type of sanctions and it depends on the strictness with which it is applied. The president always boasted that it was only the tough sanctions that brought the Iranians to the table in the first place. Not surprisingly, as the threat of those sanctions has receded, the Iranians have become more intransigent, not less. Now, if you have serious sanctions, threats that would not only further cut off Iran from the world's financial system, but would hit them where it hurts most – which is to say oil exports, at a time when oil is selling at roughly half of what it was a year ago – you might get Iran's attention and their compliance in a way that you simply can't if they sense that you're prepared to give up everything anyway.

What do you now propose U.S. President Barack Obama do with these negotiations? Is it realistic at all for the Obama administration to reach a deal with Iran that eliminates all uranium enrichment?

It's almost useless to propose anything to the Obama administration, because they're so hell-bent on getting a deal. What I would like is for the United States to, quite frankly, walk back the offer that seems to be on the table in Geneva. It's a terrible offer, as far as western interests are concerned, not just American interests. It's an offer that gives Iran a robust nuclear infrastructure that does very little realistically to prevent them from acquiring the know-how, the means and the technology to acquire nuclear weaponry in a time of their own choosing. And it's one that removes western pressure at the very moment when Iran is clearly trying to seize strategic opportunities throughout the Middle East – in Beirut, in Damascus, in Baghdad and in Sanaa. We are giving Iran not just the keys to a nuclear capability. We're giving them the keys to the Middle East in a way that is almost certain to terrify and even radicalize the Sunni Arab world. We are not only giving up too much to Iran, but we are laying the ground for intensified sectarian conflict in the Middle East in a way that is scary to think about.

You recently wrote about the evaporating support for Israel among liberal Democrats. With so many pro-Israel American Jews disillusioned by the Obama administration, do you think Israel is going to be a more prominent issue in the 2016 election, as the party has to win back some goodwill?

Israel should be a liberal cause, because Israel has always defended and enshrined and enlarged core liberal values. I don't simply mean democracy. I mean human rights, women's rights, gay rights, concern for the environment and concern for minorities. The natural liberal position should be a strongly pro-Israel position. The reality is that that has withered in recent years, for a variety of reasons.

The Democratic party, or too much of the Democratic party, has been captured by a progressive wing that treats Israel as a pariah state or a quasi-pariah state, and that is more interested in peace at any price than it is in defending a liberal state against its enemies. That is something on which Democrats, Jewish or not, ought to reflect upon. It's something that American Jews who have reflexively voted Democratic ought to reflect on, as well, not simply because of their pro-Israel sensitivities, but because of their liberal sensitivities.

During last summer's war, self-identified liberal Democrats were split on the question of whether Hamas or Israel was more to blame for the war. When you're a liberal Democrat who thinks that Hamas is the wronged party in a war, something is very wrong with your perception of events and your moral priorities.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has a very pro-Israel stance. What do you and other Americans engaged in pro-Israel advocacy think of him?

I think most American Jews, at least those who are remotely well informed, understand that the best western ally that Israel has today is Canada. The support has been well noted and well appreciated. I think the performance of Canadian foreign policy in the 9/11 era has been magnificent in terms of what it contributed to the effort in Afghanistan, the sacrifices the Canadian soldiers made in Kandahar. I remember the first time I ever had a Tim Hortons coffee was in the Kandahar air base – which was the best coffee on base, I might add.

Harper has brought a kind of clarity with him not just when it comes to Israel but when it comes to a real civilizational struggle that involves Canada as much as it does any other western nation. I think it was underscored with the attack on Parliament in Ottawa. All of that I think is well recognized in the United States. People look at Stephen Harper, I think, as a guy who's punching way above his weight in international affairs, and that's in a good sense. A lot of us, sort of in a throwback to the Vietnam era, we so admire the foreign policy of Canada that we want to leave the U.S. and move and be in a country where we actually like the foreign policy of the government. But we'll see how long that lasts. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Pompeii and the Jews

Backstory

ALEX GROPPER

Just recently the Royal Ontario Museum announced a major exhibit on Pompeii. For those that have never been there, Pompeii is an evocative place. It offers an unparalleled view of a Roman city at the height of the empire in the first century CE, thanks to the fact that the city was almost perfectly preserved for the better part of 2,000 years by the explosion of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE.

Perhaps even more importantly, Pompeii also highlights the fragility of human life and accomplishment, showing how it can all be snuffed out in the historical blink of an eye.

Pompeii's discovery in the 18th century ignited a firestorm of interest in the ancient world. It ranks as one of the greatest archeological discoveries of all time, giving us a unique view into the ancient Mediterranean world at the height of Rome's power in the first century CE.

In Europe, Pompeii's discovery sparked a renewed interest in ancient Rome and led to the neoclassical style in art and architecture. This new vogue even crossed the Atlantic and had a major impact on emerging styles. In the United States neoclassicism was referred to as the federal style, reaching its zenith with the Capitol building housing the U.S. Congress. That should really come as no surprise since the newly created United States was strongly influenced by the ancient Romans, even naming their upper house the Senate, after its ancient Roman counterpart.

What many people do not realize is that there appears to be a visible Jewish presence at Pompeii. A few have even said that the obliteration of Pompeii was divine retribution for the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. Amazingly this happened nine years earlier on almost the same day as Pompeii was wiped out by Vesuvius.

The evidence indicates that the majority of Jews arrived in Pompeii after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE (although it is possible that there had been a Jewish population at Pompeii even earlier). This was a catastrophic period in Jewish history with large numbers of Jews from Judea being deported throughout the Roman Empire. Many people wound up as slaves, especially in Rome, where they were used to build that greatest of ancient structures, the Flavian Amphitheater, more popularly known as the Coliseum. (In an ironic historical twist of fate, many Italians coming from southern Italy after the Second World War worked for Jewish builders and helped build cities such as Toronto into the vibrant centres that they are today).

In Pompeii, the epigraphic evidence from surviving inscriptions shows that many of the Jews had a lower socio-economic status. This is not uncommon since many were enslaved as a result of the Jewish Revolt; however, others were freedmen, and there were even prostitutes amongst the group.

Nevertheless there were some Jews who were well off in Pompeii, such as Fabius Eupor, who had the title of *princes libertinorum*. One inscription refers to an individual called, interestingly enough, Iudaikos, who was a wine merchant, a profession that Jews practised throughout the history of the Roman Empire. The evidence appears to show that Jews even played a role in the municipal life of the city. Another inscription refers to Sodom and Gomorrah, and may even have been scribbled as the volcano was snuffing out the life of the city.

The excavations at Pompeii have given us a bird's-eye view of a little known Jewish community of the ancient Diaspora. They also show how far afield the Diaspora had spread throughout the Roman Empire, with some scholars believing that Jews may have made up as much as 10 per cent of the Empire's population. ■

Alex Gropper is a teacher of history at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and president of the Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies at the University of St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto.

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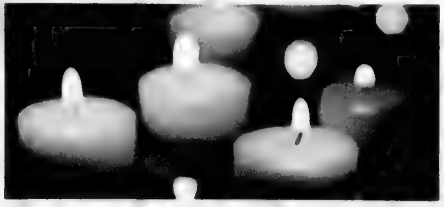

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Chocolate mould:

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Mousse:

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- 8 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- juice from 1 orange
- grated peel from 1 orange
- 1 cup plus 1/4 cup sugar
- 10 egg whites
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 tbsp. Sabra liqueur
- 1 (10-ounce) can unsweetened frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- grated orange peel for garnish

To make the chocolate mould, put the chocolate pieces in the top of a double boiler and melt over low heat.

With a 3- to 4-inch wide paint brush, paint an 8- or 9-inch springform pan with one-quarter to one-third of the melted chocolate. When well coated, refrigerate for a few minutes to set. Repeat with 3 or 4 more coats of chocolate. You can make this mould a week in advance and fill it with the mousse the day before serving and refrigerate.

To make the mousse, put the cold water in a small bowl and sprinkle the gelatin over the water. Let it stand for 10 minutes to dissolve.

Put the egg yolks in the top of a double boiler and add the orange juice concentrate, orange peel and 1 cup of sugar, and cook, stirring, until the mixture is slightly thick and coats the back of a wooden spoon. Add the gelatin and stir until dissolved.

Transfer the orange mixture to a large bowl, stir and set aside to cool. When cooled to room temperature, stir in the liqueur and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Put the egg whites in another bowl and beat until frothy, and then add the ¼ cup of sugar and the salt and continue to beat until stiff.

When the orange mixture has cooled, fold it into the egg white mixture and mix well.

To remove the chocolate mould from the springform pan, put a large serving plate over the pan and invert. Dampen a dish towel with hot water and wrap it around the pan. Slowly loosen the rim of the pan and remove. With the edge of a sharp, pointed knife, slowly loosen the bottom of the pan (which is now on top) until it can be removed. Spoon the orange mousse into the chocolate mould and refrigerate until ready to serve.

To serve, garnish with grated orange peel. To slice through the mould, use a sharp knife heated with hot water.

Flo Adds: You can also spoon the mousse into individual serving dishes or parfait glasses, or you can make small chocolate moulds with cups. Yield: 6 to 8 servings. ■

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JAY BUCHSBAUM
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

We all know that wine comes from grapes, but how is wine made? Simply put (and it isn't that simple), grapes are picked and the natural sugar in the grapes is fermented by yeast. This fermentation changes the sugar into alcohol, transforming grape juice into wine.

So can anyone go to the supermarket, buy a bunch of grapes, crush them, add some yeast and convert the grape juice into wine? The answer is yes, but it isn't going to be very good.

Today, the wines we drink are made from grapes that are not usually pleasant to snack on (unlike the seedless ones we buy at the supermarket), as wine grape berries are very small, their skins are thick and chewy, and they are loaded with seeds. But it is these grapes that make excellent wines.

Wine falls into several categories, such as dry, semi-sweet, sweet or sparkling. There is also white wine, red wine or rosé. So you can have a sweet red wine, a sparkling rosé or a dry white. Wine can be made almost in any style.

So which is best for the Pesach seder? Well, that depends on personal preference. The most important rule to remember when drinking wine is that there are no rules. Wine, just like food, should be consumed only if you like it and in whatever style you like. So, don't drink a dry red just because someone told you to — you wouldn't eat a rare steak if you prefer well-done, would you?

Most people naturally prefer sweet to dry. Having grown up on soft drinks, fruit juice, sweetened iced tea and soda, our preference is for a sweet beverage rather than a dry or bitter one.

For this reason, most people start out enjoying sweet wines such as Bartenura Moscato. Two wines in the semi-dry category that are a great next step for many people are Jeunesse Cabernet Sauvignon and By W Red. These are made with traditional wine grapes, and while they are made in the style of dry wines, they are semi-dry wines that have a hint of sweetness to them and don't taste as bitter to beginner wine drinkers.

The obvious next step for any wine lover is to gain an appreciation for dry wines. This usually starts with "New-World" wines from places such as California, Israel or Spain, as these New-World wines

There are kosher for Pesach wines for all tastes. PHOTO SUPPLIED BY JAY BUCHSBAUM

are more fruit-driven and, given their fruitiness, don't taste as dry, even though they usually are.

And though many wine lovers might stop at this point, others progress to "Old-World" wines from places such as France or Italy. These Old-World wines are generally drier, more earthy and less fruit driven. These wines do, however, pair best with various types of food.

As someone who likes all kinds of wine, I might set up my *arba kosot* (four cups)in the following manner:

- low alcohol
- medium-bodied red wine
- full-bodied red wine
- sweet and light.

In more detail, I would want to start my first cup with something low in alcohol but tasty, like the Kedem Cream Malaga, Joyvin Red or Joyvin White. These are under seven per cent alcohol and won't make me too sleepy before the seder has really even gotten underway.

For my second cup, I'm ready to drink a decent wine, but I wouldn't want to overdo it. A nice, medium-bodied red wine such as the Barkan Classic Cabernet Sauvignon or Shiraz, Ben Ami Cabernet Sauvignon or Jeunesse Cabernet Sauvignon for people who prefer something with a touch of sweetness.

By the third cup, I'm ready for a bigger wine, and I'd opt for a big and bold Cabernet Sauvignon or cab-based blend such as the Herzog Reserve Napa Cabernet Sauvignon, Weinstock Cellar Select Cabernet Sauvignon or the Petite Castel blend from Israel.

To finish things off, I want to go with something on the sweeter side – it is dessert time after all. Moscato works great here and Bartenura's "blue bottle" moscato is the most popular, but there are several on the market such as the "Moscato by W" from California. A great alternative to moscato is Bartenura's Malvasia, which is a beautiful rose colour with notes of berries and flowers. All are refreshing and work great with dessert.

So whether dry or sweet, red or white, make sure to drink wines that you enjoy, and have a wonderful and wine-filled yom tov. ■

Jay Buchsbaum is the director of wine education for Royal Wine Corp.

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Inside

Bibi's big win

Canadian Jews offer their perspectives after a contentious campaign. **PAGE 12**

PLUS: Full coverage of the results and the aftermath. PAGES 6, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37

CJN Debate: Jewish camps

Two takes on Camp Solelim's decision denying entry to a non-Jewish teen. **PAGE 30**

Time

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	7:17 p.m.	8:12 p.m.
Montreal	6:57 p.m.	8:02 p.m.
Ottawa	7:06 p.m.	8:10 p.m.
Toronto	7:20 p.m.	8:23 p.m.
Winnipeg	7:34 p.m.	8:43 p.m.
Calgary	7:42 p.m.	8:53 p.m.
Vancouver	7:18 p.m.	8:26 p.m.

Jewish high schools search for answers

Faced with a trend of declining enrolment, educators ponder what it will take to convince parents that Jewish education is worth the investment. **PAGE 8**

Israeli delegation faces 'die-in'

Protest disrupts students' visit to McMaster. **PAGE 23**

PLUS Montreal Hillel cancels controversial speaker PAGE 27

Cotler recalls role in Egypt-Israel peace

Sadat asked young prof to deliver a message to Begin. **PAGE 28**

Skyler Wexler isn't afraid of monsters

Nine-year-old has key role in sci-fi thriller *Orphan Black*. **PAGE 39**

6 27843 39403 7

Barak thanks Ottawa, and go ahead – #AskHamas anything

Envoy says Israel grateful for UN help

Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak thanked Canada last week for helping his country join the United Nations' western group of nations in Geneva a year ago, saying it will help Israel seek a temporary seat on the UN Security Council. Membership in the group allows Israel to join a number of other important UN bodies and helps it defend itself against some 20 annual motions condemning it in the General Assembly, Barak told *Canadian Press* in an interview. A Security Council seat would be a first for Israel.

Reform rabbi makes history

The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the rabbinical arm of the Reform movement, installed its first openly gay president, Rabbi Denise Eger, at its annual convention last week in Philadelphia. The founding rabbi of the Kol Ami synagogue in Los Angeles, Rabbi Eger, 55, was ordained in 1988 and came out in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* in 1990. She is engaged to be married. She also was the first female and openly gay president of the Southern California Board of Rabbis, and the founding president of the Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Interfaith Clergy Association. Rabbi Eger officiated at the first legal wedding in California for a lesbian couple. Her inauguration was followed by a session marking the 25th anniversary of CCAR's resolution on homosexuality and the rabbinate, which called for the ordination of gay rabbis.

Rabbi Denise Eger

Terror group gets social

A five-day "Ask Hamas" social media campaign launched earlier this month in an apparent attempt to soften the Gaza-based terror group's image backfired when Twitter users responded with mockery. Among the unanswered tweets to the Palestinian Islamist group were such things as "What is the proper way to strap a suicide vest onto a child? #AskHamas" and "#AskHamas What date is the next #GayPrideParade in #Gaza?" Another wondered: "Will you be publicly executing the person that came up with the idea to #AskHamas?" ■

Gematria

28

The number of women elected to the Knesset last week, a record, breaking the previous mark of 27, set in 2013.

71.8%

The turnout in last week's Israeli election, the highest since 78.7 per cent of the population voted in 1999.

Quotable

I walk the corridors of the UN tall and proud. I know who I represent. Israel has nothing to be ashamed of.

— Ron Prosor, Israel's ambassador the United Nations. See the full interview on page 62.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Digest the rules of matzah with Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Rabbi speaks out on prenup

The article on the Israeli pre-nuptial agreement was very informative. Unfortunately, the headline is misleading ("Israeli prenup to help agunot likely not effective in Canada," March 12).

It is true that Canadian courts will not uphold a financial component to a *get*. Having a court uphold a monetary payment to induce a *get* is a very strong tool. And I am close to finalizing such a document that will be acceptable to Canadian courts and rabbis. But that is far from the only help a halachic prenup can offer. It can set expectations before the marriage starts that withholding a *get* is never acceptable. It represents a solemn promise the couple makes to the rabbi that they will treat each other with respect even when the relationship is not working. And it teaches the entire community that we will not tolerate causing even one woman to become an agunah.

These goals by themselves are very powerful. The objections raised by a few rabbis are easily surmountable, especially when we keep in mind that using this document can virtually prevent a woman becoming an agunah – an imperative in our time.

I urge every rabbi to use my current document and I urge every couple getting married – and their parents, grandparents, and friends – to insist on it. If your rabbi can't do it, contact me (rabbi@adath.ca) and I will gladly help, at no cost. I would never allow anyone I love to get married without this protection. Please do the same.

Rabbi Michael Whitman
Hampstead, Quebec

Bibi and Masada

In the wake of the large victory by Benjamin Netanyahu, I have been remembering my first visit to Israel and Masada. The zealots held their ground until they committed suicide. It was the peacemakers who told the story.

With the declaration of no two-state solutions, I hope we are not heading toward a 58th-century Masada.

Adam Berel Wetstein
Toronto

All parties wanted peace

Rabbi Dow Marmur uses the divisive term "anti-peace" ("Israeli women wage peace," Feb. 26) when referring to right-wing women candidates who do not agree with Tzipi Livni and Zahava Galon, who speak on behalf of the left-wing "peace" camp.

All candidates in the election wished to have peace – the left-wing and Arab parties believe appeasing the Palestinians will achieve this. The right-wing parties do not.

Ezra Franken
Montreal

Jews need allies

Jewish communities and organizations around the world have been fighting anti-Semitism in the same way for hundreds of years. It is simply not working. But with only 14 million Jews worldwide, how can we expect to effectively counter the hatred and falsehoods spread by hundreds of millions of anti-Semites? We need allies.

The place to find them is within communities that do not have a history of hating Jews or a predisposition to be anti-Israel. Unfortunately, that is not Europe. Even in a post-Holocaust world, European Jews cannot count on safety, security and protection under the law. While we must continue pushing for change in Europe, we need a more global approach. Asia is the place to start.

Asia is rising as an economic powerhouse whose sphere of influence will only continue to grow. As well, Jews and Asians have always had a mutual respect grounded in a set of shared values that are family-centred, place a premium on education and celebrate progress.

Canadian universities have a significant Asian student population. We should send these future leaders of their communities to visit Israel.

There they will observe a progressive state that respects diversity, human rights, and the rule of law. The students will take this positive experience and return home as ambassadors for Israel and the Jewish People.

We also need to send Jewish speakers to Asian organizations to further dialogue and explore opportunities for joint educational, social, and philanthropic pursuits.

My hope is that this exercise will go beyond the theoretical, and that real tangible projects and success stories will strengthen the bonds of friendship between us.

Murray Rubin
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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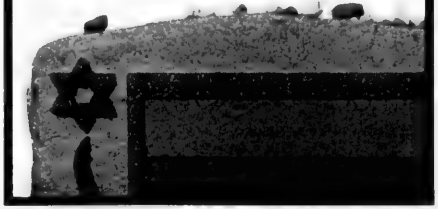

RABBI·2·RABBI

The value of interfaith dialogue

Is it only useful when it's about issues of mutual interest, or are deeper theological conversations possible now that ties aren't characterized by coercion and violence?

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Grushcow: This month, we honour our docents at our temple. They run a program that welcomes approximately 2,500 students to the temple each year. Most of them are francophone, and none of them are Jewish. For many, it's their first time in a synagogue.

Also this spring, I'm doing a sermon exchange with a young Protestant minister as well as a Catholic priest, and going to Vancouver to speak at a conference on religion in a secular world. These activities remind me how important interfaith work has always been to my congregation and the Reform movement.

What role does interfaith dialogue play for you and your synagogue?

Rabbi Korobkin: Interfaith work has historically been a double-edged sword for the Jewish People. Such dialogue was often forced upon our people and resulted in exile, pogroms and worse. That is why an aversive attitude persists to this day in our community.

I applaud your efforts at educating non-Jewish children about Judaism and the Jewish community. This can only help stem the tide of anti-Semitism, and I have done the same. Doing pulpit exchanges with Christian counterparts, on the other hand, is where we'd have to part ways. For one thing, traditional Judaism restricts entering a church for any reason. Secondly, discussions of theology and the details of each other's faith is the one area that we have found to be counterproductive, and even at times dangerous.

We find dialogue most useful when we can discuss issues of mutual interest, such as neighbourhood security, Israel, and caring for the poor and vulnerable in our communities. These efforts deserve mutual respect and co-operation, since we can accomplish so much more when working together.

Rabbi Grushcow: I think we need to differentiate between coerced medieval disputations and modern interfaith dialogue. The restrictions you speak of are based on an entirely different time and place. When we enter interfaith dialogue now, we do so as equal and willing partners.

I agree that there are many good things we can do together outside an explicitly religious or theological context. For example, our temple takes part every year in an interfaith eco-action project, in which members of different religious groups team up to clean neighbourhoods in Montreal.

At the same time, I don't think we need to shy away from deeper encounters.

The traditional restrictions on entering a church or engaging in theological conversations come from an era when the church had life-and-death powers over Jews, and the relationship between us was characterized by coercion and violence. That is no longer the case.

When I speak in a church or invite a Christian clergyperson into our synagogue, we learn from each other's insights into our shared sacred texts. We gain a deeper understanding of the similarities and differences in our belief and practice, and through this, we gain mutual respect. Talking about God with Christians is not threatening. My belief system is strong enough that I can engage in conversation without worrying about conversion, and our dialogue partners don't proselytize. My religious life would be poorer without our conversations.

Rabbi Korobkin: We can only grow through deeper understanding of each other's faith. But there's nothing "medieval" about persecutions and blood libels that are based on anti-Semitic theology. The Mendel Beilis blood libel in Russia, for example, was only a century ago. The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is experiencing a resurgence in popularity throughout the world.

Soon, you and I will start our seders with, "This is the bread of our affliction… Let all who are hungry come and eat!" Some scholars understand that the historical basis of this invitation is to dispel the blood libels that were recurring throughout Jewish history. "Here's our matzah," we are saying. "There's no Christian blood, and you can see and taste it for yourself!" Indeed, as Easter coincides with Pesach, whole sections of the seder liturgy may be understood as polemics against those who have accused the Jews of having killed their lord.

So, while I agree that we thankfully don't have to fear our Christian counterparts anymore and agree that one can certainly gain from the ecumenical dialogue of which you speak, I also feel, as George Santayana said, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Matzah makers

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

Workers at a conveyor belt at Gula's Matza Factory on Queen Street West in Toronto, 1948.

SeeJN | Forming the new government

MARK NEYMAN/GPO PHOTO

Members of the Likud party meet with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin at the president's house in Jerusalem on March 22 as Rivlin began consulting political leaders to decide who to task with trying to form a new government. The Likud party, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has a majority of 67 Knesset members supporting his effort to form the next government.

Politics is ephemeral, Judaism is eternal

In the aftermath of the Israeli election, one thing appears clear: Benjamin Netanyahu will assume his fourth term as prime minister because a majority of Israelis – albeit a slim one – believe he is the best person for the job. But after a gruelling campaign, there remains a litany of unanswered questions: How will U.S. President Barack Obama react to his frenemy's victory? Will Bibi's continued leadership hinder Israel on the international stage? Is there any hope for peace with the Palestinians? How will Israel's Arab citizens react to Netanyahu's controversial comments on election day? What's next for the leftist camp?

The list is long, and the answers are not apparent. In some cases, they may not become clear for years to come. In others, the solutions will likely appear naturally over time. Some questions could become moot with the shifting of political winds (Obama may yet have enough time to strike a nuclear deal with Iran, but two years hence there will be a new face, and perhaps a new approach, in the White House). Netanyahu himself will be called upon to find answers as well – and if he can't, Israelis may decide his time has passed for good.

There is, however, an important question that must not be left unanswered. How do we as Jews move forward? For all the uncertainty this election has produced, one thing is plain: we must not allow it to divide us as a people. There is too much at stake for all of us, for Judaism in Israel and around the world. When we are divided, we are weakened, and there is no time for weakness.

Judaism does not require uniformity. As Rabbi Dow Marmur writes in this week's *CJN*, "No individual, however exalted her or his office, and no organization, however pretentious its title, can claim to speak for us all, or even for most of us." This is one of our religion's great strengths. It explains why Israel remains an island of democracy in a region characterized by extremism and intolerance (and why Netanyahu's remarks about Arab voters stung so many, including those who might otherwise support him).

Jews don't need to all think the same way, and clearly we don't. We can have our own disagreements – about how we interpret our sacred texts, what religion means in a modern world and, yes, whether Bibi Netanyahu is the right man to lead Israel. Debate is healthy for us, and it's in our nature.

But when all is said and done, we ought to try to centre ourselves, to reaffirm the ties that bind us together. Because we need them – we need each other. There's no better reminder how crucial it is that we stand together than the coming Passover holiday season. This is the time of year when we celebrate the birth of the Jewish nation, when we remember how we walked shoulder to shoulder out of slavery and into freedom.

The turmoil of this election will pass, just like all the others before it and those to come. Politics is ephemeral. Judaism is not. Let's make sure not to confuse the two. ■ — YONI

ESSAY

How stuttering helped me to accept and embrace my adversities

Moe Mernick

Growing up in Toronto, I could have seemed like an ordinary kid. But there was something that made me sharply stand out.

I stuttered. A lot.

It began when I was three years old. My parents were told to ignore it – as "merely a stage in a child's speech development," speech experts would say, and cite the statistics that most children grow out of it.

But I didn't grow out of it. In fact, it only got worse.

Not only was it daunting for me to speak up in class or introduce myself to new friends, but I would often get laughed at when I could not even say my own name or the simple word "hello."

My mom tried to give me positive encouragement. "Moe," she would tell me, "you have so much going for you…"

But invariably, I would respond that it was all worthless if I couldn't speak.

I was miserable. I constantly wondered to myself: What would life have in store for me? How would I ever pass a job interview? What girl would want to marry me? What will I sound like when reading bedtime stories to my kids?

After numerous failed attempts to find a speech therapist who fit my needs, a match was finally made. A dozen years of therapy helped, enabling me to function on a daily basis – some days more, some days less. My therapy often consisted of fabricating real-life circumstances while in the stutter-friendly comfort zone of my therapist's office. We made phone calls and visited stores together, practising words with which I had difficulty. It gave me hope of normalcy, and I felt accepted, regardless of how my words were expressed.

Moe Mernick

But I never embraced or fully accepted my stutter. I worried it might be my companion forever. I could not come to terms with the fact that my awkward, embarrassing and inhibiting speech habits might accompany me through life.

Fast forward to today.

I have been flown around across Canada, the United States, central Europe and Australia to lecture to Jewish education programs. I received an MBA from Tel Aviv University, worked at Deloitte as a strategy consultant and trained senior-level executives on their presentation skills. These days, I work at a cool start-up and mentor entrepreneurs at a technology accelerator. I live in Israel, with my wife and children.

Indeed, I am living my dream. But what happened?

Therapy helped. My supportive family helped, too. But the ultimate turning point happened when I began to accept my stutter. No longer did I have to reject it or hide from it – it was simply a part of who I was. We all have our challenges – stuttering was mine. It was finally time to live.

Thus began my journey to discover my inner voice.

Years later, I met a married couple who had just discovered their three-year-old daughter had developed a stutter. I advised them as follows:

As young as your daughter may be, she can pick up on the fact that her parents are extremely worried about her newly developed speech pattern. As such, she will probably become hesitant to speak up because she won't want to scare you. It is easier for her to keep her mouth closed than to watch your panicked facial expressions when she can't seem to get her words out.

The more she chooses not to speak, the more anxiety she will build around speaking. Each time she decides that it is safer to not risk the stutter, she, in effect, is subconsciously developing a mental block against expressing those words.

You must create a "safe" environment for her. She must feel that you unconditionally love her and will not be upset or judge her if she begins to stutter. You and your husband must become comfortable with the fact that your daughter may stutter for the rest of her life. And it is OK.

The ball is in your court. The more accepting you become, the less your daughter will feel as though you are trying to change her.

Ironically, by becoming comfortable with the fact that your daughter may stutter permanently, you are providing her with the best chance to overcome it. The safe haven of your home will hopefully help her develop a strong self-confidence. You will thereby significantly increase the probability that your daughter's stutter will be but a blip on her early-childhood radar screen.

Please note, though, that you cannot expect her to overcome it. That is, in effect, the opposite of true acceptance of her stutter. She will sniff out your insincerity. Therefore, I strongly suggest that you and your husband have an important conversation, whereby you recognize the limit of control you hold over every aspect of your daughter's stutter.

I am confident that you will see results. Because even if she does not stop stuttering, your relationship with your daughter will no longer be one of deflated hopes and frustration, but rather one of idyllic parental love and unwavering support. This can only be beneficial for all three of you.

I was excited to hear that this little girl's stutter faded away the following year. But it was even more powerful to receive the feedback that my advice was both novel and refreshing. I was lauded for my unique approach to stuttering, and praised for having such a healthy attitude. That was meaningful to me, especially after years of frustration and anger over my own stuttering.

But it also irked me. Why had this family not heard this advice from others? Was my approach that unique? And then I realized that what I was saying didn't only apply to stuttering.

We all face our own unique adversity and choose our response. It is not about conquering our challenges, but rather about embracing them, improving our self-esteem, and leading happier, more meaningful lives as a result.

As American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr said, "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."■

Moe Mernick was born and raised in Toronto. He recently made aliyah with his wife and children, and works for a high-tech startup in Tel Aviv. www.indiegogo.com/projects/the-gift-of-stuttering/

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Jewish high schools struggle with enrolment

LILA SARICK
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Jewish high schools across the country, buffeted by forces beyond their control – including rising costs and shrinking enrolment – are looking for new ways to survive in a competitive landscape.

The announcement last month that Ottawa's main community Jewish high school was closing because of low enrolment sent a shock wave of fear and sadness across the country.

"It scares the hell out of me," said Rory Paul, head of Winnipeg's Gray Academy of Jewish Education and CEO of the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education.

Gray Academy, with 170 students in grades 9 to 12, is in much better shape than Ottawa's high school, where only 24 students are currently enrolled.

But in Winnipeg, as in other schools, principals and administrators are aggressively wooing new students and re-examining their programs.

Pluralistic, co-educational, Jewish high schools can be found in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal and Toronto. Except for Vancouver, they are all facing declining enrolments, but the problems and solutions vary in each community.

Winnipeg, which has a community of about 13,000 Jews, similar in size to Ottawa's, had fairly stable enrolment until this year, when 50 students who were registered didn't show up in September. Their parents, recent immigrants to Canada, had found better jobs outside of Winnipeg and moved over the summer.

"That was a completely unexpected phenomenon," Paul said. In response, the school has hired its first director of admissions to look at student recruitment and retention.

Gray, like other day schools, is being hit by two factors, Paul said. "The cost of Jewish education is increasing and the ability to pay or the interest in paying is waning," he said. "The second issue is there's less of an interest in Jewish day school education in the secular world."

On the financial front, except for in Ontario, Jewish high schools across the country receive some form of government funding. In Winnipeg, Gray receives half of what public schools get, and without that money, the school would likely not exist, Paul said.

Winnipeg's Gray Academy, which has 170 high school students, is in better shape than others.

Meanwhile, schools are working hard to convince parents that Jewish education is worth the investment.

"There was a time that Jewish curriculum was the value-added proposition people were looking for," said Paul. Now "we have to have the 'Jewish curriculum, plus' – that's what people are looking for."

A decade ago, Gray Academy was one of the city's first schools (and one of the first Jewish schools) to go through a rigorous accreditation process with the group, Canadian Accredited Independent Schools.

"That accreditation was a parent's assurance that the school was of the highest quality," Paul said.

High schools in both Montreal and Toronto are also facing declining enrolments, although their problems differ.

Montreal has four Jewish high schools for grades 7 to 11, varying in size from 205 to 427 students and divided by language and levels of observance. Forecasts predict that the student populations in all the schools will be declining, said Shimshon Hamerman, director of formal education at Montreal's Bronfman Jewish Education Centre.

"The trends are not looking pretty. The community is working hard to improve the situation."

A new subsidy program, squarely aimed at middle-class families has been launched, and federation funding has been allocated to encourage excellence in the schools.

While it would be cost effective for Montreal to amalgamate its small high schools, it's a difficult proposition, since the schools have diverse philosophies and different forms of governance.

"It will require quite a leader [to create a school] where all these ideologies are reflected," said Hamerman. "Or the numbers will decline, so everyone will put some water in their wine."

Montreal, like Winnipeg, is battling two formidable obstacles. The first is the shrinking size of the anglophone Jewish community. The second is a waning commitment to Jewish education.

"We don't have issues of quality of education. We have issues of identity," Hamerman said. "I don't think we're doing a good enough job of instilling identity. Until that changes, we're in a downward spiral."

In Toronto, numbers have also dipped precipitously at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, from a high of 1,500 students six years ago to 1,161 today, on two campuses. Next year, enrolment will hover between 1,000 and 1,100, said head of school Rabbi Lee Buckman, who arrived at TanenbaumCHAT 18 months ago.

The problem is one of demographics. Comparing census data from 2001 and 2011 shows that the number of Jewish school-aged children in the Toronto area has dropped by nine per cent, or by about 3,000 kids, said Daniel Held, executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education.

The commitment to Jewish education has not wavered, Held said. About one-third of Jewish children attend day school, a percentage that has remained consistent over the years. Meanwhile, the percentage of Jewish youths attending TanenbaumCHAT continues to grow.

To compensate for dropping enrolment, the school is intensifying its recruitment efforts, hoping to attract students who are not currently in day school, but could enter high school in specialized classes, Rabbi Buckman said.

The high school also maintains close ties with the numerous elementary Jewish day schools, to encourage students and parents to consider day school education after Grade 8.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

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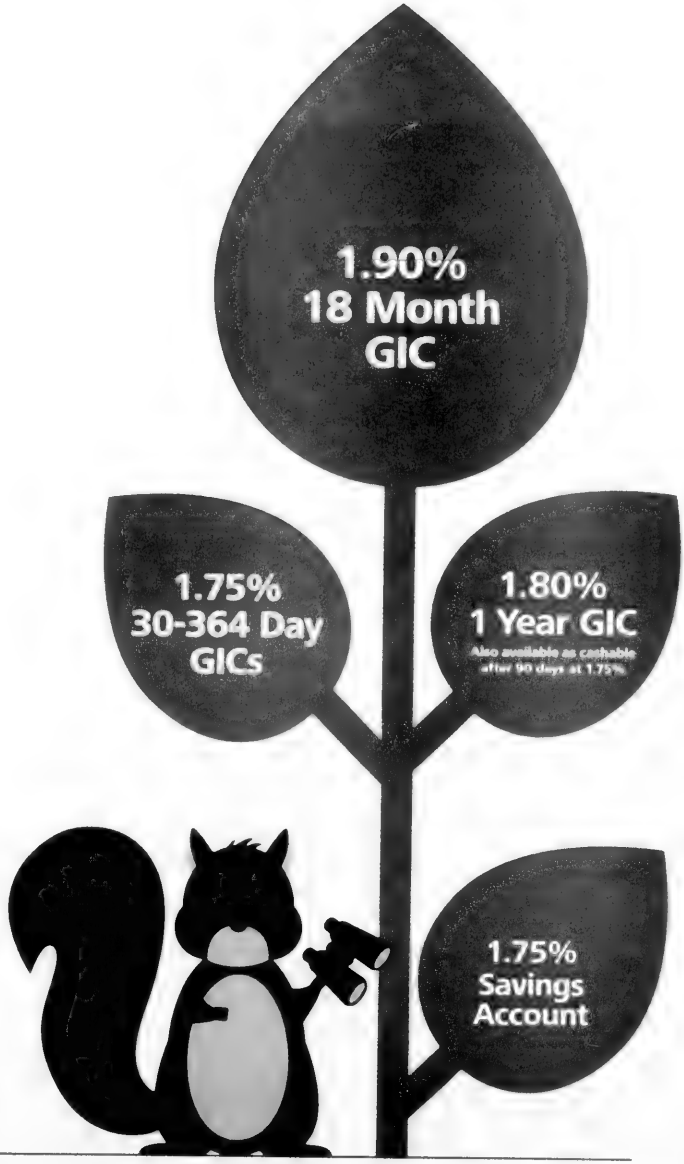

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Is freedom just for us?

Avrum Rosensweig

An injustice of epic proportion has occurred in our country, Canada, on our watch.

A lawyer by the name of Viktor Hohots took freedom away from close to 5,000 Roma refugees to Canada. Three of those individuals were Josezf, Timea and Lulu Pusuma. Like the other 5,000, the Pusumas are no longer in Canada. Their whereabouts are not for public consumption, but suffice it to say, they are not feeling safe.

According to a report I received from Rev. Alexa Gilmour, the minister of the Windermere Church, where the Pusumas found sanctuary for 18 months, "On March 2 of this year, the Law Society made a finding of professional misconduct after Mr. Hohots had officially admitted to them all of the major accusations against him made by the Pusumas and several other refugees who had filed complaints against him."

Rev. Gilmour shared with me a message from the sanctuary committee and a multifaith group, all of whom fought on behalf of the Pusumas, that now all that remains for the Law Society of Upper Canada is to decide how to punish or discipline Hohots "for his misconduct and inadequate representation of some of society's most vulnerable people."

In a March 3 story on CBC Radio's *Metro Morning* in Toronto, Rev. Gilmour spoke about the Pusumas' plight and how the law society took three years to bring Hohots to justice. Similarly, Andrew Brouwer, the Pusumas' current lawyer spoke about the travesty committed by Hohots and how it is incumbent on Canadian society, and particularly the Canadian government, to now allow the Pusumas back into Canada.

A March 2 *Toronto Star* article about this case reported about the government's disappointing response. Rather than commending the Pusuma family for testifying against Hohots, Stephen Harper's government condemned them for seeking sanctuary. Hohots would likely have continued to operate in a fraudulent manner if not for the Pusumas' testimony.

Rev. Gilmour's message to me continued, "It is a good day for justice, which we celebrate even as our hearts break knowing how many lost their right to live in a safe country because of this lawyer's greedy misconduct. May today's victory encourage and inspire all who believe a kinder and more just world is possible."

The Roma walked hand-in-hand with our people, the Jewish People, in Auschwitz. Adolf Hitler hated them as much as he hated us. Today they are besieged by neo-Nazis and many "good" Europeans once again. They are without a homeland and are considered "none is too many" by our Canadian government. The percentage of Roma coming into Canada is down to one per cent of what it was. Why?

Yet, when I approached a number of people of influence in our community to help the Pusumas, a Roma family who were hiding in a church, most of them dismissed the need. They weakly argued in favour of Harper's refugee policies, having no real understanding of its nuances. Why?

I know full well in my blood that Israel is paramount to the security of the Jewish People. I would die for Israel. Yet I ask, when will we begin caring once again about the needs of the "stranger," the most vulnerable among us, like the Roma, who are simply not welcome in our country anymore?

Do we live and die for Jewish nationalism at the expense of all other Jewish obligations?

If you feel so inclined, now would be a good time to write a letter, send an email or make a phone call to your MP and Immigration Minister Chris Alexander, asking them to bring the Pusumas back, now that their story has been proven true.

Chag Samayach. Freedom is not just for us. Happy Pesach.■

Canada failed the Pusuma family

Bernie Farber

When governments make policy errors, it can have a detrimental impact on society. Thankfully, policy can be changed. However, when policy affects a family's life, it can have a devastating effect.

Last year, I wrote about the Pusuma family. The Pusumas came to Canada as refugee claimants from Hungary. They are of Roma and Jewish origin. Because they're human rights activists, they were targeted and harassed based both on their ethnicity and their human rights work. They and their then-one-year-old-daughter were brutally attacked by Hungarian neo-Nazis.

At any other time, Canada would have welcomed them as refugees fleeing persecution. But under the present government, they were labelled phony refugees, taken advantage of by an unscrupulous refugee lawyer whose carelessness led to a rejection by the Immigration and Refugee Board. The same recklessness in legal appeals also led to failure. As a last resort, the Pusumas went into sanctuary in a Toronto church basement.

As the months turned to years, the Pusumas became disillusioned. Lack of freedom and forced sanctuary can do that to you. Despite entreaties to government officials, including the minister of immigration, there was no mercy. Our once-proud record of Canadian compassion for those less fortunate has been turned on its head. At one time, a case like this would have elicited understanding and, in all likelihood, a temporary visa to remain in the country, pending the resolution of allegations of professional misconduct against their lawyer, Victor Hohots. But the Harper government would not bend, so the Pusumas left Canada and returned to Hungary, where they remain in hiding.

On March 2, Hohots admitted to allegations of misconduct before a disciplinary panel of the Law Society of Upper Canada. There were 13 complainants, all Roma refugees (including the Pusuma family), all of whom charged that it was his misconduct that led to findings of inadmissibility. Sadly, almost all 13 claimants have been deported.

This is not just a story of legal misconduct. For Canadians, it's a story of government cruelty and mercilessness.

Throughout this entire ordeal, instead of giving any credence to the fact that 13 refugee claimants may have had honourable cases against Hohots, the government chose to demonize them. Referring to them as "bogus," ministers of the Crown appeared more like bullies than heroes and consistently refused to even consider the merits of their cases.

In the end, as reported in the *Toronto Star*, Hohots admitted everything, from not providing adequate legal advice to writing inaccurate and incomplete claims. He acknowledged doing little of the needed work, pawning it off on an interpreter in his office and an immigration consultant.

Regarding the Pusuma family specifically, the *Star* noted that a letter of reference from Victoria Mohacsi a one-time prominent Roma member of the European Parliament, was not submitted by Hohots to the immigration tribunal. As well, Hohots admitted that a documentary film giving substance to the Pusumas' claim was neither translated nor brought before the tribunal.

Hohots also agreed he had no notes of any substance pertaining to the few meetings he had with the Pusuma family. He robbed the Pusumas of any further legal recourse.

Much of this information was known to the government, yet it still refused to show compassion.

Many Canadians supported the family. Churches, synagogues and 43,000 Canadians signed a petition asking for sympathy – all ignored by the Harper government. And most sad in my view was the unconscionable silence from mainstream leaders in our own Jewish community.

It's too late for the Pusumas, whose lives have been irreversibly shattered. It's not too late, however, to take back our dignity and compassion. As we approach a federal election, please go to the website of the Jewish Refugee Action Network and ask all federal candidates to sign the pledge of change toward refugee compassion. It's a start to reclaiming our Canada. ■

Who speaks for the Jewish People?

Rabbi Dow Marmur

Last month, before the elections in Israel and at the time of the intense debate about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to the U.S. Congress about Iran, one of his arguments for going to Washington was that he doesn't just represent the State of Israel but the entire Jewish People.

He said this was also his reason for attending the demonstration in Paris in the wake of the attacks on the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and the kosher supermarket Hyper Cacher, even though the president of France asked him to stay away.

Netanyahu's claim raises a number of questions both within Israel and beyond. For example, his claim to speak for the Jewish People may provide another reason for Israel's Arab citizens – some 20 per cent of the population – to regard the statement as further evidence that their country's prime minister doesn't represent them.

The claim also became problematic when many American Jewish leaders urged him not to come. The left-leaning advocacy group JStreet even canvassed Jews in the United States to sign lists stating that Netanyahu doesn't speak for them. U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, who's Jewish, described Netanyahu's statement as arrogant.

An editorial in the *Forward*, the leading American-Jewish weekly, speculated tongue in cheek that, as only 25 per cent of the six million Jews in Israel voted for Netanyahu and 70 per cent of the 5.3 million American Jews voted for Barack Obama, the president of the United States may have more reason to regard himself as speaking for the Jewish People.

So who does represent the Jewish People? Answer: no individual, however exalted her or his office, and no organization, however pretentious its title, can claim to speak for us all, or even for most of us.

Judaism has no pope, which means that no rabbi can speak for all Jews or even for all religious Jews. The Israeli chief rabbinate has made claims to represent authentic Judaism, but even the majority of Orthodox Jews has justifiably ignored it.

Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Israel have different chief rabbis. Some have been less than role models. For example, the previous Ashkenazi chief rabbi Yona Metzger is currently under police investigation for massive misappropriation of funds and related offences while he was in office.

Despite its exalted self-definition, the World Jewish Congress is basically in the hands of one philanthropist who got it from another philanthropist. Though it makes occasional representations to governments, nobody believes that it actually speaks for the Jewish People.

Even locally, representation of the entire Jewish community eludes those who claim it. Two previous British chief rabbis have been peers of the realm with seats in the House of Lords, but despite their reputation outside the community, they didn't represent even its Orthodox sector, to which they belonged.

Though the lay equivalent, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, has a distinguished history, its role seems also to have been overshadowed in recent years.

The former Canadian Jewish Congress, perhaps modelled on the Board of Deputies, came close to a version of democratic representation, but it has now been dismantled by philanthropists who claim to have Jewish interests at heart but appear to have no patience with the democratic ambitions of their less affluent sisters and brothers.

We're a pluralistic community. Neither savvy politicians nor successful philanthropists and their staff can represent us. As the *Forward* editorial put it, "We've learned to find vitality and sustenance in a dynamic pluralism that resists centralization."

The same article also provides the most cogent answer to Netanyahu's claim: "We have survived into modern times because we haven't relied on one leader – a king or prelate or pope – and instead embraced the fact that we are diverse in more ways than we can count."

Or as Daniel Gordis of Jerusalem's Shalem College, writing in the *Jerusalem Post*, put it: "No one has ever spoken for all Jews, and it is hard to imagine anyone ever will." ■

Support should not be defined along partisan lines

Anthony Housefather and Michael Levitt

Jewish communities across the world recently celebrated the Purim holiday. The story of how political action saved the Jews of Persia, reminds us that it is essential for our community to have a voice in the political process.

In Canada, we recognize the importance of electing Jewish community members at federal, provincial, and municipal levels as well as electing those who understand the issues of importance to us. We must be a full partner of government and democracy, which means having advocates in all political parties.

The Jewish community is best served when support for community issues, including Israel, are not defined along partisan lines. The rise of the extremist Israeli Apartheid Week events on university campuses and the vitriol of the BDS (boycott,divestment and sanctions) movement has been of immense concern to our community in recent years. Just recently, on March 15, the politics of intolerance and division were on full display in presentations, demonstrations, and a BDS resolution at the McGill Student General Assembly. Similar spectacles of intolerance were planned for Toronto campuses during this week's Israeli Apartheid Week.

The BDS movement attacks the free exchange of ideas that is at the heart of our university system. Labeling Israel an apartheid state moves beyond reasonable criticism of Israeli government policies and into the demonization of all Zionists. It creates an atmosphere of hostility and intimidation for Jewish and pro-Israel students on campus.

In the face of this threat, the community reacted in a truly Canadian way – bringing together a wide range of groups and leaders – some Jewish and some not – to say that "Enough is Enough!" Elected officials from all levels of government and of all partisan stripes stood together with McGill students in opposition to this latest BDS assault.

And then, a couple days before the McGill resolution, one more voice was heard through Twitter, rallying McGill students in opposition to the March 15 vote. That voice belonged to Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, like us, a McGill alumnus. His message was clear; "The BDS movement, like Israeli Apartheid Week, has no place on Canadian campuses. As a @McGillU alum, I'm disappointed. #EnoughIsEnough."

As federal Liberal candidates in the next election, we have been very proud of the clear and unequivocal stand taken by Trudeau and the Liberal party on this issue.

In a speech to students at the University of British Columbia earlier this month, Trudeau clearly stated that neither Israeli Apartheid Week nor the BDS movement have a place on Canadian campuses. We echo and share that commitment and we will work hard to ensure that Canadian campuses are not overrun with the shameful politics of intolerance and division.

Recently, Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler launched a debate on anti-Semitism in the House of Commons. It culminated with unanimous support from members of all parties voting in favour of a well-drafted resolution on the issue. The fact that we currently have a Parliament where all three major political parties are prepared to take such a stand is something that we as Canadian Jews should be proud of, and something worth working to retain.

We now need to continue to work together at other campuses across Canada. Israeli Apartheid Week in Toronto takes place this week, and so the hard work must continue to ensure our Jewish students feel as safe and valued on campus as we did 20 years ago. On this issue and many others of great importance to our community, we are strongest when we stand together, not as partisans but as Canadians. ■

Anthony Housefather is an attorney, the mayor of Cote Saint-Luc and Liberal candidate in Mount Royal. Michael Levitt is a Toronto businessman, Jewish community leader and Liberal candidate in York Centre.

News

Canadians weigh in on Israeli election results

PAUL LUNGEN
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Whether it was unexpected, as his naysayers suggested, or breathtaking as his supporters maintained, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud Party scored a huge win in last week's Israeli election, taking 30 seats in the 120-seat Knesset and maintaining the upper hand in forming a new government.

The Zionist Camp, the centre-left opposition led by Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni, which pollsters had assured were in a dead heat with Likud, or even ahead, finished second with 24 seats.

In Canada, Prime Minister Stephen Harper congratulated Netanyahu "on his election results. We look [forward] to working with the government once formed. Israel has no greater friend than [Canada]," he stated on Twitter.

The New Democratic Party's foreign affairs critic, Paul Dewar, said in a statement that the party would "be watching as a coalition government emerges."

The NDP "remain[s] steadfast in our commitment to a negotiated two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and security, side-by-side with negotiated and agreed-upon borders.

"We will continue to urge the government to press this position with whoever forms the government in Israel," he stated.

The Liberal party had not commented on the election as of *The CJN*'s press time.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the community's largest advocacy organization, noted that those who ran for public office showed Israel is "a vibrant, healthy democracy.

"Israelis are clearly engaged and passionate about the choices facing the country, as exemplified by the fact that this year's election drew the highest voter turnout in nearly two decades and was a close race to the very end. In particular, the success of the Joint Arab List – which ranked third in seat count – is an unmistakable example of the openness of Israeli democracy as is the fact that more women have been elected to the Knesset than ever before," said CIJA chair David Cape.

Avi Benlolo, a dual Canadian-Israeli citizen, voted in the election during a visit to Israel. While there, he said, he spoke to many Israelis who were unsure of how they'd vote. He said he, too, was uncertain whether to vote primarily on security concerns or issues related to social welfare.

Commenting on behalf of the Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which he heads, Benlolo said, "The strength of Israel's democracy can be seen by the 34 political parties that fielded candidates in the election, including a newly formed Joint Arab List party... that finished third overall. It was a real privilege to participate in such a vigorous, albeit singular democracy in the Middle East."

Netanyahu's opponents on the left wing of the political spectrum said his victory was tainted by campaign rhetoric they called bigoted and by his rejection of a two-state solution. They said Likud's victory will likely lead to isolation of the Jewish state.

Arie Raif, a former Israeli diplomat and a Herzog supporter, said "I am concerned because of the fact that Mr. Netanyahu considers Arab Israeli citizens a fifth column. He called to make sure Israelis come to vote because, God forbid, Israeli Arabs gain power."

Benjamin Netanyahu and wife Sara celebrate on election night. RONI SCHUTZER/ISRAEL SUN

As for Netanyahu's campaign statement against a Palestinian state, Raif said, "Now we know the true colours of Mr. Netanyahu. We know he never meant a separation from the West Bank or a Palestinian state."

Karen Mock, a spokesperson for JSpace Canada, a "Jewish, progressive, pro-Israel, pro-peace voice in Canada," said the organization was disappointed in the election result "and especially the way Netanyahu resorted to last-minute fear-mongering and not-so-veiled racism. It reminded me of [former Quebec premier Jacques] Parizeau's comments [after the 1995 sovereignty referendum]how upset he was with the ethnic vote, and it worked for him. It rallied far right voters. [Netanyahu's] fear-mongering about Israeli Arabs voting in large numbers is just totally unacceptable."

Netanyahu's rejection of a Palestinian state "is a step backward and not in Israel's best interests. We're fearful it will fuel the [boycott, divestment and sanctions] movement," she added

Responding to criticism of Netanyahu's two-state remarks, Israeli Ambassador to Canada, Rafael Barak, advised people to take the statement "with a grain of salt," the *Ottawa Citizen* reported.

"What my prime minister said is related more to the fact that we don't have a credible interlocutor to date that [can] come to a compromise," Barak told a briefing organized by the Pearson Centre for Progressive Policy.

Netanyahu went into "TV mode" in the last days of the campaign, the ambassador added, suggesting the comments were simply electioneering.

Speaking on *Fox News* in the United States, Netanyahu said his comments about the Arab vote "should be taken in a larger context.

"I warned of foreign money coming in to selectively try to bring out supporters of a list that includes Islamists and other factions that oppose the State of Israel," he said.

As to his comments apparently backtracking on a two-state solution, he said "the conditions for that, today, are not achievable."

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' rejection of a Jewish state, his alliance with the Gaza-based Hamas organization, and the volatility in the region have changed "the terms" for an agreement, Netanyahu told Megyn Kelly, host of *The Kelly File* on *Fox*. ■

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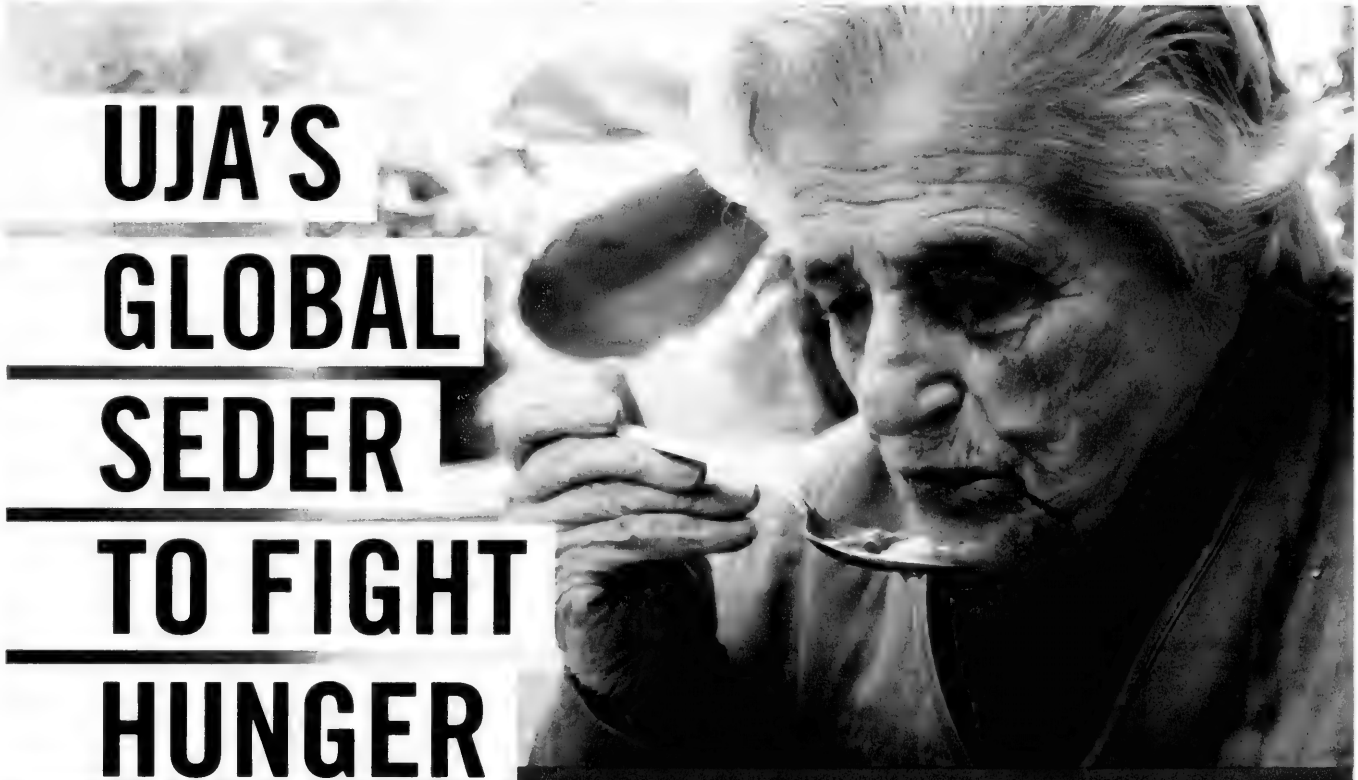

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 26, 2015

Police find Jews most targeted group for hate crimes

PAUL LUNGEN
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With the release of the Toronto Police Service's annual Hate/Bias Crime Statistical Report, members of the Jewish community might well ask themselves, is the glass half full or half empty?

The 2014 report found that hate crimes reported to police went up by 11 per cent over 2013 and that Jews were the single most targeted group in Toronto, followed by blacks and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. The total number of occurrences affecting all groups was 146 – in a city of 2.7 million people.

Nevertheless, Jews seemed to be singled out. Though comprising only 3.8 per cent of the city's population, Jews were the victims of racist attacks 44 times, or in fully 30 per cent of occurrences. Add in four attacks on Israelis, who were categorized as a separate victim group, and 33 per cent of victims were likely Jews, though Israeli victims could in theory include Christians, Muslims or Druze.

LGBTQs were the victims in 27 occurrences, followed by blacks in 20 cases. Next came Muslims, who were victimized 16 times. Single incidents were recorded in the cases of people from Korean, Chinese, Pakistani and Catholic backgrounds.

Other categories included "white" and "brown" and an additional 14 "multibias" occurrences were recorded, in which Jews again featured prominently, and in some cases, somewhat unusually.

In addition to the 44 incidents involving Jews, additional single incidents involved "Jewish/LGBTQ/Muslim," "Jewish/LGBTQ/Black," "Jewish/Somali," "Jewish/Muslim," "Jewish/Black," "Jewish/Jehovah's Witness," and "Jewish/LGBTQ/Canadians/Americans/British."

These brought up the total involving Jews combined with another identity to 52 – not including the four Israeli victims.

Len Rudner, director of community relations and outreach for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said the findings should be seen in context.

"The report speaks to a fundamental truth. Canada is a great country to live in and Toronto is a great city to live in. But the fact hate crimes occur in Toronto should be of concern to everybody. The fact the numbers are up is a concern. The fact that Jews were the most targeted is a concern," he said.

> *We have to pay attention to these things, but we can't let them define us.*

"We have to pay attention to these things, but we can't let them define us. There's more to being a Jew in Toronto than being the victim of hate crimes.

"I think if we remember that every incident represents a school, a synagogue or an individual that has been told they did not belong, and even if it happens once, it is significant and it is worth noting," he added.

The three most common offences reported to police included "mischief to property, assault and criminal harassment. The Jewish community and the black community were the most victimized group for mischief to property occurrences, while the LGBTQ community was the most victimized group for assault occurrences," the report stated.

Altogether, 22 people were arrested in connection with hate-motivated crimes. Since most incidents involved property offences, such as graffiti and vandalism where there are no witnesses, investigating the events has proven a challenge, the report stated.

The report also noted that the findings might "not be a true reflection of the prevalence of hate/bias crimes occurring in Toronto," since they are likely being under-reported to police.

Of the 44 incidents involving Jews as the victim group, 38 involved mischief, including three that involved a religious property, two were assaults, one was described as criminal harassment and three incidents involved death threats.

The Israeli victims faced two cases of wilful promotion of hatred and one each of mischief and being threatened with death.

The largest number of incidents involving Jews took place in 32 Division, which runs from Steeles Avenue in the north to Lawrence Avenue in the south and from Bayview Avenue in the east to the CNR tracks to the west of Dufferin Street. ■

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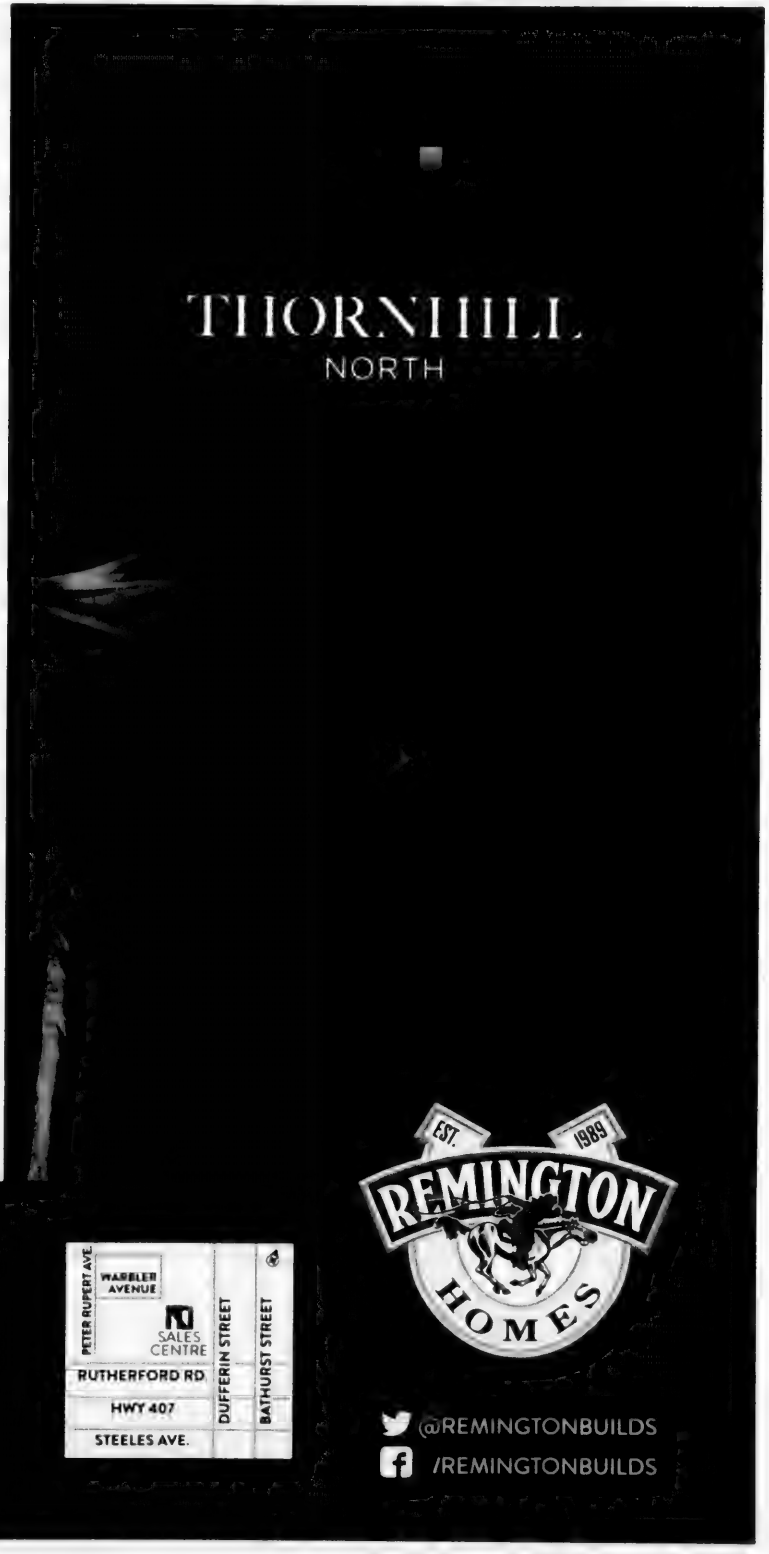

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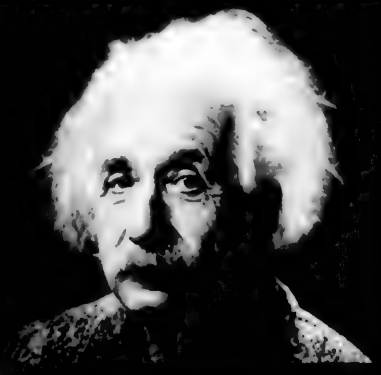

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Turkey holding more Shoah memorials, professor notes

JODIE SHUPAC
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Prof. Umut Uzer of Istanbul Technical University

Turkey's recent wave of Holocaust commemorations warrants more attention and analysis – both in the academic research community and the Israeli media, says a professor at Istanbul Technical University.

Umut Uzer, a professor of humanities and social sciences, said that in the past several years, Turkey has shown unprecedented initiative in holding public ceremonies to commemorate the events of the Holocaust.

Uzer, whose research includes the Middle East peace process, the Arab-Israeli conflict and Turkish-Israel relations was speaking in a lecture on March 16 at the University of Toronto's Near and Middle Eastern civilizations department.

Since 2011, for instance, Turkey has held official commemorations for International Holocaust Remembrance Day (IHRD), which have been attended by Turkish foreign ministry officials, diplomats and, in one instance, the governor of Istanbul.

This trend toward publicly marking the Holocaust is surprising, Uzer said, given that Turkey is becoming increasingly conservative and its relations with Israel are becoming more tense.

"What is Turkey's interest in the Holocaust," he asked, "especially as the country gets more Islamic and there's a rise in anti-Semitic writings, especially at Islamic newspapers, or on television?"

He went on to offer potential reasons for the trend: it could be a kind of "public relations" effort, he said, or it could be that Turkey is paying homage to the Holocaust to positively impact bilateral relations with Israel, though it's unlikely that this will be especially effective.

"I think the two countries have disappointed each other," he said, referring to the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident, in which nine activists from a Turkish ship attempting to break Israel's blockade of Gaza were killed by members of the Israeli navy.

Israel and Turkey currently only have "low-level diplomacy between them," he said, and "outstanding relations must first be addressed." It could also be that authorities want to assure Turkish Jews their rights are protected.

Whatever the reason, Uzer stressed the commemorations will likely have a positive effect on Turkey's ability to obtain membership in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, where it's now an observer, and may serve to counter anti-Semitism and discrimination in the country.

"The Islamist press may have attacked these commemoration events more if the big heads of government hadn't gone to them," Uzer said. "So, in that sense, the Holocaust commemoration could have some effects in tamping down the radical Islamist media outlets."

One prominent memorial event on IHRD was held at Istanbul's Neve Shalom Synagogue. Last year, Uzer said, this event was held at a private university in Ankara and was attended by around 400 people, including the speaker of parliament – the "second-highest person in the country after the president" – the foreign minister, who delivered a speech, and a number of generals and diplomats both Turkish and foreign.

Uzer noted, however, that the foreign minister's speech was not particularly well-received in Israel, given that he criticized the government of Israel.

"It caused disappointment," Uzer said. "The Israeli foreign minister said it was inappropriate to [criticize Israel] on this day… but I'd say the fact it was held at all, and attended by the speaker of the parliament, is a big deal."

In addition, Uzer said that Yad Vashem recently offered online training to a number of Turkish academics on the subjects of Holocaust and Jewish life in Eastern Europe, and that the course culminated in an in-person seminar at Yad Vashem.

"Many of these academics have since incorporated this new knowledge into their subjects and curricula," he said.

Finally, this year Turkey held its first official commemoration of the 1942 Struma Disaster, in which nearly 800 Jewish refugees aboard the MV Struma were killed in an attempt to escape from Romania to Palestine, the Struma had temporarily stopped in Istanbul, but Turkish authorities towed it into the Black Sea, where it was torpedoed by Soviet forces.

Uzer said that at the commemoration, the minister of culture gave a speech that was "really well-received by the Jewish community" and "he stressed the Struma commemoration will be held every year."

He acknowledged that the Israeli public and media have many other issues occupying their attention, but asserted, "As far as I can see, there isn't enough interest in the Israeli media about this stuff." ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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Tilly Oslender can't explain how she's lived to 108

SHERI SHEFA
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Throughout Tilly Oslender's 108 years on this planet, she's worked hard and experienced innumerable joys and hardships, but throughout it all, she's always maintained a positive attitude, a thirst for knowledge and a sharp sense of humour.

"A son goes away to university… he calls his mother and says, 'Ma, I got married,'" Ukrainian-born Tilly begins, sitting in the dining room of her midtown apartment in Toronto, pulling a joke out of her mental Rolodex.

"She says, 'You got married?! What's the rush?' He said, 'I had to do it… she's pregnant… she already has five kids, but we have nowhere to live.' [The mother says,] 'OK come here.' He says, 'Where are you going to live?' She says, 'Oh, I'll drop dead.'"

Tilly, who celebrated her birthday on March 24, sat down for an interview with *The CJN* alongside her only daughter, Roslyn Oslender.

Despite having been approached by reporters in the past, her interview with *The CJN* was the first she has agreed to do.

She said she made a decision not to talk about her age after attending a program at a retirement home 36 years ago.

"They were saying their ages… I told them, at that time, I was 72. [They said], 'You don't look it, you must be making a mistake.' They thought it was not true," Tilly said.

On her way home, she fell and broke her wrist. "I became superstitious and chose not to talk about my age."

But Tilly, whose birthday predates the discovery of penicillin by 20 years, is living proof you're never too old to change.

Over the decades, she has needed to be flexible and adaptable. She and her oldest sister were brought to Canada from her native Ukraine by relatives in Toronto when she was 22 to escape the hardships brought on by the Russian Revolution.

She said Jews were oppressed and "everyone was trying to run away."

Tilly, who was one of five siblings, worked tirelessly – at one point making $3 a week at a garment factory in Toronto – to save enough money to sponsor the rest of her family to join her here.

But she said after she paid an immigration agency to bring them over, "they closed the immigration and that was the end of it. They couldn't come."

In the decades since Tilly has been living in Toronto, she only visited them in Ukraine once, about 15 years ago.

Tilly Oslender, left, and daughter Roslyn
SHERI SHEFA PHOTO

"Fifty years had passed since they had seen each other," Roslyn said.

"They have all passed away," Tilly added. "I'm the only one left."

Tilly, who was married for more than 55 years to her husband, Jack, who died in 1990 after a long battle with emphysema, said she worked hard all her life, but balanced that with an active social life.

In 2004, Tilly and her daughter joined Beth Tzedec Congregation, where she attends weekly bridge games, various programs and High Holiday services.

"My mom has a terrific attitude and always wants to know what's coming up, what she can look forward to… She's very positive, not a complainer, and she enjoys life and wants to know everything," Roslyn said.

"She's telling the truth!" Tilly jumped in.

"My doctor asks me, 'How did you do it?' I don't know. I have no idea… I said, 'You're the doctor, you should tell me!' I made him laugh," said Tilly, who still lives alone, although a nurse comes daily to help bathe her, and her daughter, an only child who doesn't have any children of her own, is her mother's closest companion.

"She calls me about a dozen times a day," Tilly said.

"She's the only one. She is one in a million, and she doesn't know what she does for me. She prolongs my life."

"Stop it, Mom," Roslyn interjected. "It's not true. I always say it's only God. If I'm an instrument, that's great, because I love my mom, but I don't prolong anyone's life. But it's nice that she says that."

Although last year Roslyn threw a big party for her mother's 107th birthday, plans were more laid back this year, likely a lunch date with friends and family.

"Every year on our birthdays, we go to the synagogue, always… thanking God," Roslyn said. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 26, 2015

Israeli university students give back to community

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Despite Hillel of Greater Toronto's offering of on-campus programs for Jewish university students in Toronto, many Israeli students appreciate having a space of their own to socialize, develop leadership skills and contribute to the community.

"There is a bit of a cultural difference. [The Israeli students] like to speak Hebrew amongst themselves, to have a place to be as Israeli as they want and hang out with people from similar backgrounds," explained Rotem Stark, Hillel of Greater Toronto's director of Israeli initiatives and the leader of Pisga, a leadership program launched by Hillel four years ago and targeted at Israelis studying at colleges and universities across the city.

Earlier this month, this year's cohort of 25 Pisga participants – the largest group Pisga has had to date – engaged in a series of charitable activities as a way to give back to the local Jewish community.

On March 8, the students put on a Purim carnival for youth at the DANI Centre, a nonprofit agency that helps develop and nurture independence for young adults living with physical or cognitive challenges.

The event included face painting, mask making and the assembly of mishloach manot.

And on March 12 and 13, the students assembled 20 Shabbat baskets full of gourmet goodies and snacks, and delivered them to people in the hospital, in partnership with Chai Lifeline Canada, a nonprofit that helps families that have a child suffering from a serious illness, and Bikur Cholim, a social service organization that provides support to vulnerable individuals and families.

"The idea was to complement the food staples people get [from organizations like Bikur Cholim] with chocolates and other yummy things that everyone loves to get, as well as foods you can easily consume in the hospital, like packaged couscous," Stark said.

Pisga's overall aim is to provide Israeli students with a forum for socializing and obtaining professional development skills, and the group includes people who recently moved from Israel to study in Canada and some who are Israeli-born but have lived in Canada for a number of years.

Toronto Pisga participants make masks at the Purim carnival they put on for youths at the DANI Centre.

Participants range from first-year to fourth-year students and come from a range of schools, including York University, the University of Toronto, Ryerson University, George Brown College and Seneca College.

Stark, who herself moved to Canada from Israel at age nine but returned as a teenager to serve in the Israel Defence Forces, noted that, particularly for those who are very new to Canada, the transition to life here can be tough.

"I think they can struggle to fit in with the Canadian Jewish community and may need that adjustment period to get used to the culture," she said, citing the fact that "Canadians are much more polite [than Israelis]" as an example.

Much of Pisga's programming is conducted in Hebrew, and activities also include team-building sessions, speaker events, mentorship around professional skills, and social opportunities such as ski trips.

Stark emphasized that Pisga members are not isolated from other Hillel participants, and are frequently encouraged to attend general Hillel gatherings and parties in addition to the Pisga programming.

"Israeli students can have some challenges when they first move here, and I think they appreciate having this group around to help soften that in-between state," she said. ■

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Halifax Hillel delivers soup to sick students

LEAH COLLINS LIPSETT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Elyse Holmes, a Dalhousie University student living in residence, receives much-needed chicken soup from Arielle Branitsky, director of Jewish Student Life for the Atlantic Region of Hillel Canada, as part of Atlantic Hillel's "chicken soup hotline" program for sick students.

Spring might be hitting the rest of Canada, but in Halifax, snow banks still line the streets, temperatures remain below zero – and colds are still rampant.

Atlantic Hillel in Halifax knows that when students are sick, it can take all their energy just to get out of bed, let alone make themselves comfort food.

That's why Hillel created a "chicken soup hotline."

"It's Jewish penicillin," says Tamar Ellis, student body president of Atlantic Hillel. She's the one who cooks the soup, from scratch – "I don't like soup mixes," Ellis says. The soup is all kosher: mostly chicken, with a vegetable option for vegetarians.

It's kept frozen at Hillel House, the organization's homey centre near Dalhousie University and delivered directly to sick students' doors within 24 hours of an email request.

"A lot of students that come to Dal come from out of town, so it's a nice way to make them feel a little at home," says Ellis.

The program started in the 2013-14 school year when Hillel held a big Shabbat dinner and had a lot of soup left over afterward. Atlantic Hillel hosts weekly Shabbat dinners, as well as events such as film screenings and talks.

"We were freezing it, and the previous Hillel director thought it would be a good idea to give it out to sick students," says Ellis.

By the end of the term, all the soup was gone. So Arielle Branitsky, director of Jewish student life for the Atlantic Region of Hillel Canada, decided to continue the program this school year.

"Right now, we're only set up for a really small demand," says Branitsky, who delivers the soup when Ellis isn't able to. So far this school year, they've only had a handful of requests, but Branitsky wants to expand the hotline.

"What I'd like to see is just making sure more students know it's available to them," she says.

This winter the hotline was only publicized through the Hillel email newsletter, which reaches about 370 people, some of whom aren't students any more. When there's room in the Hillel budget, though, Branitsky wants to print magnets with the chicken soup hotline information and give them out on campus.

"And then, ideally, every fridge is sitting there with a reminder that they can call Hillel for some chicken soup."

Branitsky is modelling the program after a similar hotline at Western University in London, Ont. The idea of a "Jewish penicillin hotline" was first conceived by the University of Michigan Hillel and caught on across the United States.

"It's not only beneficial to the students, but it's a good reminder to the parents that we're here, and that we're doing good things for their kids. As a non-profit organization, you need your community to know you're working for them," Branitsky says.

"I had a student [who had received soup] come up to me last term and say, 'I have to give you a hug on behalf of my mother.'

"It's so Jewish in nature," Branitsky says, laughing.

Halifax has the biggest concentration of Jewish students in the Maritimes, but that still isn't very many – only around 300, Branitsky estimates.

"We're doing this as a service for the student community, and we recognize that in this area, there isn't a huge Jewish population," she says.

Regardless of the number of students using it, Hillel and its programming are still important, Ellis says.

"It's nice for Jewish students to have something that they can identify with... meeting other Jewish people, and educating non-Jewish students on campus about what we do."

Elyse Holmes, a Dalhousie student living in residence, experienced the chicken soup hotline first hand when she had a bad cold earlier this winter. She was all smiles – and stuffed nose – when Branitsky delivered her soup.

"I was feeling really crappy, and when you're feeling that way, you definitely don't want to go out and find your own soup," Holmes said. "So it's nice to have it delivered and have it homemade."

Sick students in Halifax can email halifax.hillel@gmail.com to request soup, or to get involved with Hillel. ■

Israeli delegates face 'die-in'

Anti-Israel students staged a protest March 13 at McMaster University. FACEBOOK PHOTO

SHERI SHEFA
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Tensions flared between pro-Israel and anti-Israel students at McMaster University earlier this month after students protested a visit by a delegation of four Israelis who were promoting their country's diversity.

On March 12, four Israelis who are part of a project called Connecting Leaders in Communities (CLIC), established to promote Israel's shared values with other democratic countries and build partnerships, were brought to McMaster by a pro-Israel student group called Israel on Campus (IOC), with the support of McMaster Hillel.

McMaster Hillel president Lindsay Stitt said that when the four Israelis – a Palestinian-Muslim-Israeli, Areen Haj Ahmad; a half-Christian, half-Jew, Hanna Larson; and two Jewish-Israelis, Sam Sank and Yona Melchers – set up a table in the student centre to let students ask them questions, one of them was "mistreated" by students who opposed their message.

"Areen, the Palestinian-Israeli girl… had requested that she wanted to be represented by a Palestinian flag and asked if we could put that up. We said 'No problem.' I printed out a Palestinian flag and an Israeli flag, and we put them up," Stitt explained.

"I was present for a conversation where Areen was told she should not have the flag at the table because she does not represent the oppressed Palestinian voices. When Areen said she works very hard in Israel for the rights of Palestinians who are not in Israel, she was told she should not have the flag up. She was spoken to in a very rude manner," Stitt added."

"At the tabling event, she was being mistreated, being told that she didn't understand the issues, told that her flag doesn't represent her."

Raphael Szajnfarber, director of McMaster Hillel, said IOC and Hillel had planned an event for later that evening called Business Partners in Peace.

"It was to include a member of the delegation who is a Palestinian Arab Israeli [Ahmad] who would be speaking alongside a McMaster University professor, both of whom have experience using business as a tool to foster positive conversations and dialogue and co-existence," he said.

He said Ahmad chose not to take part in the evening lecture because she felt too intimidated after the tabling session.

"She had received a lot of Facebook messages and she had been surrounded, and she told me personally, 'I don't feel comfortable speaking, I'm sorry,'" he said.

"She was called a traitor and was being bullied, and she ended up deactivating her Facebook account to stop the messages from coming in," Stitt added.

In the hours following the tabling event, anti-Israel students began putting up posters around campus that contained an image pulled from CLIC delegate Sam Sank's blog that showed him holding two flare guns in his Israel Defence Forces fatigues.

The posters contained a caption that said, "Not on our campus."

The following day, about 75 students gathered in McMaster's atrium, not far from the student centre, to hold a "die-in."

"From the second floor of the atrium, there were paper planes that were dropped, and they were hitting people, and they were falling down as the paper airplanes hit them," Szajnfarber said.

Although no campus group took credit for the protest or the posters of Sank, which were posted without authorization from the university, Szajnfarber suspects Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR) McMaster, a student group involved with the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, was behind it. "No group took responsibility, but all of the leaders of SPHR organized it and spoke at the protest," he said.

SPHR didn't respond to an interview request, but a post on its Facebook page referred to the tabling event and posted the photo of Sank that was used in the poster.

"We are sorry that Israel on Campus felt it was appropriate to have these people leafleting in the student center… People like this don't have a place on our campus. Our campus should never be a place of violence," the SPHR Facebook posting said.

On March 23, a resolution urging the university to cut ties with Israeli institutions was scheduled to be tabled at the McMaster Student Union general assembly.

Szajnfarber wouldn't reveal how Jewish and pro-Israel groups were going to respond to the vote, but said BDS "creates a really toxic campus environment and BDS… is a discriminatory movement." ■

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Ari Weinberg vividly recalls his first experience in the theatre 21 years ago, when the then nine-year-old was cast in a production of *Fiddler on the Roof* at Toronto's Leah Posluns Theatre.

"I have been in love with the theatre ever since," he said.

Weinberg subsequently attended a high school for the performing arts in Toronto, and then Sheridan College. While his early postgraduate work in theatre was on stage, he found himself drawn more to working behind the scenes. His goal was to become an artistic director, a goal the 30-year-old has finally realized in his new role with the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre (WJT) as its new leader. And he couldn't be happier.

The 27-year-old theatre company has just come through a traumatic time. In February 2014, faced with declining audiences and declining revenues, its board made the difficult decision to fire artistic director Michael Nathanson and cancel the remainder of the season.

Last fall, Kayla Gordon, Nathanson's predecessor, agreed to act as interim artistic director. She noted in an earlier interview that the WJT's precarious financial situation was not unusual. "Every couple of years, the board would say that we lacked the funds to stage a second or third show," said Gordon, who was the WJT's artistic director for 11 years. "But we always found a way to survive.

"It happens with other Jewish theatres as well. Such is life in small theatre with small audiences."

In December, the theatre mounted a one-man show, Jake Ehrenreich's *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*. The three performance sold out.

For Weinberg, who officially starts in his new position June 1, this will not be his first time in Winnipeg. Four years ago, he was cast in a Manitoba Theatre Centre production of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was set in Jerusalem.

"One day in rehearsal, Steven Schipper [MTC's longtime artistic director] asked me what I saw as my future in the theatre," Weinberg recounted. "I told him that I wanted his job.

"Steven took me out for lunch and outlined the responsibilities of an artistic director. In 2013, he invited me back for a month as an intern artistic director. He became my mentor."

Ari Weinberg

Most recently, Weinberg served as intern artistic director at the Toronto-based Metcalf Foundation and was the internship adviser for the music theatre performance program at Sheridan College. He also directed productions of *Godspell* and *Sweeney Todd* at Theatre Sheridan. He has two Patron's Pick awards from the Toronto Fringe Festival.

Weinberg said he kept in touch with Schipper, who encouraged him to apply for the WJT opening.

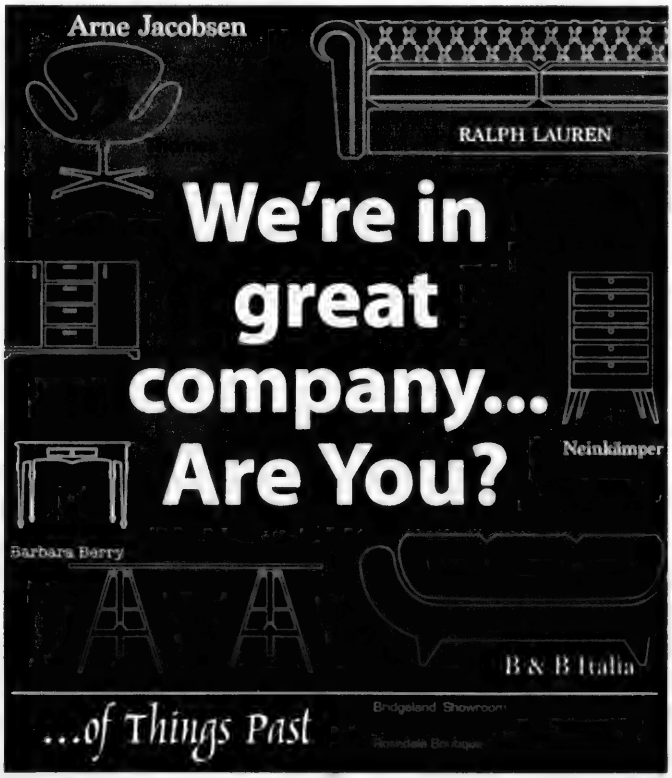
"I am excited to be coming back to Winnipeg," he said. "I love the city. I have had terrific experiences in my previous visits. And there is such a vibrant artistic arts and culture scene. I am looking forward to attending the theatre, the ballet and the opera. In Toronto, I would go all the time."

The WJT's next production is *Bad Jews*, which makes its Canadian premiere May 6. Weinberg will be on hand for the opening.

He said he and Kayla Gordon will be working together to plan the next season.

"I want to stage shows that will appeal to people of all ages," he said. "In particular, I want to reach out to younger audiences. I want our shows to feel like events that people will want to come to."

He is also looking forward to having his parents and both his bubbies and zaides come from Toronto to see his openings. ■



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– Jonelle Grossman

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 26, 2015

Torontonian throws party for girl affected by terror

Philanthropist pays to bring Danish teen and her family to Israel after her bat mitzvah was interrupted by Copenhagen attack

JODIE SHUPAC
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Hannah Bentow cuts her cake and dances at her bat mitzvah at Jerusalem's Matan Women's Institute for Torah Studies.

A Danish mother whose family was sent to Jerusalem by a Toronto philanthropist to reprise her daughter's bat mitzvah after the original party was disrupted by a Feb. 14 shooting attack outside a Copenhagen synagogue said the experience has strengthened her sense of Jewishness.

"It reinforces my Yiddishkeit," Mette Bentow told *The CJN* after the family of five had returned from a week-long, all-expenses-paid trip to Israel that 33-year-old Torontonian Josh Salmon, a total stranger to them, took upon himself to arrange.

Last month, Salmon read in *The Times of Israel* about 12-year-old Hannah Bentow's sense of remorse after Dan Uzan, the man standing guard outside the Copenhagen synagogue where her bat mitzvah was taking place, was shot to death by a lone, allegedly Islamist gunman.

"I read that she wished she'd never had a bat mitzvah," Salmon said, "and I felt really bad that a kid had to feel like that... And I thought, what better place for a girl to have her bat mitzvah than Israel?"

Salmon, who owns a high-end landscape design and construction company, got in touch with the chief rabbi of Copenhagen, who connected him to the Bentows.

"I called Mette and said, 'I'd like to send you guys to Israel, what do you think about it?'" Salmon said.

Bentow – who felt Hannah's sense of guilt around her bat mitzvah was "a burden that's unfair for a 12-year-old to have to carry" – was "gob-smacked by Salmon's offer," she said.

"Philanthropy is not a thing we're so used to in Denmark, because we pay so much tax," she added. "So for someone to offer such a grand gesture, we couldn't believe it."

Although initially hesitant because she believed any money spent should go to Uzan's family or his memorial fund, Bentow said Salmon assured her, "We'll do both," so the Bentows accepted.

Salmon's friend, the owner of the Israeli Dan Hotels chain, paid for them to stay half the week at the Dan Eilat Hotel and the other half at the Dan Jerusalem Hotel.

Salmon arranged for Hannah's bat mitzvah to be held at the Matan Women's Institute for Torah Studies in Jerusalem and connected them with an Israeli party planner, who supplied a DJ, sweet table and photo booth.

The Matan Institute's chancellor invited her granddaughter and her friends – all around the same age as Hannah – to attend the party.

"The party was really nice, and it was so sweet of the girls who came," Hannah said. "I almost felt like a superstar with all the attention and amazing things we got to do... I don't even know how to thank Josh – he is the nicest person ever! I mean, who does something like this for someone they don't know?"

Hannah's mother reflected: "It was so fantastic, like retribution. These terrorists think they can make us less Jewish or hide who we are, but we just took more pride in it."

She said the trip gave her family "the break we needed" after the trauma of the Copenhagen shooting, during which they and their guests had to hide in the synagogue basement for several hours.

"I think the one who coped best was actually Hannah, and our youngest, who's eight, probably took it the hardest. In the weeks after, he was afraid to go out in public or to school because he said he was sure someone would recognize him as a Jew and 'kill me.'"

All three children attend a Jewish school in Copenhagen, which Bentow said is protected by barbed wire and a police presence.

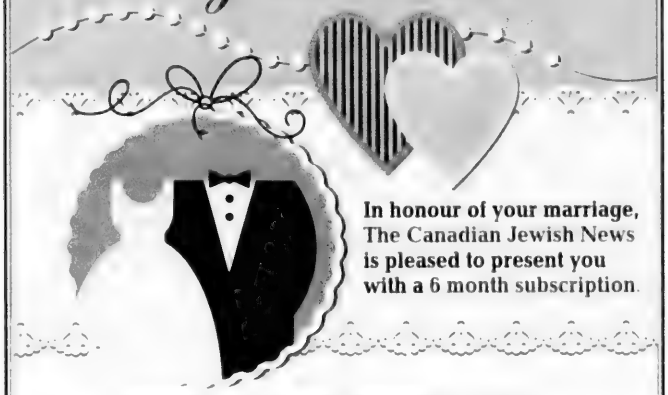
Salmon, who was unable to attend the Jerusalem bat mitzvah, said he made the gesture because "I felt we couldn't undo what's been done, but we could try to give Hannah a second chance."

In addition to the party, he arranged for the Danish ambassador to Israel to take the Bentows out to lunch one afternoon, as well as for them to spend time volunteering on an army base and meeting soldiers, and for them to visit a dolphin observatory in Eilat, which has a program for children who have undergone terror attacks or sexual abuse.

Salmon said he's passionate about supporting organizations that assist individuals with special needs and has contributed to charities such as Dani, Yachad and Chai Lifeline.

"I've never met Josh," Mette Bentow said, "and I don't know what I'm going to do when I actually meet him...We are beyond grateful for what he and all the others did for us." ■

Congratulations!



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Hillel cancels controversial aboriginal Zionist's talk

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Hillel Montreal is defending as a "principled stance" its last-minute decision to cancel a talk by assertive pro-Israel activist Ryan Bellerose of Calgary, which had been scheduled to take place March 16 at Concordia University.

Bellerose, who is also an activist for aboriginal rights, thinks the event was scrapped because some Israel advocacy groups, including the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and "progressive Zionist" students, do not like his "in your face" approach to defending Israel.

"I'm not a very PC guy," said Bellerose, who did receive a platform to speak two days later at a private event organized by the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research (CIJR).

Hillel contends the reason was that Bellerose's recent tweets, mostly to Hamas' Twitter account, and his response to those tweets on other social media, were not acceptable discourse.

Bellerose is a founder of Calgary United With Israel, which describes itself an independent grassroots group, largely composed of students, that was started a couple of years ago. During the war in Gaza last summer, it was involved in a rally for Israel outside Calgary City Hall that turned violent. A similar group, Toronto-based StandWithUs Canada, sponsored Bellerose's trip to Israel last year.

Bellerose, 40, a burly semi-professional football player and former oil-rig worker who grew up in the Métis settlement of Paddle Prairie in northern Alberta, was to have spoken on "How Being Indigenous to Canada Helps Me Understand the Middle East" at a widely publicized afternoon event sponsored by Hillel Concordia and Hillel McGill. He said he was told by Hillel late the night before it would not be taking place.

Hillel Montreal executive director Jeff Bicher told *The CJN* that the "decision to cancel... came as a result of information received from students that many would consider mainstream pro-Israel activists.

"Hillel's policy is to promote civil discourse, and we felt that his [Bellerose's] discourse did not remain civil. I have read Mr. Bellerose's tweets and, although some were written in tasteless humour, we were prepared to still have him share his experiences on campus. What led to this point was the way in which he chose to respond on the event Facebook page. Mr. Bellerose crossed the line in many students' eyes, and ours."

On March 15, Bellerose retweeted a photo to #AskHamas of two young boys apparently choking as they are hung by the collars of their T-shirts to a railing by a man, with the caption: "Do you put children out to dry??"

Among a series of tweets by Bellerose to #AskHamas the day before were: "What do you plan to do about the lack of women in Gaza, buy more goats or buy more sheep?" and "How much it cost [sic] to convert your terror tunnels into sewers, after all they are filled with sewage anyway?"

Ryan Bellerose speaks at the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, as its director, Frederick Krantz listens. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

In announcing the event's cancellation, Hillel posted on Facebook: "Although much of what Ryan Bellerose espouses with respect to indigenous people and Israel resonates with our community, some of his messages are clearly not in line with Hillel or Concordia... It is unfortunate that at this late stage we are forced to cancel the event, but Hillel Concordia cannot ignore some of Mr. Bellerose's previous public comments that only came to our attention in the last few hours."

After the cancellation, a post appeared on Bellerose's Facebook page from "an admin" that he or she "believe[s] this was a case of character defamation."

"If Hillel Montreal/Concordia really valued different 'races and cultures' as they state... they would value Native straightforward talk, which isn't necessarily pillowed with flowers around the edges. Racist move in this admin's opinion."

Bicher denied allegations by some students and by Bellerose that left-wing Jewish students or CIJA, the advocacy partner of Federation CJA, which funds Hillel, pressured Hillel to pull the plug.

Bicher said many of the pro-Israel students who rallied to defeat the BDS motion put forward at the Students' Society of McGill University general assembly March 15 "were the same students who took issue with Mr. Bellerose's behaviour. I am happy to note that their barometer was right on...

"We recognize that some may take issue with this principled stance. We are comforted though by the plethora of messages from pro-Israel activists, on campus and around the world, commending Hillel Montreal, Hillel McGill and Hillel Concordia, for doing what was right."

CIJA did not respond to an emailed question from *The CJN* on the matter.

Bellerose's appearance was scheduled during the annual Israeli Apartheid Week at Concordia and McGill University. Among its events was a discussion at the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal on "Indigenous Resistance to Colonialism and Racism" which included Glen Coulthard, a member of Yellowknife's Dene First Nation, and another featuring local Métis artist Moe Clark.

In his March 18 talk at CIJR, Bellerose avoided the issue until it was raised by the audience. He said he was angry and feels he was "smeared a little bit."

His message to CIJR was that natives and Jews are both indigenous peoples fighting for their ancestral land and both face insurmountable prejudice from "white people."

Jews are the indigenous people of the Land of Israel, he said. "Jews should not apologize for winning," he said, and other indigenous peoples see them as an example of how to successfully return to their land. "It's important to celebrate that victory."

Bellerose is a contributor to a recent CIJR online publication titled *Zionism, An Indigenous Struggle: Aboriginal Americans and the Jewish State*. The article, co-authored with American Comanche activist David Yeagley, contends other movements have tried to appropriate the oppression of Native Americans into their cause. ■

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Cotler looks back on his (small) role in Israel-Egypt peace

PAUL LUNGEN
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Most people are spectators to history, others are active participants. A select few end up having a cameo role.

Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler has been a prominent player on the international scene for decades, defending prisoners of conscience and freedom fighters such as Nelson Mandela and Natan Sharansky, among many.

But in one of the 20th century's most momentous events – the peace talks that led to the treaty between Israel and Egypt – Cotler had a smaller, albeit important, role.

It was, he said, something of a cameo appearance.

The year was 1977, and Cotler was a young law professor who'd studied at Harvard and was teaching at McGill University. After the school year ended, Cotler took a path less travelled, spending his summers in Egypt, Syria and Jordan, lecturing at local universities and studying the domestic political culture, foreign policy and attitudes of the people. He'd end his summers with a trip to Israel.

By 1977, he'd already visited the region a couple of times, the first in 1975 as part of a delegation of professors for peace in the Middle East.

During that trip, he made the acquaintance of a number of personalities who would go on to enjoy prominence on the international stage. One was Tahseen Bashir, a confidant of Egyptian presidents, including Anwar Sadat, who had been a liaison with the visiting professors.

In 1976, Cotler addressed the Institute of Political and Strategic Studies at al-Ahram Institute, where he met Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a professor at Cairo University who would go on to serve as Egypt's foreign minister and later as secretary general of the United Nations.

> *I was asked to bring a message from Sadat to Begin exploring the possibility of a peace process.*

Those personal connections led the law professor, who himself would later achieve some prominence as Canada's minister of justice and attorney general, to an important crossroads of history.

Bashir and Boutros-Ghali knew Cotler, knew he was a supporter of the State of Israel, and knew he ended his summer trips with a visit to the Jewish state. With the election in 1977 of Menachem Begin as prime minister of Israel, they wanted to know what Cotler thought about the new right-wing Israeli leader.

Here's how Cotler remembers it: "There were two questions they were interested in: did I believe Egypt could make peace with the newly elected Likud government of Israel?" Cotler recalled. "My answer was yes, I believed that Likud, if they would agree to a peace process, would be able to carry the country.

"Then came the major question… Did I believe that Sadat could make peace with Menachem Begin? I said, look, I don't know Menachem Begin personally. I said he's known to me as a great parliamentarian, a believer in democracy, somebody I believed would want to make peace with the largest and most important of the Arab countries, with Egypt, and yes I believe he would be open to an Egyptian-Israeli peace process."

It was, apparently, what the Egyptians wanted to hear. Cotler was called back for subsequent meetings, during which he met Sadat, the Egyptian president.

MP Irwin Cotler played a role in the 1979 peace agreement between Anwar Sadat, left, and Menachem Begin, right pictured with Jimmy Carter.

"I was then asked to bring a message from Sadat to Begin exploring the possibility of a peace process. And Sadat was very clear what the conditions for an Israel-Egyptian peace were," Cotler said.

"One was complete withdrawal by Israel from the Sinai Peninsula. Number 2 was recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

Then came the big question: would Cotler be willing to convey to the prime minister a letter from the Egyptian president outlining his terms for negotiations and to bring back his response?

Cotler wasn't sure if Begin would agree to the conditions expressed by the Egyptian president, but he agreed to transmit the letter directly to the Israeli leader.

From Egypt, he continued to his previously scheduled meeting in Syria, but cut it short and cancelled a visit to Jordan. Back in Israel, he was not yet sure how he could gain entrée into Begin's circle. It came about somewhat fortuitously, though by then Cotler had established numerous connections among movers and shakers in the Israeli establishment.

After addressing a lunch event for young parliamentarians, a young woman present, who happened to be the parliamentary secretary for Likud, wanted to know more.

Her name was Ariela Zeevi, and she was someone "I did not know at the time," Cotler said.

Zeevi had heard Cotler speak about the Jews of Syria, including the high regard they had for the newly installed prime minister. Intrigued by his information from Damascus, she told him he must tell his story to Begin directly.

She arranged the meeting, and a day or two later, Cotler found himself with Zeevi, sitting in Begin's office, meeting the prime minister for the second time – he had crossed paths with Begin in 1967 when the Likud leader visited Montreal, but he was sure Begin would not remember him. Cotler updated him about the situation in Syria and then added, perhaps ominously, that there was something he had to discuss in the strictest of confidence, with no one else present in the room.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

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Other camp accepts non-Jewish teen rejected by Solelim

JODIE SHUPAC
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The father of a 13-year-old Richmond Hill boy who was refused entrance to Camp Solelim because the teen isn't Jewish said another Jewish camp has offered to accept his son.

Andrew Weir said he spoke to one of the directors of Camp Wingate, a new private camp on the site of the old Pripstein's Camp Mishmar that serves kids ages seven to 16 and is located just north of Montreal, and was told by her that his son Tyler and any of his friends who wished to join would be welcome at the camp.

Director Laurie Wiseman explained that the Jewish-owned Wingate is primarily attended by Jewish campers, and camp rituals include reciting blessings before meals and singing *Hatikvah*, but there is no policy on admitting children based on religion.

"I've actually never heard of such a thing in my life," she said, adding that she was "shocked" to read about Weir's situation in news reports.

"Tyler won't go to a camp unless his friends go with him... so we're thinking about trying to make a movement [to encourage Solelim kids to join Tyler at another camp]," Weir said.

"I hate that I'm causing all this junk, but I have to think to myself, 'Do I let them get away with this? Do I actually want to bring kids away from their camp?'"

The story of Tyler's refusal by Camp Solelim, despite the fact he attended one of Solelim's feeder camps, Camp Shalom, last summer, was picked up by several news outlets after Weir contacted a Richmond Hill-based *Metroland* reporter earlier this month about Tyler's case.

Weir said it hadn't been his intention to "put the Jewish People in the spotlight like this" and stressed that his beef is with Solelim, not the Jewish community at large. He added that he was initially reluctant to go to the media, but said a Jewish friend of his encouraged him to do so.

"I didn't expect it to go this far," said Weir, who has raised Tyler as a single father since birth. "I just promised I'd do everything I could to help my son go to camp with his friends."

Tyler goes to school with many Jewish kids, he said, and a large proportion of his friends are Jewish.

Camp Solelim is located near Sudbury and serves 14- and 15-year-olds. It's part of the non-profit Canadian Young Judaea (CYJ) movement, which has seven affiliated camps across Canada, including Shalom. The cost of Solelim's six-week program is around $7,000.

Weir said that the phone call he had last fall with Risa Epstein, national executive director of CYJ and director of Solelim, in which she informed him that Tyler would not be allowed to attend camp, made him "sick to my stomach," and that she was "incredibly rude."

"She told me I shouldn't even be calling and was ignorant of the fact that Tyler shouldn't be going to a Jewish camp."

Speaking to *The CJN*, Epstein denied saying those things, but would not offer further comment on her discussions with Weir.

Solelim spokesperson Sindi Kachuck told *The CJN* the camp has not heard from any parents who say they'll pull their kids out to join Tyler at another camp, and that Solelim has only received one email from a camp family that said Tyler should be admitted.

She said a Solelim board member spoke to Weir about the camp's mission as a "place for Jewish children to explore their Jewish identity" and that Weir expressed disappointment, not anger.

Tyler, who spent three summers at Camp Walden, a Jewish-owned for-profit camp with many Jewish campers, prior to attending Shalom last year, said, "At Shalom, I got to make a lot of new friends... I feel really upset and not welcome anymore."

Adam Shulman, director of Shalom, told *The CJN* that Weir had been approved at Camp Shalom as the result of an oversight.

Campers at a Yom Israel event at Camp Solelim last summer CAMP SOLELIM PHOTO

"The official policy at Camp Shalom is we look for campers who have at least one parent who is Jewish, and on the application, we ask if the mother and father [respectively] are Jewish," Shulman said.

He explained that although Weir's application indicated that he's not Jewish and doesn't have a parent who is Jewish, this was only caught by the camp after the boy was officially accepted.

"It was only after his approval that we realized [he isn't Jewish]," he said, noting the camp did not want to rescind Weir's approval at that point. He added that even within the Young Judaea system, each camp has its own individual policy on the issue of admitting campers based on Jewish identity or parentage.

Weir said, however, that he had, at the time of applying to Camp Shalom, explicitly told the camp on the phone that Tyler wasn't Jewish and asked if that would be a problem. He said he was told there was no issue with it.

Epstein told *yorkregion.com* that the camp must adhere to its mission to develop future leaders of the Jewish community by nurturing Jewish identity and values and fostering a sense of pride in Israel.

"This mission statement is foremost in our summer training and educational programming," Epstein said. "For this mission to be accomplished, it is essential that our campers be Jewish."

On March 17, Epstein sent an email to parents from Camp Solelim's board of directors saying the article that appeared on *yorkregion.com* news was "one-sided and many statements in the article attributed to camp director Risa Epstein were untrue."

It added: "We differ from other camps as our primary focus is... to offer a unique, positive, immersive Jewish experience for 14-15 year olds... This value of developing one's own culture is also recognized in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Faith-based schools, camps and other organizations are protected under the Human Rights Code. These rights and freedoms are fundamental to the success of our democratic Canadian society."

Kachuk said that since the email was sent out, the response from Solelim families has mostly supported the camp's decision.

Weir said he's not sure if he would at this point be willing to send Tyler to Solelim, assuming the camp reversed its decision, though Tyler says he still wants to go.

Weir, who said he and Tyler aren't religious, noted, "I even asked Tyler at one point if he wanted to convert. But he said, 'I'm like you, Dad. I don't want to practice it, but I enjoy learning about this stuff.' He's not willing to commit to anything at this point, but he loves learning about Judaism and thinks the history behind Judaism is amazing."

Simon Wolle, acting director of Camp Northland-B'nai Brith, said Northland's application doesn't ask if campers are Jewish and non-Jews have attended over the years.

"If we become aware that a potential camper applying to camp is not Jewish, we would likely contact the parents to make them aware that the majority of campers and staff are Jewish and part of the camp's mission statement is Jewish identity-building... to ensure that the parents and potential camper are... making an informed decision." ■

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Should Jewish camps accept non-Jewish kids?

Opening up the summer experience in the spirit of multiculturalism can yield surprisingly positive results

Mira Sucharov

Before Camp Solelim, the Young Judea camp that has made headlines for turning away a prospective camper because he's not Jewish, makes its final decision, I suggest they talk to Aaron Ingram.

A Winnipeg-based real estate and corporate commercial lawyer, Aaron is by all accounts a leader in the Jewish community. He sits on the board of directors of Camp Massad of Manitoba as well as the Shalom Residences; he is a member of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's community relations committee; he is a Jewish Federation donor; and, as he describes it, is "a longtime supporter of the Jewish community and the State of Israel."

Did I mention that Aaron is not Jewish?

Let's back up to when Aaron was a chubby-cheeked, blonde five year old in 1989. That summer, he accompanied his mom who had taken a job as the head cook at Camp Massad in Winnipeg Beach, the Hebrew immersion camp that I also attended. Fast forward 18 years, and Aaron had logged 10 years as a camper and eight summers as a counsellor, including two as assistant director. (His mom, Marilyn, is still head cook.)

A very agreeable kid with a big personality, as a youngster, Aaron quickly landed leads in the camp plays. With no formal Hebrew background, his lines were transliterated for him. Soon enough, he acquired the services of a Hebrew tutor during the school year. By the time Grade 5 rolled around, he was enrolled in one of Winnipeg's half-day-Hebrew-immersion schools. In grades 7 and 8, he attended Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate, the Jewish high school, where he earned a spot in the highest Hebrew level. He recalls being able to finally read the camp play scripts in Hebrew letters as a "big moment" for him.

"As a child growing up in the disadvantaged North End of Winnipeg," Aaron told me in an e-mail interview, "my experiences in the Winnipeg Jewish community, being immersed in the wonderful environment that is Camp Massad, a world of creativity and intelligence, and the lifelong friendships that I have developed… have heavily influenced me."

I asked Aaron whether he feels Jewish. Not religiously, he tells me. He is an atheist. (That there are Jewish atheists is admittedly a bit of complexity we didn't get into.) But he considers himself culturally Jewish, and certainly a part of the Jewish community.

"I have cried tears of despair in the death camps in Poland," he tells me, "and have cried tears of joy upon my arrival in Israel."

And were he to meet and marry a Jewish woman who wanted him to convert, he says he would do so "without hesitation."

Aaron recalls his early experiences with daily and Shabbat prayers at Massad. "When I was a young camper, participating in the daily prayers and Shabbat tfillah, it felt like being handed the keys to a secret world that was welcoming me. I loved singing the prayers. I still know most, if not all, by heart."

For his part, Aaron thinks Solelim's decision to bar access to Tyler Weir is seriously misguided. As a board member at Camp Massad, he personally extends Tyler an invitation to join the Camp Massad community and offers to personally fundraise to offset the cost of airfare from Toronto to Winnipeg.

It's clear that there's a value clash between the particularist and insular dimensions of Jewish programming, and especially Jewish camp – fuelled, no doubt, by the fear of intermarriage. On one hand is the need to inculcate culturally rich and rigorous experiences in our youth. On the other is the desire to fit in with Canadian multicultural values of openness and pluralism. Even there, though, multiculturalism relies on robust transmission of cultural identity, something that can most easily be achieved in a culturally homogeneous context, some would argue.

Yet people like Aaron – and I join him in this sentiment – would claim that opening the windows a crack to those who might have their own reasons for wanting to partake of our rich communal traditions may yield unexpected benefits not only for them, but also for the communities of which they may seek to be a part. ■

Mira Sucharov is a an associate professor of political science at Carleton University.

Camp equips Jewish youth with the essential leadership skills that will benefit the larger Jewish community

Risa Epstein

A Jewish camp designed specifically for Jewish campers: who would have thought that, in 2015, the very idea of such a camp would spark any discussion?

Certainly not the founders of Camp Solelim, who established it 50 years ago to provide Jewish teenagers aged 14 and 15 with a summer experience that would instil pride in their Jewish heritage and in Israel – the Jewish State that, back then, was only a teenager itself.

In our Canadian multicultural society, we have always had, among other things, Catholic school boards, profession-based associations, faith-based clubs, girls-only organizations such as the Girl Guides, and many boys-only schools.

At Camp Solelim, it has always been about equipping our Jewish youth from across Canada with leadership skills that will benefit the larger Jewish community from coast to coast.

Over the years, thousands of campers have "roughed it" in Solelim's tents on Clearwater Lake, outside of Sudbury, Ont. Recently, many former campers have written to tell me how much being a camper at Solelim meant to them and what a huge impact it had on their lives – and, more specifically, on their lives as Jews.

As Solelim's camp director for 13 years, I have personally witnessed the positive effects that this camp has on these Jewish kids. By the end of each summer, they are charged up – excited – about being Jews and Zionists. There is a certain Jewish spirit – "ruach" – that follows Solelim campers when they return home and remains with them for the rest of their lives. It's that spirit that has prompted many former campers to send their own children to the camp – because they wanted their own kids to have the Solelim experience and feel the camp's inimitable "ruach" as well.

Our legacy affirms that the Solelim experience not only impacts our campers as they mature into adults – many of whom take their place as Canadian Jewish leaders – but that they pass that legacy down into the next generation of Jewish children. This is a heritage we continue to nurture.

That is why we are so disappointed to see Camp Solelim in the spotlight, not because of our achievements, but because of a decision we made based on our guiding principles that have served us well for 50 years and inform everything we do. At our core are programs that provide Jewish teens with the opportunity to learn about, question, examine and explore their Judaism, with a view to developing their own Jewish identity.

Guided by the Jewish tenet of tikkun olam, we appreciate and embrace outreach to other faith communities and contribute to the Canadian society at large. We have programs that support and raise awareness for numerous causes in the wider community, such as Pencils for Kids in Africa, the Sudbury Food Bank, and the Christmas toy drive. We pride ourselves on our ability to build and sustain relationships with other faiths and people of non-Jewish backgrounds.

Based on our 50-year mandate, the direction we took with this specific application was appropriate. We discussed our position with the family and we understand the child's disappointment. We are sympathetic to his situation, but there are many options for him in the Jewish family of camps. Some have reached out to the family directly.

In such a diverse Jewish community, there is room for different kinds of Jewish camps, and the mandates and policies of each should be respected. These diverse models must continue to coexist, as our laws provide.

I am proud of what Camp Solelim has achieved and look forward to the positive impact it will continue to have on Jewish children in the years ahead. ■

Risa Epstein is director of Camp Solelim.

Camp Solelim instils a strong Jewish spirit in campers, its director says. CAMP SOLELIM PHOTOS

INTERNATIONAL

Bibi's last minute warning that the left might win spiked the Likud turnout

HAVIV RHETTIG GUR
JERUSALEM

A lot of groups are licking their wounds after Likud's trouncing of the Labor-led Zionist Union on March 17.

The Israeli left, to be sure, did better than it has done in almost a generation. It rallied around the Labor party, energized the base, sent thousands of volunteers to "get out the vote."

And it lost. Spectacularly.

In the process, politicians, pundits, pollsters and analysts learned some important lessons – not just in humility, but also in the changing face of the Israeli electorate.

The right learned that Likud is its great indispensable party, the big tent to which it rallies in times of danger. That ethos of underlying unity among the usually bickering factions of the right headed off the left's most potent challenge in almost two decades. It won't be forgotten anytime soon.

We all learned that the right knows how to get out the vote. Or, at least, that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does. His method was simple: talk incessantly about the turnout of the enemy – the left, the Arabs, the shadowy foreign funding behind it all. It wasn't exactly a noble or honest final few days in Likud's campaign, but it worked.

Overall turnout spiked in this election, and the smart money held that this rise would favour the left. It was leftists, after all, who have been missing from previous elections. But in the wake of Likud's stunning surge in the final count, a surge predicted by no poll and no pollster, the simple fact is inescapable: right-wingers came out to vote, right-wingers who haven't bothered to vote in recent elections, right-wingers who did not like or support Netanyahu – all felt compelled to save Israel from the prospect of a left-wing victory. In the last two hours of voting, a two-point turnout jump over 2013 swelled to a five-point spike. That rush, it's now fair to say, was of right-wing voters delivering the first "election surprise" of the right.

Why did turnout rise so dramatically? Simple: the majority of the Israeli electorate continues to distrust the left's judgment. It is a trust deficit rooted in a more general distrust of Palestinian intentions, of the Obama White House and other touchstones of left-wing policy. In hindsight, it may be one of the bitter ironies of this campaign that Labor's own slogan, "It's us or him," may have done as much to guarantee Netanyahu victory as anything Netanyahu may have done.

And that brings us to what the left can learn from this race. The despair emanating from left-wing voters and pundits is misplaced. The left did better in this election than it has done in a long time. But the left has spent almost two decades essentially writing off the electorate as too trapped in fear or hate to be worth seriously campaigning for. That, at least, has been the explanation of left-wing media outlets such as *Ha'aretz* over the years for Netanyahu's continued triumphs at the ballot box. The path to reclaiming an electorate one has ridiculed and despised for so long is a hard one. But, alas, the left will not actually lead Israel without the support of a majority of Israelis. Isaac Herzog is the first leader of the left in quite a few years who seems to understand that.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

Botched TV exit polls earn vote of no confidence

RENEE GHERT-ZAND
JERUSALEM

Having heard the results of the exit polls on election day March 17, Israelis went to bed thinking that the Likud and Zionist Union were neck and neck. Two TV exit polls (on Channels 1 and 10) showed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud and Isaac Herzog's Zionist Union, the country's two largest parties, tied at 27 Knesset seats each. The third (on Channel 2) showed the Likud leading the Zionist Union by one seat, 28-27.

Either way it was close, and though Netanyahu was clearly better placed to form a government, the leaders of both parties were said to already be reaching out to smaller parties in bids to form ruling coalitions.

It was a whole other story, however, when citizens awoke the next day to learn that with 99 per cent of the ballots counted, the Likud had actually won 30 seats and the Zionist Union only 24. Herzog, who had promised hope and change, conceded defeat and Netanyahu was on his way to forming a right-wing government and another premiership.

Zionist Union campaign strategists were not the only ones being asked what had gone wrong. Questions were being raised as to how the exit polls – announced with great fanfare and little hint of potential fallibility – could have been so far off in predicting the actual six-seat spread between Likud and Zionist Union.

The pollsters offered answers, but it seemed they themselves weren't completely sure what had happened.

Prof. Camil Fuchs, a Tel Aviv University statistics expert who conducted the Channel 10 exit poll, told Army Radio that the discrepancy could be attributed to the fact that a larger number of voters refused to participate in his exit poll than in past elections.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

Elections for the 20th Knesset
17 March 2015

Party	Chairman	%	Seats	+/-
Likud	Benjamin Netanyahu	23.40%	30	+12
Zionist Union	Isaac Herzog, Tzipi Livni	18.67%	24	+3
Joint List	Ayman Odeh	10.54%	13	+2
Yesh Atid	Yair Lapid	8.81%	11	-8
Kulanu	Moshe Kahlon	7.49%	10	+10
The Jewish Home	Naftali Bennett	6.74%	8	-4
Shas	Aryeh Deri	5.73%	7	-4
Yisrael Beiteinu	Avigdor Lieberman	5.11%	6	-7
United Torah Judaism	Yaakov Litzman	5.03%	6	-1
Meretz	Zehava Gal-On	3.93%	5	-1
(Total number of seats)			**120**	

Note - The above list contains only the parties which passed the threshold

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OPINION

We may argue, but we all want to see Israel thrive

Joseph Schwartz

> *Anyone can come to Israel for a visit, pray at the Kotel, enjoy a shwarma but only Israeli citizens can cast their ballots and help determine their country's fate*

If you have friends or family in Israel, then it's pretty likely your Facebook feed was filled last week with pictures (or selfies) of people casting their votes in the 20th Israeli election.

There's a reason people, myself included, felt the need to post a picture – something I've never seen done in a Canadian election – and it's because voting in Israel is an amazing experience.

Anyone can come to Israel for a visit, pray at the Kotel, enjoy a shwarma, or ride a camel, but only Israeli citizens can cast their ballots and help determine their country's fate. It's not only a privilege, it's a responsibility, and one I try not to take lightly.

Having made aliyah in October 2012, this was actually my second time voting in Israeli national elections. Still, this year's election felt just as significant and important as the last time I voted. (I have even started my own tradition of eating a new fruit before voting in order to make a *Shehechiyanu* prayer on the special day. This year I opted for a guava; last time it was papaya.)

But despite the jubilation of voting, election season in Israel can be extremely divisive, especially in this campaign where both sides had nearly identical rhetoric. Likud's campaign posters proclaimed "It's us or them," while the Zionist Union opted for "It's us or him."

Basically, it was someone against someone else.

Also, in Israel, unlike Canada, it is quite accepted and common for people to ask each other who they voted for. This can cause further divisions – consider that in the final election results, 12 parties received at least one per cent of the vote, meaning the odds that two people voted for the same party were not great.

Yet, somehow, you could still feel a sense of unity. Since Election Day is one of the few national holidays that isn't Shabbat or a religious holiday, it's considered to be like a Sunday, a day off that can be enjoyed outdoors, on the beach, or by having a BBQ (which we of course called a Bibi-Q).

In that regard, Election Day in Israel is similar to Yom Ha'atzmaut, and I spent part of the day at the beach with a small group of friends. Among us, there were voters for five different parties, and of course we knew whom each person voted for. Last election, I played baseball with a group of Americans who also represented voters of at least four parties.

The day after Election Day, I happened to be in a small falafel shop in Jerusalem. In front of me, waiting in line like the rest of us, was Zionist Union MK Hilik Bar. He seemed engrossed in conversation on his phone, and he took his falafel to go (so I didn't have time for a selfie). Still, seeing him there reminded me how small Israel really is, and how much the lives of all Israelis are interconnected. We may have different views, but at the end of the day we all want what's best for our country.

I will end with a story. A couple of weeks ago, my roommates and I needed some painting done in our apartment. Our landlord hired a painter who showed up about an hour early with no tools. After having to leave to get tools and a ladder, he asked me if he could borrow a pair of pants because he didn't want to get his pair dirty.

That's one of my favourite things about this country. We all argue for weeks about pretty much everything, but then we borrow each other's pants. Because, in all honesty, we have no other country, and at the end of the day we all want to see it thrive and succeed. ■

Joseph Schwartz, a Toronto native, made aliyah in 2012, mostly for the entertainment. He is currently working in marketing and finishing a master's degree in political communications.

Israeli Arabs call on Netanyahu to apologize for turnout comments

ELHANAN MILLER
JERUSALEM

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's warning on election day of high Arab turnout at voting stations continued to make waves, as civil society groups and private citizens accused the Likud leader of inciting against a fifth of Israel's population.

"Next time a [political] murder takes place, it will be as though the prime minister sanctioned it by saying it's OK to hate Arabs," said Arab-Israeli TV presenter Lucy Aharish, who was chosen to light a torch in the coming Independence Day ceremonies, on Channel 2's *Meet the Press*. "The prime minister simply doesn't get it."

Arab voter turnout reached 64 per cent last week, significantly higher than the 57 per cent rate of the 2013 elections, though still much lower than Israel's national average of 71.8 per cent, which was a 15-year record.

MK Ahmad Tibi, number 4 on the Joint (Arab) List, turned to the camera during a Channel 2 interview on March 19, asking Netanyahu to publicly apologize for his comments.

"You have hurt all Israeli citizens, not just the Arabs," Tibi said.

Members of the Joint List met with President Reuven Rivlin on Sunday and told him that they had turned to Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein and requested that he recommend that Netanyahu stand trial for his statements.

Although Netanyahu subsequently explained that his comments were not intended to single out Israel's Arab population but rather to warn against foreign meddling in the election process, the Abraham Fund Initiatives, an Israeli non-profit dealing with Jewish-Arab co-existence, asked Rivlin to take Netanyahu's words into account when tasking him with forming the next government.

The prime minister's comments, the organization told Rivlin on Sunday, "have deeply shocked Arab society in Israel, causing huge damage to the Arab minority's relations with the state."

"We regard with seriousness the encouragement of fear and hatred toward Arab citizens of Israel as part of the election campaign, ignoring the long-term damage that these utterances cause to the common life of Jews and Arab citizens of Israel," the statement read.

"We call on you (Rivlin) to raise this matter during your consultations, and ask the prime minister to rectify the damage caused to Arab-government relations through a corrective public statement."

Indeed, during his meeting with party representatives on Sunday, the president denounced "hateful" remarks during the election campaign, calling on Israeli politicians to "mend and heal Israeli society."

Speaking with Joint List Leader Aymen Odeh, Rivlin spoke out against the "harsh and hurtful" remarks by both Jewish and Arab candidates during the election season. In the run-up to the elections, a Joint List spokesperson compared Zionists to the Islamic State. "There is no place for such remarks, not during the elections and certainly not after them," he said. "I call on everyone, Jews and Arabs alike, to refrain from mutual incitement and provocation."

U.S. President Barack Obama was among several world leaders who criticized Netanyahu for his remarks, expressing concern about the impact of that sort of rhetoric on Israeli democracy.

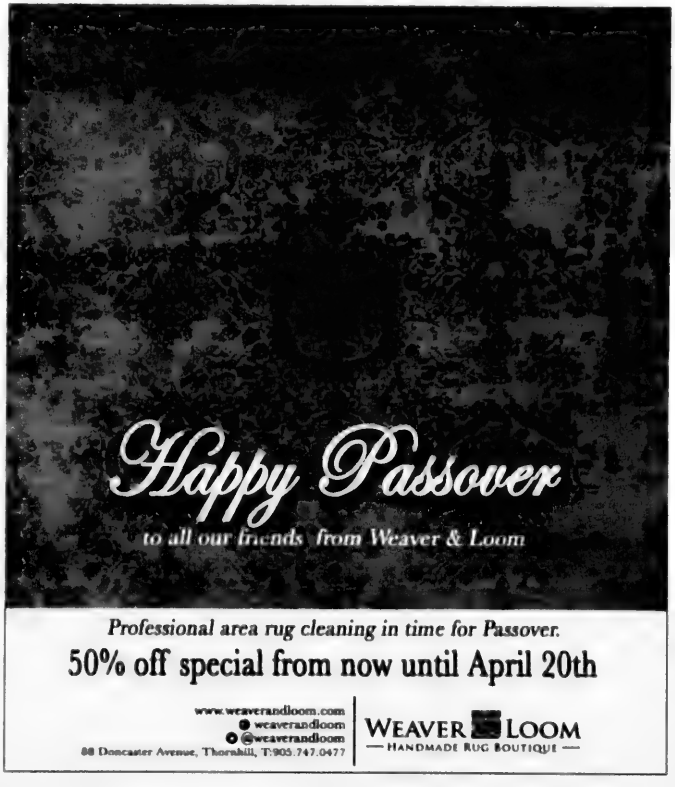
"We indicated that that kind of rhetoric was contrary to what is the best of Israel's traditions. That although Israel was founded based on the historic Jewish homeland and the need to have a Jewish homeland, Israeli democracy has been premised on everybody in the country being treated equally and fairly," Obama told the *Huffington Post*.

"And I think that that is what's best about Israeli democracy. If that is lost, then I think that not only does it give ammunition to folks who don't believe in a Jewish state, but it also I think starts to erode the name of democracy in the country," he added.

Meretz MK Issawi Freij also called on Rivlin to compel Netanyahu to apologize for his remarks.

"Netanyahu was not averse from using racism, with words whose aim was to stir up the basic fear of the voters in order to snatch a victory at the polling station, but this victory achieved on the backs of Israel's Arab citizens," Freij said. He called on Rivlin to demand that Netanyahu apologize to Israeli Arabs publicly, "and to make that a condition to receiving the mandate for putting together the government." ■

Times of Israel
Timesofisrael.com



Will the left use this loss as a catalyst for future win?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

One of the more long-term questions that arise from this race is whether the left will be able to use this loss as a catalyst for future victory. If, as has been its wont, the left falls back on its traditional rhetoric depicting Netanyahu's Israel as wracked by famine, poverty and war, and facing imminent collapse, then it will be setting itself up for continued failure. Such talk is hard to take seriously when battling an election; it would be truly dangerous to take it seriously after losing one.

The left now needs to build on its success, find new constituencies, develop a "ground game" not just in the two months before an election but in the three years that separate them. Despair will not get it from where it is now to where it needs to be to win.

Finally, the world's professional Israel watchers, journalists, pundits, think-tank analysts, should (but probably won't) learn an important lesson from this race about Israelis. A recurring theme on the Twitter accounts of foreign correspondents – at least of the overwhelming majority whose opinion of Netanyahu is not favourable – is that Netanyahu won the election through "fear-mongering."

It is true that Netanyahu explicitly "fear-mongered," and that this won him his steep lead last week. But Netanyahu's international critics fundamentally misunderstand his audience, his electorate, and so deeply misconstrue what exactly he was "fear-mongering" about.

Netanyahu's critics insist that he fear-mongered about Iran and the Palestinians. He did not – because he doesn't have to. The Israeli electorate has long ago written off Palestinian politicians as untrustworthy and unable to deliver peace. And it is Iran, not Netanyahu, that has convinced nearly all Israelis from all parts of the political spectrum that Iran is a very real danger to Israel.

All Netanyahu had to do was to warn, at times in blatantly racist terms, that the left and Arab voters were "turning out in droves." His fear-mongering was not on the substance of the disagreement with the left – the electorate already mistrusts the left's judgment on these issues – but simply to warn that the left might win. That alone spiked the Likud vote, even in the cold late-evening hours of election day.

The election turned from a near-rout of the right predicted in poll after poll by the entire panoply of Israeli pollsters into one of the right's most dramatic victories in decades. The lessons abound: shifting turnout meant that geography didn't quite play its expected role, settlers switched en masse to Likud even as they disappeared as a pressure group in Likud's primaries, and the V15 "anyone but Bibi" campaign probably ended up mobilizing more rightists than leftists on election day.

Isaac Herzog with his wife Michal outside the polling station last week. Despite the result, the left did better than it has in a long time. RONI SCHUTZER/ ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

But the main lesson is also the most obvious one. The left did better this election than it has in a long time. Yet it only really took its first step on the long road to rehabilitation and victory. ■

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Right-wing voters tend to participate less in exit polls

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Mina Tzemach, who conducted Channel 2's exit poll together with her partner Mano Geva, insisted her statistical model was good. She also pointed to lower than usual participation in her exit poll as the possible problem.

"Usually we have seven or eight per cent of voters who don't agree to participate, but this time is was more like 15 per cent," she told Army Radio.

Tzemach said this lack of participation was greatest at polling places that were known to have many pro-Likud voters, and in particular immigrants from the former Soviet Union countries who are reluctant to take part in exit polls. This under-representation of Likud voters must have skewed the results, she said.

Channel 1 pollster Stella Karayov dismissed a suggestion that exit poll participants could have been untruthful about whom they had actually voted for. According to her, this kind of behaviour would have affected results for not only the large parties, but also the smaller ones – whose exit poll numbers turned out to be very close to actual vote counts.

Channels 1 and 2 used similar methods in their exit polls. Both asked voters who had just finished dropping their actual ballots into official ballot boxes to vote again in similar fashion for the exit poll.

Channel 2 set up 60 ballot boxes at polling stations around the country to gather information from 25,000 voters this way. The polling stations were chosen based on socio-economic criteria, as well as on information gleaned from the two previous elections as to the reliability of exit polling at these particular locations. Channel 1 used the same number of ballot boxes, but at polling places that served a total of 30,000 voters.

Instead of using ballot boxes, Channel 10 asked people to fill out a survey after voting. Fuchs told *Ha'aretz* that he suspected that the lower participation rate that this approach generates (usually around 80 per cent) is due to the lack of anonymity. At the same time, however, he said the methodology was preferably in terms of speed and logistical simplicity.

Prof. Tamar Hermann, academic director of the Israel Democracy Institute's Guttman Center for Surveys, does not give much credence to exit polls, no matter how they are conducted, she told the *Times of Israel*. She prefers to look at the information that long-term surveys provide.

In a report she wrote for the Peace Index survey just a week before election day, Hermann predicted that the right bloc would win based on a lack of change in public attitudes in the months since the elections were called late in 2014.

Echoing comments by the television pollsters, Hermann said that certain subsections are indeed harder to survey. She confirmed that right-wing voters do tend to participate less in exit polls, as they consider them to be associated with what they perceive as a left-leaning media.

In other types of polls and surveys, she said other groups, such as young people, are harder to reach because methodologies such as calling people at home on telephone landlines are becoming less useful and reliable in the digital age.

The real problem with exit polls may not lie with how voters act as they are surveyed as they exit the polling stations, but instead with how they behave at home after they have voted.

"It's a problem of impatience and greed," Hermann said of the inaccuracy of exit polls.

There's the matter of the pollster's commercial interests, but also of the voters' desire to know the election results the minute the polling places close at 10 p.m.

"We act as though it would really hurt to wait 10 hours to get the results," Hermann said.

One Twitter user agreed, tweeting, "If the elections are over at 10 p.m. and we have final results at 6 a.m., then what do we need an exit poll for?"

Less patient Israelis (which would probably be the majority, if we were to do a poll) would rather keep the pressure on the polling professionals.

"If I had done a survey as I walked around on [Tel Aviv's] Gordon Beach, I'd still have come out with a more reliable poll," tweeted one. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

Will the real Netanyahu please stand up

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu celebrates his victory last week. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

URIEL HEILMAN
JTA, JERUSALEM

There are two Benjamin Netanyahus.

To his detractors, Netanyahu is arrogant, a dissembler and a racist. To his defenders, he is intrepid, politically astute and singularly devoted to Israel's security.

Netanyahu's critics blame him for alienating Israel's closest ally and hurting bipartisan support for Israel. They point to Netanyahu's statement last week that he opposes Palestinian statehood as proof that he, not the Palestinians, is responsible for the failure to reach a two-state peace deal. And when Netanyahu issued his plea on election day that Israeli patriots had better get out to counter the Arab-Israeli vote, they saw it as the ugly epitome of a campaign marked by fear-mongering and racism.

For these detractors Netanyahu is a symbol of everything that's wrong about Israel, and his strong win is a distressing sign of the direction Israel is taking.

"Benjamin Netanyahu's victory is a deep disappointment to all who hoped that Israel might choose a new direction for the country in yesterday's election," J Street's executive director, Jeremy Ben-Ami, wrote in an email last week to supporters of the self-described pro-Israel, pro-peace lobbying group.

"The manner in which the prime minister secured his victory – shredding the broad bi-partisanship that underpins American political support for Israel and preying on fear and racism at home – also demonstrated that he willingly put his own political interests before his concern for Israel's relationship with the United States and his commitment to Israel's democratic character."

To his defenders, Netanyahu is a very different figure, one who makes no apologies for putting Israel's security ahead of diplomatic expediency, is bold enough to deliver hard truths even when they are unpopular and is clever enough to outmaneuver political rivals – even the president of the United States. Yes, he has his flaws but the vicious attacks against him are little more than political mudslinging.

In this view, Netanyahu's decision to go ahead with his controversial March 3 speech to Congress had a positive effect. It galvanized opposition to a bad nuclear deal with Iran. Netanyahu may have upset some of Israel's friends, but the controversy served the greater purpose of helping focus attention on the deal's shortcomings.

When Netanyahu said that he wouldn't allow a Palestinian state on his watch, supporters saw it as an honest and sensible assessment of the lessons Israel has drawn from the upheaval that radical Islam has brought to the Arab world.

"I think anyone who is going to establish a Palestinian state and to evacuate territory is giving radical Islam a staging ground against the State of Israel," Netanyahu told the Israeli website NRG. "This is the reality that has been created here in recent years. Anyone who ignores it has his head in the sand."

He clarified his position (or backtracked, depending on your view) in an MSNBC interview on March 19 saying he supports "a sustainable, peaceful, two-state solution – but for that, circumstances have to change."

This view holds currency across the Israeli political spectrum, though left wingers might articulate it differently – perhaps stressing the desire for an eventual two-state solution and trying harder to figure out how to get there. After what happened with Gaza and Lebanon polls show few Israelis believe it's possible right now to cede West Bank territory without it becoming a staging ground for attacks.

Then there's the matter of Netanyahu's 11th-hour appeal to supporters to counter the Arab vote. Some defenders of the prime minister have downplayed it as campaign politics, noting that Netanyahu tried to soften his tone right after his election win, saying he would bring security and social welfare to "all citizens of Israel, Jews and non-Jews alike."

There's a lot of room between the polar opposite views of Netanyahu, and many Israelis occupy that space. That's key to understanding the election results.

Netanyahu wasn't the overwhelming favourite in Israel. His party captured only one-quarter of all votes. But Netanyahu was the beneficiary of several factors. Plenty of Israelis who don't like him or his leadership style still agree with the fundamentals of his positions on Palestinian statehood, Iran and the threat of radical Islam.

Netanyahu's chief rival, Isaac Herzog of Labor running under the Zionist Union banner, lacked the security credentials that helped elect the only other two Labor party prime ministers since 1977 – Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak, both former Israeli Defence Forces chiefs of staff (Shimon Peres of Labor also served as prime minister but never scored an outright election win).

While kitchen table issues are increasingly important for Israeli voters – the two parties that focused most intensely on these, Yesh Atid and Kulanu, won a total of 21 Knesset seats – the results overall suggest that ideology and security concerns still remain paramount for most Israelis at the ballot box.

And with the ascendance of radical Islamists in the Arab world, rising anti-Semitism in Europe, deep unease about the emerging nuclear deal with Iran and a growing sense of diplomatic isolation in Israel, the right-wing parties – and Likud in particular — were able to capitalize on Israeli fears.

Whether Netanyahu's premiership will be seen as having improved Israel's security or imperiled it may ultimately depend on how history unfolds — and your view of Netanyahu.

What's clear is that with Israel facing threats on multiple fronts, including myriad domestic challenges and a crisis in relations with the U.S. president, Netanyahu has his work cut out for him. ■

Father of seven 'angels' sobs during memorial in Borough Park

JTA
NEW YORK

The Brooklyn father who lost seven of his eight children in a home fire called his kids "a sacrifice" to the community."

Gabriel Sassoon sobbed as he tried to recite the names of his late children — saying they were "angels" — during a eulogy Sunday at a Jewish funeral home in the heavily Orthodox Borough Park section of Brooklyn, the *New York Post* reported.

"They all had faces of angels. Hashem knows how much I love them," Sassoon said, according to the *Post*.

He was out of town at a religious conference when the fire consumed his home shortly after midnight Saturday March 21. Officials have blamed an unattended hot plate warming Shabbat meals as the cause.

His wife, Gayle, and one of his daughters, Tziporah, 15, both escaped the blaze by leaping from the house but are fighting for their lives in the hospital. They are unaware of the seven deaths.

About 1,000 people lined the street outside the Shomrei Hadas funeral home for the service, according to the *Post*. Inside, an overflowing crowd of mourners wailed for the lost children, who ranged in age from five to 16.

The bodies were to be flown to Israel for burial last Monday.

"They were a burnt offering," Sassoon said of his children. "I lost everything in the fire. Seven pure sheep. Those are my seven children."

Gayle Sassoon reportedly had planned to take the children out of town for the weekend - to her parents' home in southern New Jersey — but stayed home because of a snowstorm that hit the New York area.

Authorities identified the victims as girls Eliane, 16; Rivkah, 11; and Sara, 6; and boys David, 12; Yeshua, 10; Moshe, 8; and Yaakob, 5. They were all found in the upstairs bedrooms of the two-story brick-and-wood single-family home in the Midwood section of Brooklyn.

"The horrific tragedy that struck the Sassoon family has left all of us deeply shocked and saddened," State Assemblyman Dov Hikind, who represents the district that the family lives in, said in a statement.

Hikind urged his constituents to check that their smoke detectors are working and the safety of their hot plates.

Gayle Sassoon grew up in Brooklyn, and moved to Israel, where she met her husband. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 26, 2015

Syrian dentist detained in Turkey claims to work for CSIS

But Ottawa denies any link to apparent facilitator for IS sympathizers

NICK ASHDOWN
ISTANBUL

Mohammad Al Rashed, a 28-year-old Syrian dentist was seized by Turkish authorities on Feb. 28 in a southeastern province near the Syrian border. He's accused of helping three British teenage girls cross from Istanbul to Gaziantep by bus to join the Islamic State (IS).

According to a police report quoted by Turkish media, Rashed claims to be working for Canadian intelligence, who allegedly flew him to Jordan to share information with the Canadian Embassy in Amman.

Canadian authorities said the man is not Canadian and has never been employed by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). However, they did not comment on whether or not Rashed has worked with CSIS in the past.

"They may be trying to figure out who this guy actually is, who the Turks believe he is, what his story is," says Prof. Wesley Wark of the University of Ottawa. But Wark, an expert in intelligence and terrorism, has his own theory as to Rashed's relationship with CSIS.

"From the information I have, I would assume that Rashed was a freelancer who was helping not just these three girls but others cross the border into Syria, presumably for money," Wark says.

"For various reasons [Rashed] may have approached Canadian intelligence to see if he could [...] barter what he knew about people smuggling and travel routes to the Canadian authorities."

According to the police report, there is no evidence that Canadian intelligence officials sent Rashed money at any point, though he did receive funds from someone in England. He claimed to have worked for CSIS because he wanted Canadian citizenship.

Wark says that CSIS, which has had agents working overseas in anti-terrorism operations at least since the 9/11 attacks, may very well be working in the region and is definitely interested in information about IS's foreign fighter routes. One of the agency's primary jobs is to develop local sources, often as informants, to supplement one Canadian agent or a very small team in the region.

"You wouldn't have Canadian intelligence operatives themselves trying to penetrate [IS] or engaging in risky cross-border operations into Syria," he says.

But when CSIS uses assets like this, the Canadians typically inform local authorities about it.

"They would be keeping the Turks apprised of the nature of their operations and the identity of their officials in Turkey," he says.

Prof. Wesley Wark

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu publicly accused Rashed of working for a country with the anti-IS coalition, in effect accusing that country of assisting the militant group, while government sources leaked to local media that the country in question is Canada. Footage of Rashed was also released and government-controlled media accused Canada of supporting IS.

Wark is doubtful as to whether CSIS was actually working with Rashed.

"One of the oddities of this case which suggests this guy isn't really in CSIS's control, but is a freelancer, is the way in which the Turkish government responded," he says.

If CSIS didn't inform the Turkish government about Rashed, they may not have been using him as an asset, says Wark. Rashed may very well have approached the Canadians, as many do, but that doesn't mean they worked with him.

Either way, Wark doesn't foresee a degradation in Turkish-Canadian relations, which are generally good.

"Spy spats always blow over in the end, particularly between partners, so I don't suppose it'll have any long-term repercussions."

He says there's a lot of animosity between Turkey and western countries over foreign fighters using the former as a transit route to IS-controlled regions of Syria.

"I think the Turkish government is perhaps understandably angry to find what they believe to be some kind of western intelligence involvement in the very problem they're under such pressure to deal with," he says.

"But it may be that they're exaggerating the circumstances of the case for domestic political consumption, or they don't know really know the full circumstances of the case at this point." ■

The Media Line
Themedialine.org

Pregnant Canadian trapped in Israel being used: parents

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, TEL AVIV

Pregnant Canadian single mom Hana Gan is still in Israel after being turned back at the airport Feb. 19 due to a "no exit" order, and her parents have been given custody of her two young sons.

Now 6-1/2 months pregnant, Gan will soon be trapped in Israel by her pregnancy, her supporters fear. Meanwhile, her parents say she's being exploited for political purposes.

Following a hearing on March 3, Gan's parents were awarded custody of her two boys, ages four and six. She has been told by social services that finding an apartment and co-operating with a psychologist's investigation would help her claim. But her defenders argue that she is her children's mother and shouldn't have to prove herself.

"She cannot support herself. She cannot support kids," her father, who asked not to be identified, told *The CJN* last week. "She never worked in her life, she never had a steady job. If she went back to Canada, she would be on social services. She has addiction problems... she is a sick person. She needs treatment. We want to try to help her."

Hana Gan FACEBOOK PHOTO

At the hearing, he said, she was ordered to go for psychiatric evaluation before she could get her children back. "It was supposed to happen two months ago. She refused to do it. She knows her situation."

She is only able to visit her children once a week for two hours in a supervised "contact centre." But her father says she's free to speak to them any time.

However, he believes her supporters are more interested in promoting their own cause than in Hana's well-being or that of her children.

"She's hooked up with some groups that are manipulating her," he said. "She doesn't even know what they're doing to her. This is an anti-Zionist group. They are using her for their political agenda."

Moti Leybel of the Israeli organization Bereaved Parents with Living Children claims to represent "hundreds and hundreds" of Israeli parents whose children have been removed by social services "without any reason." These cases get little attention, he believes, since they don't involve foreign citizens.

Gan's supporters are promoting her cause mainly through the RedressOnline.org website, run by Nureddin Sabir, a Libyan anti-Israel activist.

In a recent audio recording on YouTube, a social worker expressed concern to Gan about publicizing photos and videos of the children through social media channels. "There is a law that you are not supposed to publicize your children. All this involvement of the people whose company you're in... it is not helpful."

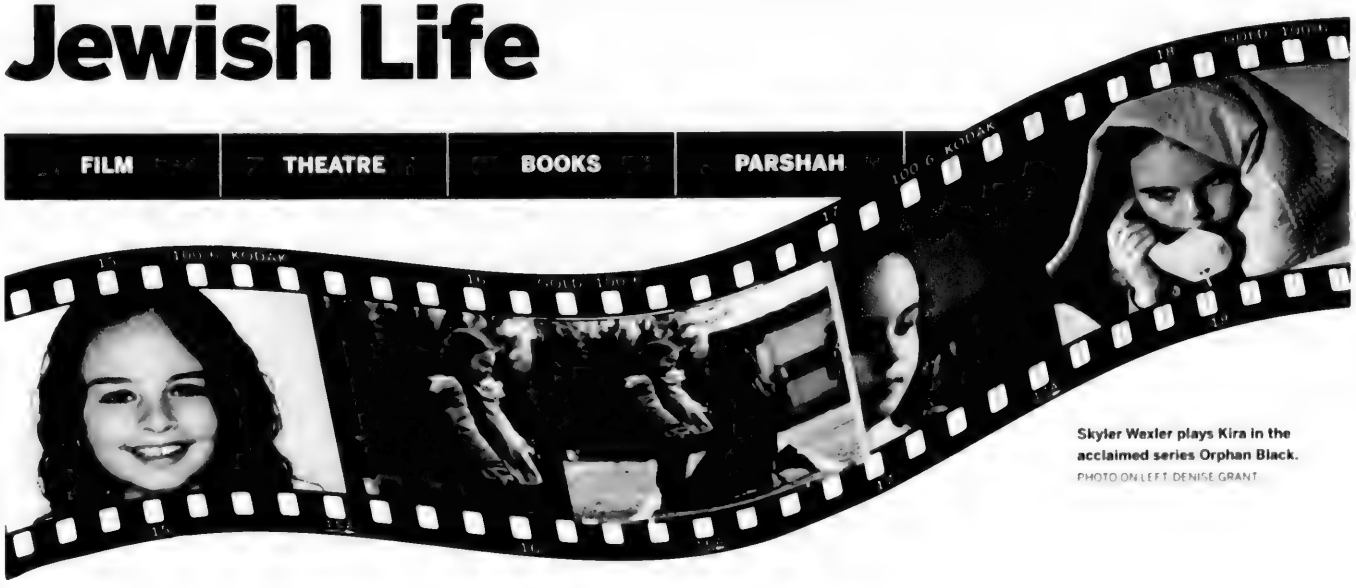
In the same clip, the social worker admits that Gan is new to Israel and her situation unknown. "We don't know you... We know you only for a few months... What we know is what you told us, what your parents told us, what the school told us, what the reports to us from Canada told us," the worker said.

In the face of a possible conflict between Gan's right to leave Israel and her children's rights, the social worker is heard explaining that the state has a responsibility to step in to make sure the children are safe. "The more co-operative you will be, the shorter this will take."

However, Gan insisted that there has never been any evidence found, in Canada or in Israel, of negligent parenting.

When contacted for comment, Gan's lawyer Benny Dekel told *The CJN*, "This is all confidential information." He ignored further requests, as have Gan's other supporters. ■

Jewish Life



Skyler Wexler plays Kira in the acclaimed series Orphan Black.
PHOTO ON LEFT: DENISE GRANT

Nine-year-old actress a hit on Orphan Black

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The thought of monsters would be unsettling to most kids – but not to nine-year-old Skyler Wexler of Toronto, who plays Kira in the acclaimed TV series *Orphan Black*.

"I really like horror stories; I read them a lot. They're not frightening to me," she said.

Skyler is building a repertoire in sci-fi roles, setting her apart from other young actresses. Her first major film was 2012's short *The Captured Bird*, which played at the Toronto International Film Festival. Described as a darkly poetic fable, it begins with Skyler drawing chalk figures of people on the cement of a playground. An unusual crack in the pavement, which is seeping a mysterious black fluid, captures her interest, and she follows this crack to an ominous building. Inside, she encounters several bizarre phenomena, including walls which bleed black, and tentacles which emerge from the ceiling to touch her. She then witnesses the birth of five terrifying supernatural beings who threaten the existence of her world.

"Skyler was the only human actress acting amongst monsters," said her mother, Charlene Wexler.

"I got to see how they [monsters] were made. I followed the goo into a house and saw a big puddle in one of the rooms. I sat down and it turned into a monster," Skyler said with a big laugh.

As a young child, Skyler would watch kids' programs on TV and ask, why isn't that me?

"I did what any parent would do: I signed her up for drama and singing lessons," said Wexler.

A passion for performing on stage and on camera is what makes Skyler happy.

"She loves to sing at family Chanukah and Purim parties. Skyler directs her young cousins whether it is Shabbat prayers or a holiday play they put together.

"Singing, acting, putting on plays, writing her own plays, and creating her own music is what drives Skyler," said Wexler.

Skyler started acting in commercials for Manulife and Sears, performing in school musicals such as *Frozen*, *Hairspray*, and *The Wizard of Oz*, and singing both the Canadian and American national anthems at the ACC in front of thousands.

Skyler first appeared on the small screen in 2011 in the series *Against the Wall*. She soon landed roles in *Warehouse 13*, *Alphas*, *Really Me*, *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, *Rewind*, *We Wanted More*, *Carrie*, and *Orphan Black*.

With a following of loyal fans, Skyler is best known for her acting role as Kira – the daughter of one of the clones played by Tatiana Maslany – on the TV series *Orphan Black*, for the last three seasons.

Skyler worked alongside award-winning actress Julianne Moore, who played her mother in the 2013 remake of *Carrie*, in which Skyler played young Carrie.

> *I really like horror stories; I read them a lot. They're not frightening to me.*

Skyler also has a musical bent, and writes her own songs.

"I hear her often as she sits at the piano humming whatever she has created, trying to figure out the chord that matches what she is humming. Once she has put it all together, she puts the words to it and there is her song," said Wexler.

Skyler works with vocal coach Marla Joy for a minimum of two hours a week, and with her piano teacher Mark Feldman for one hour a week.

In her music video *The House of The Rising Sun*, (available on YouTube) Skyler captured both creativity and imagination through song and character equally, pulling the viewer in and demonstrating her depth and range as an artist.

"My concept for this video came from wanting Skyler's fans and audience to be able to see the intensity and the passion with which she performs," Joy says.

Singing for causes such as Sick Kids Hospital, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Autism Speaks, Autism Sings and Imagine a Cure for Leukemia, is important to Skyler.

"Skyler brings smiles to kids when she sings," said Wexler. "She often tells me, 'Mummy, I can't believe what my music can do for someone, I didn't realize.'" ■

Margulies' play still as relevant now as it was five years ago

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One of the questions Jordan Merkur hopes audiences consider when seeing his production of Donald Margulies' Tony Award-nominated play *Time Stands Still* is "How do you respond to the news?"

After photojournalist Sarah Goodwin (played by Kirstin Rae Hinton) is injured by an improvised explosive device (IED) in Iraq, she goes back to her Brooklyn home with her partner and fellow journalist James Dodd (Jason Jazrawy). In what Margulies has described as a love story, the show follows the couple for one year as they struggle to return to life outside of a war zone.

Merkur first directed *Time Stands Still* at Toronto's Fringe Festival in July where it was honoured as a Patron's Pick. *Now* magazine lauded the show and recognized its outstanding ensemble cast and direction. To remount it, Merkur formed the TSS (Time Stands Still) Collective with his actors and stage manager. Together they worked to raise money for a full run at Theatre Passe Muraille.

Sam Rosenthal – who plays Sarah's editor Richard – produced the show with Merkur and the rest of the collective. While they crowd funded and solicited donations from family and friends, they also got creative and hosted unique events to further engage their prospective audience.

In January, Hinton and Jazrawy – who are a couple both on and off stage – held a murder mystery themed party and in February, Rosenthal hosted a champagne brunch where award-winning *Toronto Star* journalist Michelle Shepard spoke alongside psychiatrist Dr. Anthony Feinstein, who studies post-traumatic stress disorder.

The event brought in money for the show, but it also made an impact on the actors and guests who heard Shepard and Feinstein reflect on their experiences with foreign conflicts. For Rosenthal, it also changed his perspective on producing theatre. An event such as this, he explains, "galvanizes people into wanting to see the show move forward."

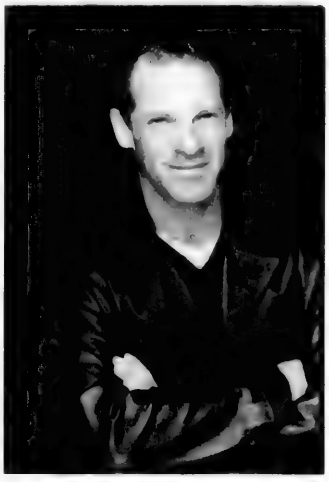
Time Stands Still opened on Broadway in 2010 and starred Laura Linney, Eric Bogosian, Brian D'arcy James and Alicia Silverstone. Merkur thinks it's just as relevant now as it was five years ago.

Journalists today are no longer simply observers in conflict areas. The horrific beheadings of American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, and Japanese freelancer Kenji Goto, remind us how groups such as the Islamic State target members of the media.

In the play, one of the characters doesn't understand why some journalists risk their lives when reporting overseas. She talks about how when she reads a magazine story, she just flips the page and is thankful that she lives in the United States.

Merkur understands that. "I'm here in Canada and most of my family lives now in Israel," he says.

Though Merkur visits them, he knows that their lives are much different than his. "They're dealing with more conflicts than I do living at Carlton and Jarvis," he explains. "And so, for me, when I hear the news in Israel, or I hear news of what occurred in Paris, or the anti-Semitic actions in places in Europe; what do I do about it?"



Jordan Merkur directs Time Stands Still.

> *[The play] really deals with some of the issues that we have to deal with as people who are consumers of the news*

Merkur has a history of directing and producing socially relevant work. He graduated with a BFA in theatre from York University in 1985. Before he finished school, he was already producing work in downtown Toronto and started his production company Eclectic Theatre in his graduating year.

He ran Eclectic Theatre for 16 years and earned 12 Dora Award nominations, winning five. Afterwards, he was the artistic director at the Red Barn Theatre in Jackson's Point, Ont., until it tragically burned down in 2009.

Now, he's excited for even more people to see *Time Stands Still*. "A lot of people who are following the stories in the Middle East, or in other places, would find this play quite compelling because," he says, "it really deals with some of the issues that we have to deal with as people who are consumers of the news." ■

Time Stands Still *plays at Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace, 16 Ryerson Ave., until March 29. Tickets can be purchased at the Theatre Passe Muraille Box office, by calling 416-504-7529 or by visiting www.artsboxoffice.ca*

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Applications due by May 8, 2015. Scholarship will be awarded in June.

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

TJFF ANNOUNCES OPENING AND CLOSING FILMS

Israeli filmmaker **Eran Riklis** is slated to attend the Ontario premiere of his film *A Borrowed Identity* at the opening of the 2015 Toronto Jewish Film Festival in the Varsity Cinema, 55 Bloor St. W., Thursday April 30.

Based on the celebrated novel *Dancing Arabs* by **Sayed Kashua**, *A Borrowed Identity* focuses on an Arab-Israeli boy who attends a prestigious Jewish boarding school in Jerusalem, where he struggles with issues of language, culture and identity.

Closing the festival on May 10 is **Alvaro Brechner's** touching comedy *Mr. Kaplan*. It's a Uruguayan film about an elderly Jewish man who embarks on a fool's errand to capture an old German bar owner he suspects of being a Nazi.

Full festival details will be available online at tjff.com as of Monday April 13.

• • •

Names in the News

Toronto-area playwright **Daniel Karasik** has garnered much attention in recent years as the winner of the Toronto Arts Foundation Emerging Artist Award and the CBC Literary Award for Fiction. His latest play, *Little Death*, asks fundamental questions about marriage, fidelity and intimacy. Performances, supported by the Koffler Centre of the Arts, Toronto Arts Council and Canadian Heritage, run April 17 to May 3 at the Theatre Centre BMO Incubator, 1115 Queen St. W. Tickets $15 to $30; 416-538-0998. Karasik has been named playwright-in-residence at Tarragon Theatre for the 2015-16 season.

• • •

Names in the News II

Beth Tzedec cantor **Simon Spiro**, known as one of the most mellifluous and musically progressive in the city, made a guest appearance at **Neil Sedaka's** March 16 concert at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall. Spiro has performed with Sedaka many times previously, most recently at a 2008 concert at Beth Tzedec. In his earlier professional life, Spiro recorded several Neil Sedaka sound-alike albums for K-Tel Records in the late 1970s. The Roy Thomson concert was a benefit for Chai Lifeline Canada, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping children with serious illnesses and their families.

• • •

Music Notes

• **Iain Scott** continues his series on Opera and Shakespeare. Drop-in $18. Miles Nadal JCC. Monday March 30, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

• **Fern Lindzon** and **George Koller** and others perform at the Jazz Bistro, 251 Victoria St., April 8 and 9. jazzbistro.ca

•The PBS series *American Masters* presents the documentary *Jascha Heifetz, God's Fiddler*, telling the story of **Jascha Heifetz** (1901-1987), considered the first truly modern violin virtuoso. "Setting the standard in violin playing for nearly a century, Heifetz's name became shorthand for excellence for everyone from **Jack Benny** to **The Muppets** to **Woody Allen**." Premieres on PBS on Thursday April 16, 8 p.m.

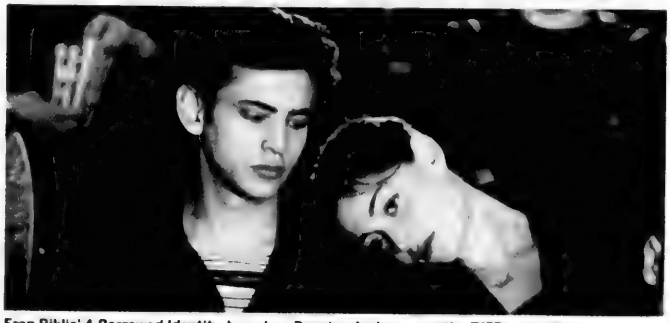
• • •

Arts in Brief

• **Joseph Kertes** discusses his new novel *The Afterlife of Stars*. Miles Nadal JCC. Thursday March 26, 11 a.m to 12:30 p.m.

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Tinghir-Jerusalem, Echoes From the Mellah*, a French-Moroccan documentary tracing the fate of the Jewish Berbers who once lived in director's **Kamal Hachkar's** Moroccan village. With speaker **Yigal S. Nizri**. Hachkar will be in attendance. $15, $10. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday March 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m.

• The Paris art auction house **Ader Nordmann** presents a sale of rare antique Jewish ritual objects from the collection of Dr Norman P. Schenker (born 1912), a medical doctor, film producer, ardent Zionist and honorary fellow of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The sale, scheduled for April 22, is pegged to take in an estimated 20-30,000 euros ($30,000-40,000). www.ader-paris.fr ■



Eran Riklis' *A Borrowed Identity*, based on *Dancing Arabs*, opens the TJFF on April 30.

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Jewnior Games adds life to youth group programs

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Talia Osiel and Faigie Grunwald saw a gap in the way synagogue youth group programs were typically facilitated and decided to pool their combined 30 years of educational and teaching experience and develop a new model.

"Shuls were entrusting youth programs to high school and university students who, as eager and excited as they were, didn't have the educational background, budget or time to put together a really successful Jewish educational program," Osiel, who has a master's in curriculum writing from OISE and a certificate in Judaic studies education from York University, said.

Last September, she and Grunwald, a certified ECE teacher who has worked as a special education teacher, a preschool teacher and a day camp director, launched Jewnior Games, a company that designs and develops innovative Jewish curricula tailored specifically to synagogue youth groups and supplementary Hebrew schools.

The main idea, Osiel said, was to "create Jewish educational resources that are fun, engaging and attract kids' attention right off the bat."

She said their programs can be characterized as "carnival games meet birthday party, or camp colour war meets board games… All are professionally designed, yet durable, so kids can play in a hands-on way, and really get involved."

Jewnior Games currently delivers programs to eight institutions in the Toronto area, including Shaarei Shomayim, Beth Tzedec Congregation, Temple Kol Ami, Forest Hill Jewish Centre and the Sephardic Kehilla Centre. The plan is to expand into Jewish summer camps and special events.

It also provides leadership training. Osiel and Grunwald meet with the staff of each synagogue or school to teach leadership skills and get feedback about what works and what doesn't.

"We go through everything," Osiel said. "like how to play [the games], how to manage a successful youth group, how to make games that are competitive but fun, how to involve the shy child, how to get kids to co-operate respectfully… plus different ways to use the materials, what arts and crafts complement the program, and even what snacks to serve to best develop a concept."

Jewnior Games programming is divided into two streams: "Mini champs" (for children from preschool to Grade 3), and "Champs" (children grades 3 to 6).

Osiel explained that the games and activities, while lively and fun, integrate learning about topics like Shabbat and holiday rituals, blessings, Israel, and values from the Torah and texts like Pirkei Avot.

She described the programming as "denominationally neutral" and stressed that the activities require no prior knowledge.

"We're not here to cater to a particular market or push any specific Jewish mandate," she said, "but to get kids to explore their connection to Judaism and to get them involved in a way that's fun and positive."

Osiel and Grunwald design and plan the curriculum for each program, taking into account the shul or school's individual needs in terms of group size and time allotted.

Jewnior Games' signature bags contain an array of games and resources.

> "We're not here to cater to a particular market or push any specific Jewish mandate"
>
> Talia Osiel

They then give their ideas to local graphic designers and tradespeople, who construct the materials for them. These include large, vinyl floor mats on which to play games, tents, soccer balls and portable, three-dimensional tunnels.

After Osiel and Grunwald meet with staff, they decide together which items should be used for a specific class or program. The different materials for each week are packed into Jewnior Games' trademark, bright cloth bags, which are colour co-ordinated according to age group.

Osiel emphasized that the element of surprise and discovery is part of what makes the experience exciting and dynamic for kids.

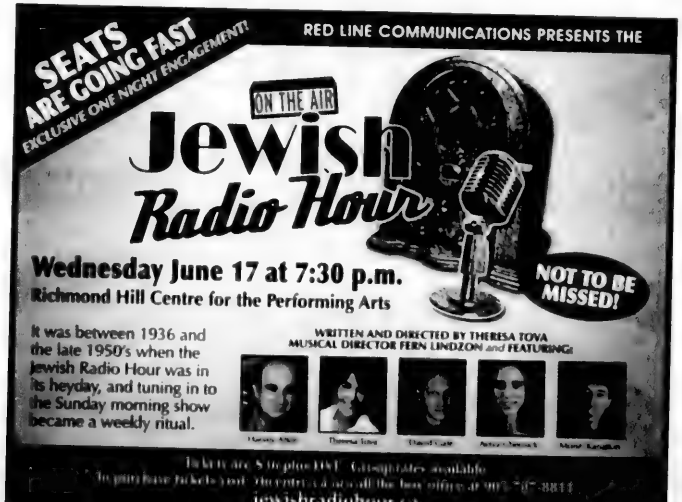
"The whole thing is, 'What's in the bag?'" she said. "And it's amazing what comes out of the bag… It's always a new game, a new challenge, something different… The vinyl floor mats, which roll out, are very popular, as kids can run and stand on and move pieces on them."

She noted that all resources are "bright, exciting and very durable," as well as minimally wasteful.

Instead of each individual shul or school youth group leader creating a game or lesson on Bristol board and subsequently throwing it out, the Jewnior Games materials function as shared, reusable resources.

Osiel and Grunwald hope to begin holding cross-institutional staff training, so that staff from different organizations can share ideas and best practices.

"We don't want a divide, a sort of 'Who has the best program?'" Osiel said. "We want this to be more of a collaborative, community effort." ■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KlezFactor leader is a player and a scholar

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Mike Anklewicz, a clarinettist in two klezmer bands and who has with roots in jazz and classical music, is a fearless musical explorer.

Anklewicz has recorded with the Czech-based punk jazz band Eggnoise, playing clarinet on the band's amazingly eclectic CD, *Yolk*. He described *Yolk* as "Steely Dan meets '80s prog rock," citing such diverse influences as Frank Zappa and Paul Simon. "The electronic stuff is easier to listen to than Nine Inch Nails," Anklewicz noted.

Anklewicz was at a Montreal conference on improvisation where he met one of Eggnoise's leaders, Ondrez Galuska. "We were roommates at the conference and we traded music," Anklewicz said. He ended up visiting Galuska in Prague, where they recorded tracks for *Yolk*.

Anklewicz leads the Canadian klezmer fusion band KlezFactor, which was formed in 2004. The group performs traditional and original compositions, fusing klezmer with jazz, rock and classical musical techniques. *Klezmachine*, the band's most recent CD, topped university radio charts in Ontario and also got radio play in other parts of Canada, the United States, Argentina, France, Portugal, Spain and Russia.

Anklewicz lived in Berlin for a year, where he played with a Berlin-based version of KlezFactor. Reminiscing about the music scene there, he said, like Toronto, there's not a lot of money to be made performing because paid gigs are hard to find. He added that musicians often get together to play for enjoyment rather than money and "if they perform, it's outside Berlin at festivals."

Anklewicz began playing klezmer in the late 1990s, while he was studying music at Queen's University. By the year 2000, he was attending KlezKamp, the annual Yiddish folk arts program that was held in the Catskills.

Anklewicz said that growing up he was exposed to a wide array of music, from classical to the 1960s folk music of Peter, Paul and Mary and The Travellers.

"Klezmer was a big part of the landscape," he said, adding that his parents took him to chassidic festivals to hear klezmer.

Anklewicz's interest in klezmer extends to the academic side of the music. In addition to a bachelor's degree from Queen's, he holds a master of music degree from the New England Conservatory in Boston and received a PhD in ethnomusicology from York University in 2013. His dissertation, *Musical Hybridities and the Klezmer Revival* looks at klezmer from its historical aspects, when it was blended with early jazz, to the current scene.

"Klezmer today comes from what people have access to," Anklewicz said, citing Socalled, who combines hip hop and klezmer, and pianist Marilyn Lerner, whose influences include Debussy, avant-garde composer John Cage and free jazz pioneer Cecil Taylor.

> *Klezmer today comes from what people have access to.*

Anklewicz will be giving a four-part lecture about klezmer at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, where he teaches saxophone, beginning on April 15.

"I'll try to give people a taste of the history of the music and how it developed," he said. "The lecture is going to give me the opportunity to go into a lot of detail and play a lot of music."

He will travel once more this summer to take part in a musicology conference in Astana, Kazakhstan. At this writing, he's scheduled to perform in Prague with the Toronto-based world-music artist Lenka Lichtenberg and in Amsterdam with a traditional klezmer trio. He's also playing with KlezFactor in Berlin and Dresden.

Locally, you can catch Anklewicz's trio playing traditional klezmer at the Free Times Cafe on May 3 for the "Bella, Did Ya Eat?" brunch. He's at Solel Congregation in Mississauga on May 23 for a performance and lecture.■

For more information about Anklewicz, visit www.mikeanklewicz.com. KlezFactor's website address is: www.klezfactor.com.

COMING SOON:
Look for our annual literary supplement in the April 2 PASSOVER edition of The CJN

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Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

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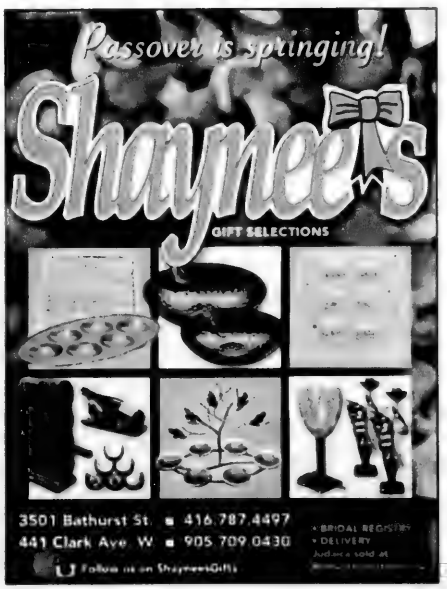

New Haggadah distinctly Canadian

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Over the last half-century, the Jews of Canada have grown from the world's sixth-largest Jewish community to the fourth. Sadly, this is due in part to the decline of other communities, but it is also a function of our growing size and vitality.

The Jews of Canada, however, have not developed their own institutions to the extent that the three larger Jewish communities of the world have. Israel, the United States and France all have rabbinical schools of various Jewish denominations – Canada has none. Almost all Canadian rabbis are foreign trained, and most are foreign born. Very few Hebrew or Yiddish books are published in Canada. Recently, the Orthodox Jewish community here was pleased when a major Jewish publisher, Koren, printed a so-called Canadian version of its excellent Koren-Sacks prayer book.

What made this prayer book Canadian? One page. The prayer for the government and president of the United States is replaced with an almost identically worded prayer for Canada's government and prime minister.

Rabbi Adam Scheier, senior rabbi at Shaar Hashomayim congregation of Montreal, and Richard Marceau, author of the autobiographical *A Quebec Jew: From Bloc Québécois MP to Jewish Activist*, have teamed up to address this imbalance, along with the talented Canadian graphic designer Lewis Robinovitch. The result is beautiful and creative. Their distinctly Canadian trilingual Passover Haggadah was printed in Canada and published by Rabbi Scheier's synagogue.

Haggadot have traditionally been the most popular liturgical vehicle for Jewish artwork. Instead of illustrations and illuminations, this Haggadah contains about 100 pictures of Canadian Jewish life, many from the early years of the 20th century.

Some of the pictures are loosely connected to the nearby Hebrew text, such as the one of the Jewish Old Folks home on Cecil Street in Toronto from the 1920s, opposite the verse from the grace after meals, "I was once young and now I am old…"

Other pictures are connected generally to Passover, such as the advertisement from the *Canadian Jewish Review* of 1923 urging consumers to purchase Ward's Orange Crush in the "Krinkly Bottle" as a "Passover delight." Many are simply curious items from Canadian Jewish history, such as the ticket, in Yiddish and English, to the Toronto Labour Lyceum's "First Annual Fruit Ball," which took place on a Friday night in 1927.

Aside from pictures of Jewish Canadiana, other elements make the Haggadah specifically Canadian. The traditional Hebrew texts are translated into both English and French, and all instructions appear in our two official languages as well. The grace after meals includes a 12-word Hebrew prayer for Canada (and a nine-word Hebrew prayer for Israel, the only two additions to the traditional Hebrew Haggadah text). Most significantly, 19 Canadian rabbis explain and elucidate different parts of the Haggadah.

The Haggadah consistently uses gender-neutral language in both English and French. (The English translation of the text was adapted, with permission, from Noam Zion's excellent Israeli haggadot, *A Different Night* and *A Night to Remember*.) The Haggadah is also unabashedly non-denominational: the contributing rabbis, women and men, come from across Canada and from all the major Jewish denominations. (Full disclosure: I, too, appear in the Canadian Haggadah, with a short reflection on the controversial *Shfoch Chamatecha* prayer, the one that calls on God to "pour out fury on the nations that do not know God.") As far as I can tell, all 19 contributing rabbis are anglophones (as are most Canadian rabbis), but their comments also appear in French translation.

Canadian Haggadah Canadienne
Compiled and edited by Rabbi Adam Scheier and Richard Marceau
Koren

One of the most thoughtful insights into the text of the Haggadah was provided by my York University colleague, Rabbi Michael Brown, writing about the *Ha lachma anya* prayer near the beginning of the seder, which invites all who are hungry to come and eat with us. After restating some of the traditional explanations for the inclusion of such sentiments at the beginning of the seder, Rabbi Brown provides his own (more convincing, in my opinion) reason.

In the Torah, the mitzvah of remembering the Exodus from Egypt is frequently coupled with the call for Jews to reach out to the disadvantaged of society. For example, "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that [i.e. what remains on the vine] shall go to the stranger, the orphan and the widow. Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I enjoin you to observe this commandment." (Deuteronomy 24:21-22)

Rabbi Brown explains: "Remembering [that we were slaves in Egypt] is not simply a thought or a word. We are enjoined to act, to look after the weak and the needy… And unfortunately, even in our prosperous society, the needy are very much with us: the homeless, the refugees, the mentally ill, the poor. Our seders can be enriched by including them."

This prayer and commentary are accompanied by two illustrations: a Canadian Jewish Congress pamphlet titled "What about *their* Passover in 1946?" illustrated with a picture of Jewish war refugees, and a blurb from 1926 from the Hebrew Aid Society of Vancouver, describing how they distribute Passover provisions not just to needy Jewish homes, but also to "Jewish inmates in hospitals, asylums and penitentiaries."

I know my own seder this year will also be enriched by use of this handsome and thoughtful Haggadah. ■

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PASSOVER FOOD

Welcome to my virtual kitchen!

NORENE GILLETZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

With almost 4,200 cooks in my virtual Facebook kitchen, it's quite a challenge to answer everyone's cooking questions, plus offer menu suggestions and recipes. There's a constant stream of interesting recipes being posted by foodies from around the world. There are members from Australia, Israel, United States, Canada, England, Mexico, Germany, even the Netherlands. Each Shabbat or Jewish holiday, there are posts from members wishing each other Shabbat Shalom or Chag Sameach. The members refer to each other as 'Noreners,' a term coined by Aviva Bursten Cohen of Winnipeg.

A few weeks ago, several members asked if we could set up a selection of Passover recipes within Norene's Kitchen! Lois Held of Atlanta stepped up to the plate and used her excellent computer skills to set up special files with recipes for various categories: soups and starters, salads, sides, miscellaneous, vegetarian, chicken, desserts, plus dairy, fish and meat sections. Cookbook author, Barbara Wasser of Niskayuna, N.Y., a frequent poster, suggested the various categories – teamwork at its finest!

Lois Held is a popular poster in Norene's Kitchen and her recipes always receive rave reviews. Her Lemon Baked Chicken is no exception.

Lois shared: "I have been making this luscious chicken for years – ever since it appeared on a Manischewitz product order list. My family loved it and I have been making it since the kids were little. I always double the recipe!"

Lois Held's Lemon Baked Chicken

- ❑ 1 whole lemon
- ❑ 1 frying chicken, cut into eight pieces
- ❑ 3/4 cup matzah meal
- ❑ salt
- ❑ 3/4 tsp. paprika
- ❑ 1 egg
- ❑ 2 tbsp. water
- ❑ peanut oil
- ❑ 2 tbsp. sugar
- ❑ 1 unpeeled lemon, thinly sliced
- ❑ 1 can (10-1/2 oz) condensed clear chicken soup, undiluted

Grate the rind of the whole lemon and set the rind aside. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice of both halves over the chicken. Mix matzah meal with salt and paprika. Beat the egg with the water.

Dip the chicken first into the egg mixture and then into the matzah meal mixture.

Heat 1/4 in. of oil in a large skillet and slowly brown the chicken pieces.

Place the browned chicken pieces into a roasting pan. Sprinkle the grated lemon rind over the chicken, making sure to put some on each piece.

Sprinkle with sugar and arrange lemon slices on the chicken. Add the soup (I use homemade) and cover.

Bake at 375 about 45 minutes, or until chicken is done. Serves 3 to 4.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

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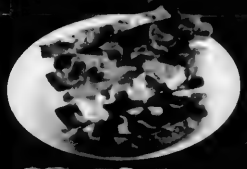

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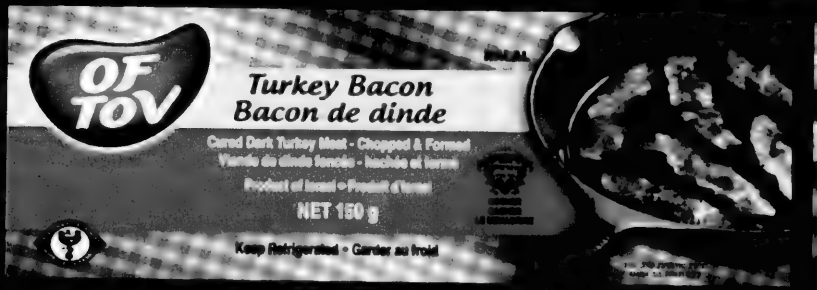

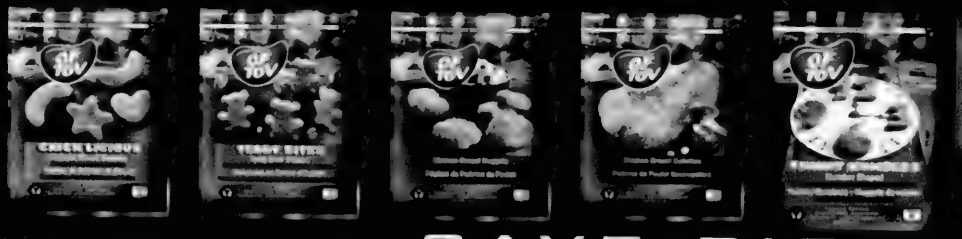

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Food should look as good as it tastes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

...

Daniella Silver of Toronto, an exciting new personality in the world of Jewish cooking, has an extraordinary sense of colour and presentation. I've been working together with Daniella for more than two years to help create her exciting new cookbook, *The Silver Platter: Simple to Spectacular*, which will be launched in Toronto on May 5. Recipes include easily accessible ingredients, clear instructions, gorgeous photographs, "Norene's Notes" with tips and techniques, plus full nutritional information for every dish listed in an appendix. More than 100 recipes are gluten-free, and many are ideal for Passover.

Daniella wrote: "My family has a long history of artistic talent. We all seem to have developed our creativity in different ways. Mine has manifested itself through food. Its presentation, the colour of the ingredients, and the blending of textures are all aspects of an art form. Food has to look beautiful to be appetizing. This recipe is made with simple ingredients and the finished dish is absolutely spectacular!"

Daniella Silver's Sweet Potato Scallop

This simple, unassuming scallop is both sweet and savoury. Using sweet potatoes instead of white makes it a healthier option. As a final bonus, the elegant upright presentation gives the dish some textural interest that is worthy of any holiday feast. It should not be frozen.

- ❑ 1/4 cup olive oil
- ❑ 1/4 cup honey
- ❑ 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ❑ 2 tsp chopped rosemary
- ❑ 6 medium sweet potatoes, thinly sliced (do not peel)
- ❑ kosher salt
- ❑ freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400. Coat a large oven-to-table baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, combine oil, honey, cinnamon, and rosemary. Add sweet potatoes; sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper. Stir to coat on all sides.

Arrange sweet potato slices in prepared baking dish by standing them upright in tight rows. You should have parallel lines of sweet potato slices (skin showing) along the length of the dish. Drizzle with any remaining oil mixture.

Bake, covered, for 45 minutes.

Bake, uncovered, an additional 20-30 minutes, until golden and glazed.

Norene's Notes

Variation: Sprinkle sweet potato slices generously with salt and pepper. Add 3 tbsp. olive oil, 2 tbsp. honey, and 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil or dill. Stir well. Arrange sweet potato slices in baking dish as directed in step 3. Bake, covered, for 45 minutes. Uncover; bake 20-30 minutes longer.

Quick Tip: The sweet potatoes can be sliced with a food processor, using medium pressure. Yields 8 servings ■

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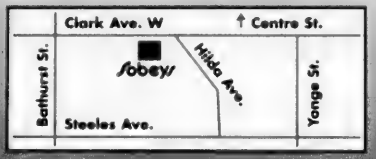

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Bloggers dish up Passover twists in an ebook

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Thanks to the vision of four dedicated and tech-savvy online friends, Jewish cooking is entering the modern age with *4 Bloggers Dish: Passover: Modern Twists on Traditional Flavors*.

The four bloggers are Whitney Fisch (JewHungryTheBlog.com), Amy Kritzer (WhatJewWannaEat.com), Sarah Lasry (ThePatchkePrincess.com) and Liz Rueven (KosherLikeMe.com). Each offers a slightly different take, from Whitney's Southern kosher inspirations to Liz's "flexitarian" style.

With over 50 recipes like Dilly Leek Croquettes, Gnocchi, Homemade Tomato Sauce and Quinoa Meatballs and Cinnamon "Donut" Holes, the book offers a wealth of breezy, fun possibilities.

More than its unique flavours, though, what sets *4 Bloggers Dish* apart is that it's an ebook. It's not available in print at all. But the big plus is that it only costs $3.99 (US) on Amazon. And you don't have to wait for delivery, either: start flipping through recipes instantly on almost any device, including your computer screen, with Amazon's Kindle reader application.

"The biggest challenge, but also the most fun," Kritzer told *The CJN*, "was making sure the recipes we each contributed were varied enough, and hit all the Passover classics, with a twist, like matzah ball soup and potato kugel. Working with three other authors needs a bit more organization, but the result is more point of views and more recipes."

4 Bloggers Dish includes dairy recipes and gebrochts. There's also plenty of meat on offer, in surprising flavour combinations.

For more information, or to buy the book, visit 4bloggersdish.com or search Amazon for "4 bloggers dish."

Shakshuka With Feta And Cilantro

Whitney says, "I had never even heard of shakshuka until I was studying abroad in Be'er Sheva, Israel during my junior year of college. I was invited over to a friend's house for lunch and she served us this dish, which I thought was glorified marinara sauce baked with eggs. It wasn't until I experimented with making my own a few years later that I really fell in love with the dish. Now a staple in our household, it's the perfect one pot meal for Passover or any time of year."

- ❑ 5 tbsp coconut or vegetable oil
- ❑ 1 medium onion, diced
- ❑ 4 cloves of garlic, diced
- ❑ 1 red pepper, chopped
- ❑ 1 green pepper, chopped
- ❑ 1 can of whole tomatoes
- ❑ 1 can of diced tomatoes
- ❑ 5 eggs
- ❑ 1 tbsp. kosher salt
- ❑ 1/2 tbsp. pepper
- ❑ 1 tsp. cumin
- ❑ 1 tbsp. hot sauce
- ❑ handful of cilantro leaves and stems, diced
- ❑ feta cheese (to taste)

Heat a deep, large skillet or sauté pan on medium. Slowly warm oil in the pan. Add chopped onion, sauté for a few minutes until the onion becomes slightly translucent.

Add a dash of salt, pepper and cumin to the onions and stir.

Add the garlic and continue to sauté until mixture is fragrant.

Next, add bell peppers and continue sautéing for another 6 – 8 minutes or until peppers start to brown.

Add both cans of tomatoes to pan, stir until blended. Add more of the cumin and hot sauce to the pan of vegetables, as desired (to taste).

Stir well, and allow mixture to simmer over low-medium heat for 6 – 8 minutes (break apart some of the whole tomatoes at this point too – just push down with a spoon to break them apart). Taste the mixture and season to taste.

Before cracking each egg into the pan, make a little divot in sauce for egg to go into.

Crack the eggs, one at a time, directly over the tomato mixture, making sure to space them evenly over the sauce. It's common shakshuka practice to place 4 eggs around the outer edge and 1 in the center. The eggs will cook "over easy" style on top of the tomato sauce.

Cover your pan and allow to simmer for an additional 10 – 15 minutes.

Keep an eye on the eggs to make sure that the yolks remain "over easy" to "over medium."

Add feta, if desired, halfway through this final 10 – 15 minutes of cooking.

Garnish with cilantro and serve. Serves 4

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Matzo Ball Potato Chowder

A recipe from Amy, who calls this "A cheesy, creamy broth with chunks of tender potatoes and carrots and light fluffy matzo dumplings."

For matzo balls:

- 3 eggs, separated
- 1/2 cup vegetable stock
- 1 cup matzah meal
- 1/4 cup onion, grated
- 3 tbsp. olive oil or schmaltz
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

For chowder:

- 4 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large white onion, diced
- 1 cup carrots, washed, peeled and diced
- 1 cup celery, diced
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 2 quarts (just under 2 litres) vegetable stock (homemade or store bought)
- 2 lb. russet potatoes (about 2 potatoes), washed, peeled and diced into ½-in.cubes. Set in water until using to keep from turning brown.
- 1 1/2 cups half and half
- kosher salt and black pepper to taste
- pinch cayenne
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded or more to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, minced

First, make your matzah balls. In a medium bowl, whisk 1/2 cup stock with the egg yolks. Then whisk in matzah meal, onion, olive oil, salt, pepper and cheese.

In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until frothy. Gently fold into the matzah meal mixture, careful not to over mix. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

When ready to cook, bring 2 quarts of water to a boil in a large, wide stockpot and lower to a simmer. Form the batter into 24 1- to 1 1/2 in. balls.

Place balls in the water, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes until matzah balls puff up and are cooked through.

Meanwhile, in a large 4-quart stockpot heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, carrots and celery and sauté until onions are translucent and carrots and celery soft, about 7 minutes.

Add white wine to deglaze while stirring. Mix in stock and bring to a simmer.

Add potatoes and simmer 15 minutes until fork tender.

Pour in half and half, add matzah balls and bring back to a simmer.

Season with cayenne, salt and pepper to taste (depending on how salty your stock is). Top each serving with shredded cheese and parsley.

Notes: Can be made up to 3 days ahead up to Step 5. When ready to serve, simmer with half and half, add matzah balls and serve. Makes 8 bowls ■

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Potato chips with trendy touch

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One of the latest trends in desserts is the combination of sweet and salty flavours in one dish. I noticed that supermarkets have recently begun selling chocolate covered potato chips.

I resisted the temptation to buy them, until I did some Passover shopping. Then I tried some dark chocolate-covered potato chips. They were quite delicious, but I thought I could make my own, so I purchased kosher-for-Passover bittersweet chocolate chips, 100-g dark chocolate bars and six 6-oz. bags of salted rippled potato chips (I wanted to leave room for error).

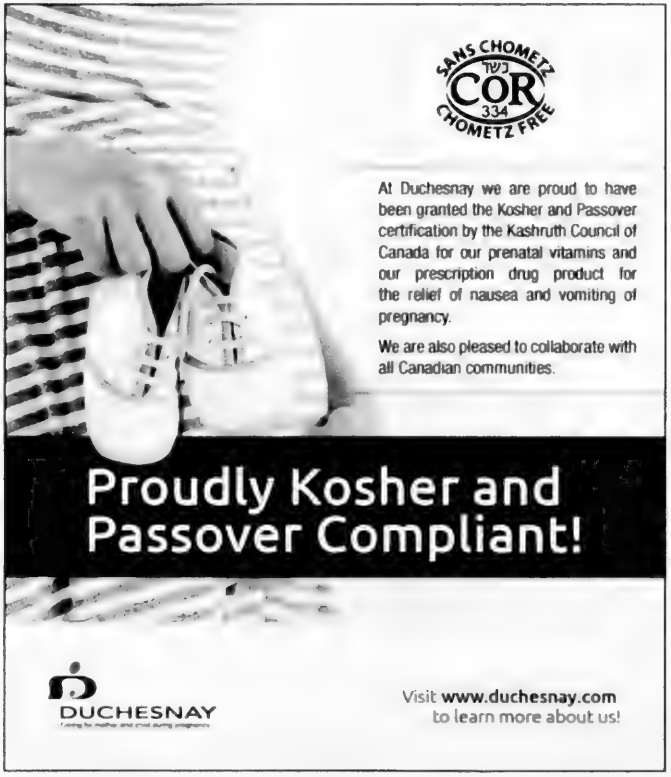
I went online to check out some recipes for chocolate-covered potato chips. Some recipes called for submerging the total chip in chocolate like the Passover variety I tried. I opted for partially covered chips, because this method was less messy. The recipes I saw all called for chocolate and shortening. I used margarine instead, which is readily available at Passover. The recipe is easy, but time consuming. The results were very good, so I'm going to make them for one of the seders.

Dark Chocolate-Covered Potato Chips

- 2 tbsp. margarine
- 1 cup bittersweet pareve chocolate chips
- 2 oz. dark chocolate (72 per cent cocoa)
- 48 to 50 whole rippled potato chips

Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. In a medium heatproof bowl set over a small saucepan of barely simmering water, combine chocolate chips, chocolate and margarine, stirring occasionally, until completely melted and smooth.

Dip one potato chip at a time halfway into the bowl of melted chocolate. Use a spoon to coat chip with chocolate, leaving the top quarter bare. Lift chip out of the chocolate, allowing any excess to drip back into the bowl, and place coated chip on the lined baking sheet. Repeat until all the potato chips and/or chocolate have been used up. Allow chips to set at room temperature until the chocolate is firm, about 2 hours. Makes about 4 dozen chips. ■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Passover desserts – time to start baking

FRANCINE KURLANDSKI
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It is no big surprise that everyone loves desserts. At the end of a delicious meal, especially one as important as the seder meal, you want to wow and impress your family and guests, and leave them with a sweet, lasting impression.

I start early with the Passover baking, in a carefully prepared area in the kitchen. With all the daily reminders to keep a healthier diet, I try to look for recipes with minimal amounts of matzah meal as a lot of it tends to make the dessert heavy.

By freezing some of these desserts beforehand, you will be able to free up some much needed time for cooking and the preparation that has to be done the day of the seder.

Pesach Chocolate Chip Cookies

- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup cake meal
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup potato starch
- 1 package chocolate chips
- 2/4 toasted walnuts or pecans

Beat eggs, margarine and sugar together.

Combine dry ingredients and add to egg mixture. Add chocolate chips and nuts. Mix well.

Drop by spoonfuls on cookie sheet. Bake at 350 for approximately 10-13 minutes. Remove from pan quickly, and cool.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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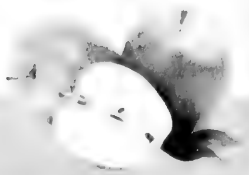

Melting Moments Cookies

- Passover jam of your choice
- 4 egg yolks; 4 egg whites
- 3/4 cup oil
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- juice of 1 orange
- 1 cup cake meal
- 1/2 cup potato starch
- 1 cup pecans crushed

Combine all ingredients except jam and crushed nuts and allow to stand 5 minutes.

Make dough into balls, dip into slightly beaten egg white, roll in nuts. Place the balls on a cookie sheet lined with parchment. Make a dent in the centre of each cookie ball. Bake at 350 for 5 minutes.

Remove from the oven, place jam in centres, return to oven for an additional 15 -20 minutes.

Apple Pudding

- 3 pieces matzah
- 3 medium apples
- 3/4 cup raisins (optional)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp. margarine
- 3 eggs beaten
- rind from 1 lemon, and 1 orange

Soak matzah in cold water until soft; drain well. Peel and grate or thinly slice apples. Combine with remaining ingredients. Pour into greased casserole. Bake at 350 for 20 to 25 minutes. Serve hot. ■

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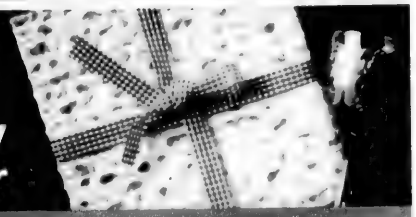

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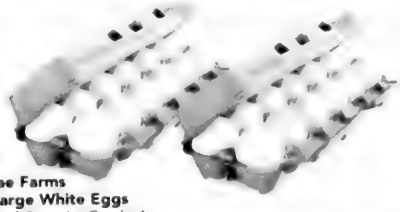

2.29 [illegible]
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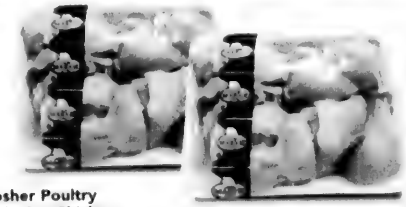
Fresh Large White Eggs
Product of Canada, Grade A



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Marvid Kosher Poultry
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Jumbo Cantaloupes
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13.99 pkg of 5x454g
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Passover Matzos

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9.99 /lb
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3.99 /lb
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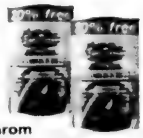
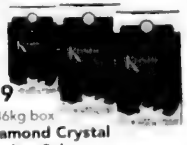


1.49 675g tin
Bnei-Darom
Cucumbers in Brine
Bonus Size



2.49 1.36kg box
Diamond Crystal
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4.99 454g tub
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Fresh Potatoes
Red, White or Yellow Flesh
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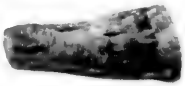
1.49 127g box
Streit's
Matzo Ball or
Matzo Ball & Soup Mix

16.99 136kg pkg
Migdal Cheese Slices
White or Coloured

1.99 500ml tub
Western Sour Cream
Regular or Light



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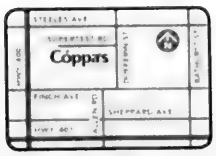
2.99 650ml bottle
Kedem Concord Grape Juice
Assorted Varieties

4.99 284g tin
Manischewitz Macaroons
Assorted Varieties

6.99 623g pkg
Ungar's Frozen Gefilte Fish
Regular or No Sugar



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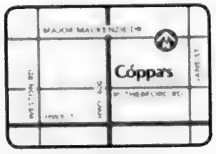

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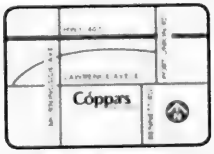

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What's New

MARCH 26 - APRIL 2

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, March 26

BOOK TALK

Evan Fallenberg is the writer-in-residence at Holy Blossom Temple. He speaks tonight at 7:30 p.m. on writing and the themes of his books; March 28, following kiddush, on the art of translation; March 29, he conducts a writers' workshop, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m., Koffler Centre of the Arts, 180 Shaw St.

BOOST YOUR WILLPOWER

Uri Galimidi discusses "Boost your willpower, shift your life," 7:30 p.m., Lodzer Congregation.

Friday, March 27

COMPOSERS' SHABBAT

Temple Har Zion's clergy, choir and guest soloist **Rachelle Shubert** celebrate Jewish composers, 8 p.m., 905-889-2252.

Saturday, March 28

SOCIAL ACTION SHABBAT

Authors **Marjorie Gann** (*Five Thousand Years of Slavery*) delivers the dvar Torah, and **Judie Oron** (*Cry of the Giraffe*) speaks at 1:30 p.m. for Social Action Shabbat, First Narayever Congregation.

Sunday, March 29

FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

Author **Judie Oron** (*Cry of the Giraffe*) speaks about her daughter's years in Ethiopia and her rescue, 10:15 a.m., Temple Sinai.

LITERARY BRUNCH

Author **Liz Pearl** (*Living Legacies: A collection of writing by contemporary Jewish women*) speaks at Beth Emeth Synagogue, 10 a.m. RSVP by March 25, 416-633-3838.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Drivers are needed today to deliver food hampers for NCJW's Passover food drive. Call 416-633-5100.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of April 9 is March 30. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto - Kimel Family Education Centre, participated this month in One Match's program to register potential stem cell donors. The project, which has been adopted by all 31 high schools in York Region, was spearheaded by Mark Watkin, whose seven-year-old daughter Sarah died of leukemia last year.

CHOCOLATE SEDER/LATIN DANCE

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a chocolate seder for children, noon- 2 p.m. Email agol@shaarshalom.ca.

Brotherhood holds a Latin dance, 8-10 p.m. Email office@shaarshalom.ca

Monday, March 30

AN EVENING WITH JOSEPH BOYDEN

Author **Joseph Boyden** speaks at Temple Emanu-El, 7:30 p.m. Free, donations accepted for Camp Onakawana, a camp for First Nations youth. RSVP 416-449-3880.

BOOK AND FILM REVIEW CLUB

Author **Joe Kertes** reviews his book, *The Afterlife of Stars*. Lunch at 1 p.m., review at 1:30, Beth Tzedec Congregation. $20. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Thursday, April 2

YIDDISH VINKL

Clifford Goldfarb and **Hartley Nathan** discuss "Sherlock Holmes: The Jewish Connection," noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20 (includes lunch). RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to deliver meals to Holocaust survivors. Call **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext. 496.

Baycrest is looking for volunteers (over 13) to assist with palliative care, meals and special events. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

PASSOVER SEDERS

Chabad Markham hosts a seder April 3. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Oraynu Congregation hosts a family pre-Passover seder and potluck dinner, March 29 and an adult/teen seder April 3. RSVP by March 27, 416-385-3910.

Association of Jewish Seniors holds a seder April 3 at Bernard Betel Centre. Purchase tickets from AJS or at Bernard Betel Centre, 416-225-2112.

Jewish Russian Community Centre hosts seders April 3 and 4. Free, reserve by March 27. 416-222-7105.

Congregation Habonim hosts a seder April 4. Free, but donations welcome. RSVP 416-782-7125.

Temple Har Zion hosts a seder April 4. RSVP by March 27. 905-889-2252, ext. 5.

Ve'ahavta, Holy Blossom Temple, Habonim and the aboriginal community host a seder April 5. RSVP 416-964-7698, ext. 225.

SOCCERATHON

Canadian Friends of Beit Issie Shapiro are holding a soccerathon, April 26, 2-6 p.m., Trio Sportsplex, 601 Cityview Blvd., Woodbridge. Contact gilad.epstein@lorexcorp.com or cfobis@rogers.com

ROOTS OF POVERTY

Learn how to be a Jewish social change-maker, in a 6-week course on "The Roots of Poverty," Mondays, April 13-May 18, 6-8 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC. Register by April 1. Email cara.gold@veahavta.org

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Enjoy open mic night with Klez Konnection, April 8, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

INCOME TAX CLINICS

Barbara Frum library offers free tax help to people with low incomes, March 28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; April 13, 6-8:15 p.m. Register in advance.

SPRING COURSES

Registration is open for Temple Emanu-El's spring lecture series, Mondays, 2-4 p.m. Starts April 13 with **Sergei Plekanov** on "The Ukrainian crisis." Other speakers include **Rick Phillips, Robert Steiner, Daniela Monaldi, Katherine Barber.** $45/series; $12/lecture. 416-449-3880.

Register now for Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn series. Starts April 14 with **Anna Shternshis** on "Soviet Jewish culture." 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

THIRD SEDER

United Jewish People's Order and Morris Winchevsky School hold a third seder,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

April 12, 4:30 p.m., Villa Colombo, 40 Playfair Ave. Purchase tickets by April 1. 416-789-5502.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com

- Looking Ahead: A 6-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals, starts March 26, 7 p.m.
- Widow/Widower under 65. A 6-session group for people under 65 who have recently lost a spouse, starts March 31, 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Passover celebration, April 2, 1:30-3 p.m. Register by March 30. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, April 15; Spa day, facials, manicures, barber, hairdresser, April 2, 10 a.m. Balance and co-ordination class April 14, 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; High tea with live music, April 29, 1:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. March 31, **David Greenglass** discusses "A taste of Newfoundland and Iceland," 10 a.m.; April 2, Wellness lecture on 211 Toronto, 1:30 p.m.
- **Association of Jewish Seniors. Jamie Golombek** discusses "Financial planning," Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 470 Glencairn Ave. Breakfast at 9:30 a.m., meeting at 10 a.m. RSVP **Arnold Foss** 416-635-2900, ext. 458.
- **The PEP Group** presents entertainment and Passover refreshments April 9, Earl Bales Community Centre, 12:30 p.m. RSVP **Terri** 416-785-0335.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333 or Judi 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com.
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org.
- **Beth Sholom**'s seniors group meets for lunch and exercise every Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com
- **Doone Estey** discusses ways to have a more co-operative home and avoid nagging, March 26, 7 p.m.
- PJ Plus is an active Jewish learning program for children with a parent, Fridays April 17-June 19, 9:30 a.m. or Sundays April 12-June 28, 10 a.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "El Greco," Tuesdays, April 14-28, 1 p.m.
- Take a trip with the JCC to Stratford to see *The Diary of Anne Frank*, May 20.
- Duplicate bridge will be Thursdays April 16-June 18, 12:30 p.m.
- Dance and yoga for young adults with an intellectual disability, April 14-June 16, 6:15 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Bring your lunch and learn day, March 26. **Joseph Kertes** discusses his new novel, *The Afterlife of Stars*, 11 a.m.; **Zahava Lambert** discusses "Passover customs reflected in Judaica," 1:30 p.m.
- Free Passover-themed Shabbat family party open house, March 27, 10 a.m. RSVP anniem@mnjcc.org.
- Israeli family Kabbalat Shabbat, March 27, 5:30 p.m. Dinner, games and kids activities in Hebrew. Ext. 321.
- Opera educator **Iain Scott** discusses "*Merry Wives* and *Falstaff*," March 30, 1:30 p.m.
- Canada improv games, Toronto regional finals are at the Al Green Theatre, until March 28, 7 p.m.
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, March 29, 1 p.m. Ext. 521.
- Katka Team (grades 2-6) presented by Camp Gesher/Habonim Dror, March 29, 1 p.m. Email: Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com
- Passover arts and activities, presented by the MNJCC, Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School and PJ Library at Avenue Road Arts School, March 29, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Ext. 136.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Tinghir-Jerusalem: Echoes from the Mellah*, March 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Yigal Nizri.** Box office opens one hour before screening time
- Register for wellness workshops: MELT for neck and shoulders, March 29, 10:30 a.m.; MELT decompression of the spine, March 29, 1:30 p.m. Email fitnessguru@mnjcc.org or ext. 574.
- Register now for the Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singer's edition, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17- 21.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext 3025

- Day and evening ceramics classes offered
- Learn to play bridge or mah-jong. Day and evening classes.
- **Dr. Joey Shulman** discusses "Balance hormones, boost energy and burn fat naturally," April 16, 7 p.m.
- **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m.
- Paint your family history from realism to abstraction, Fridays 1 p.m., starts April 17.
- Learn to make large floral works on canvas, paper or fabric, April 14- June 16, 1-4 p.m.

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

Music and mandelbrot

Dr. Michael Gordon

I was at a concert given by the Toronto Symphony with Canadian pianist Jan Lisiecki playing Beethoven's fifth piano concerto – one of my favourites. As the piece started, I was taken back to my early teens, when one of my dearest aunts, Marion, came with her family to visit us at my family's small bungalow a few blocks from the Brighton Beach on whose sands I spent much of my youth.

We had recently moved into this little house. For the first time in my life, I had my own room, as previously I shared the one bedroom in our family's apartment with my sister and grandmother. We moved in the early 1950s, soon after my grandmother died.

My small room was my castle – I designed and built desks and shelves and cabinets so that it was very efficiently compact. At one end, opposite the foot of my single, narrow bed was my treasure – my music cabinet that had my turntable, the amplifier with the speakers being spread around the room for "stereophonic" effect, although the vinyl records themselves were monaural with "stereo" only coming to the public a few years later.

Marion, knowing my love for music, brought me a recording of a new release, *Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor,"* played by the renowned Robert Casadesus with the New York Philharmonic under the famous conductor Dmitri Mitropoulos, first released in 1955.

As was my habit, like that of any musicophile who received such a precious gift, I repeatedly listened to the red-sleeved record until its beauty embedded itself in my psyche. It forever resonates with the memories of my youth and my associations with Marion and her family, which was the case that night at Roy Thomson Hall.

In addition to the record she brought me, she delivered a box of her famous mandelbrot, of which she was a true master baker.

Why was Marion important to me? She was the wife of my mother's only brother, an art history professor and painter and the mother of my only two first cousins on my mother's side. She was a talented and creative person, a lover of and teacher of English literature with a deep, sonorous voice. Her love of literature resonated with me, and in my adolescent years, I loved to read, especially fiction, a habit that has not left me. She elevated reading to "the art of literature."

Another thing I associate with Marion was that she spoke Yiddish beautifully (which I basically understood from hearing my grandmother speak it to my mother about *taboo* subjects.)

Marion was also what I would call a gourmet cook, something my own mother was not. Having a meal at Marion's was always an adventure for me, and if luck would have it, she baked something for dessert, her mandelbrot being her tour de force.

She unfortunately had to deal with her own personal tragedies. Her young est daughter died in an automobile accident during a time when she was somewhat estranged from the family, and she did not have the chance to truly reconcile, especially with her father.

The impact was lifelong, even though Marion continued with her career. As other aspects of her life slowly unravelled, she always found areas of pure joy, which she dwelled on, including the extraordinary success of her son, my cousin, and his family. Every phone conversation, as our personal visits became fewer, focused on her family, and that mattered a lot, because it gave her solace, as did the joy of teaching, which she continued to do until just a few years before her death.

She was an important part of the fabric of my family and of my growing up. And the red-sleeved cover of the Casadesus recording was part of our strong bond, which I recall every time I hear the music in concert or as a recording. ■

Family Moments

MAZAL TOV!
DORA ENDER AND HARRY NADLER CONGRATULATE THEIR SON DANIEL NADLER ON COMPLETING HIS PhD DEGREE AT HEBREW UNIVERSITY
WARMLY REMEMBERED AT THIS TIME IS DANIEL'S MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER SHOSHIL ENDER
IN WOLBROMEK SHE WAS BORN IN THE POLISH SHTETL OF KRASNIK, WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THE JEWISH WORKERS WERE TAILORS. SO SHOSHIL, WHO COULD TO BE AN ATHLETE, WAS FORCED TO LEAVE SCHOOL AT EIGHT OR NINE YEARS OF AGE. THIS TRADE, HER SKILLS BROUGHT WITH THE WOLBROMEK DIASPORA, HE WAS PUT TO WORK AT THE AGE OF TEN. SHE TAILORED HER WAY INTO POLITICS. A SUPPORTER OF THE BUND, WALKING BUNDIST ORGANIZER SHOSHIL IS THE TAILOR WHO MADE FIRST SPORMS SHOSHIL ENDER WOULD BE SO THRILLED AND PROUD TO FEAT WHEN SHE WAS FORCED TO TO LEAVE SCHOOL AT TEN. HER GRANDSON GRADUATED FROM THE NUMBER ONE RANKED UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel tov to Beatrice & Jack Bishansky on their 60th anniversary. With love from their children and grandchildren.

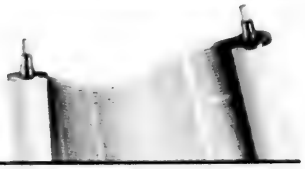
The family of Anne (Chunchie) Goodman wants you to join in celebrating her 90th birthday, March 26. We wish her continued good health and mazel.

Mazel tov to Zaidy Morris Zuckerman on his 90th birthday with much love from his children and grandchildren – wishing you health and happiness till 120!

Happy 99th birthday to Dorothy Schwartz, a wonderful mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. May all your future birthdays sparkle like this one.

Parshah

Tzav | Leviticus 6:1 - 8:36



Yacov Fruchter reminds parents and children to open their hearts to each other
Rabbi Shalom Spira explains the nuances of 'kosherizing' vessels before Pesach
Rachael Turkienicz says Shabbat Hagadol reminds us of the power of choice

Yacov Fruchter

The Shabbat before Pesach is referred to as "Shabbat Hagadol" – Shabbat of Greatness. One explanation is that this was the day the Jewish People in Egypt defied their slave masters by slaughtering sheep, an Egyptian deity. This assertion of power and trust in God was an important step in their march towards freedom that we celebrate on Pesach.

Another reason for the name can be found in the words of the Haftorah for Shabbat Hagadol, from the prophet Malachi. He famously ends his prophesy with the idea that on "the great and awesome day" Eliyahu the prophet will be sent to perform a great task.

This is the same Eliyahu Hanavi (the prophet) that visits us at the seder. And what is the great act that Eliyahu will perform on this "great day" as promised to us on the "Great" Shabbat?

"*Vheishiv lev avot*" – "And I shall return the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to their parents, lest I strike the land with destruction."

Really? Is that the extent of what will transpire on the "great and awesome" day? Does it really require the restorative powers of Elijah to remind parents and their children to turn their hearts to one another? Is the relationship between families, generations and loved ones so broken that a miracle is required to heal the wounds?

Sadly, we know that the words of Malachi continue to ring true today. If we can just learn to open our hearts to our parents, both to share and to listen, and accept the gifts of their hearts, our world would indeed be a very different place. We need children who are willing to share with their parents their most challenging questions, and parents who see their kids as more complex than being able to fit into one of four categories. If we don't, we will continue on a path toward suffering and brokenness. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"And if it was cooked in a copper vessel, [the latter] shall be wiped and rinsed with water." (Leviticus 6:21). The Gemara, Avodah Zarah 76a, decodes this to mean that after the ritual deadline for eating any offering passes, there is a mitzvah to wash the metal vessel in which the offering was cooked. Following this cleansing, we must independently purge the vessel in boiling water (*hagalah*) to "kosherize" it, just as Numbers 31:21-23 requires for treif metal cookery. This is because the sacrificial flavour that is absorbed within the utensil walls has become forbidden following the deadline.

Nevertheless, concludes the Gemara, although Numbers 31:21-23 demands the more powerful purification of blow-torching (*libbun*) for treif metal pyrolysis equipment (e.g., shish kabob spits), such is never required for sacrificial utensils. *Hagalah* will always suffice in the Temple, because at the time the offering was roasted (prior to the deadline), the foodstuff was still kosher (*heteira bala*).

This distinction leads some decisors to claim that the same is true for utensils in which chametz was toasted prior to Pesach. Because chametz was still kosher then, *hagalah* will suffice to kosherize the vessel for Pesach. Others counter that chametz is more stringent than the case of expired offerings, because once Pesach arrives, there will not be even one moment during which chametz is permissible. The latter school indeed prescribes *libbun*. (See *Encyclopedia Talmudit*, s.v. *hagalah*, sec. 11.)

Rabbi Menasheh Klein (*Teshuvot Mishneh Halakhot* 6:93) envisages this controversy as bearing a further ramification regarding when to sell chametz for a Jew who will celebrate Pesach in a different time zone than his/her home (where the chametz merchandise is stored). If chametz is *heteira bala*, then it is a homocentric prohibition, whereas if *libbun* is indeed required, then chametz is a nutrient-centric prohibition. Rabbi Klein prefers that one cover both possibilities. ■

Rabbi Shalom Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

The Shabbat before Pesach is called "Shabbat Hagadol," the Great Shabbat. We might think that one of the Sabbaths before the High Holidays would be "The Great One," and yet it's the one before Pesach.

The unusual thing about that Shabbat, long ago in Egypt, was that God commanded the Israelites to choose a lamb for sacrifice, separate it from the flock and keep it separate for three days. It seems like such a simple task, but the text already mentioned that the Egyptians didn't view animals the way the Israelites did. For an ancient Egyptian, the lamb had a level of godhood. To select one, separate and designate it for slaughter was to make yourself a target. The Egyptians would never take kindly to this action.

Jewish commentaries point out that this was the first commandment the Israelites actively chose to do. If they were inclined to be Egyptian, they would not select a lamb. If they chose God over Egypt, they would follow the commandment. It was the moment of great choice.

Every choice in life involves two steps: turning away and turning toward. This was first described to us with Abraham and Sarah, the first Jews. "Lech lecha," leave the old world, turn away, and turn toward the new unknown. That moment of first choice is the greatest of moments. It's the time a new door opens and we find the courage, or perhaps the trust, to cross its threshold.

The Greatest Shabbat, Shabbat Hagadol, is that first moment of choosing – turning away from Egypt and turning toward God. Sometimes we're so busy with reaching our goals that we don't notice our greatest moments of choice. Shabbat Hagadol reminds us to take note of those moments. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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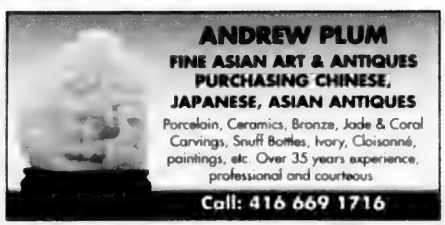
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Cotler met his future wife as he helped make peace

CONTINUED ROM PAGE 28

"Begin looked at me and said, 'She [Zeevi] is my confidante for all things.' In other words, she's in the meeting."

"Then I shared with Begin the contents of the note… I gave it to him," Cotler said.

"He read the note and said these conditions are unacceptable," he recalled. "I said, 'I didn't say the conditions were acceptable to you. I'm just conveying to you the fact that these are the conditions [Sadat] conveyed but that he would want to explore. Peace negotiations would ensue, and I believe they're worth exploring.'

"He asked if Sadat was sincere," Cotler continued.

"'Yes, I have no doubt about his sincerity. I have no doubt about his commitment to peace,'" he replied.

And while Begin again repeated that Sadat's conditions were unacceptable, Cotler suggested the overture was still worth exploring.

"That's exactly what happened."

There were other back channels being explored at the time – one involved famed Israeli military and political leader Moshe Dayan.

After delivering his letter, Cotler's role was limited, "other than to report back."

No doubt peace talks would have resulted even without his contribution.

But don't underestimate the importance of personal relationships, he said.

Begin and Sadat met and developed a personal rapport that helped them overcome political and diplomatic obstacles and, in the end, make peace.

"I believe it would not have happened had they not developed this personal relationship between them," he suggests.

"The initial trust that developed between them presaged the agreement. Without that personal relationship, there would not have been that agreement," Cotler said.

There have been reports that there was friction between the two leaders, but Cotler believes they did get along.

Bottom line: they each trusted that the other was truly committed to peace.

Cotler has said little to date about his role in launching the peace talks. They were reported briefly in 1977 and again four years ago in a report in Israel by journalist David Horovitz.

But this year, on the 36th anniversary of the Israel Egypt peace treaty, Cotler believes it's time to complete the record.

> *We had our differences then, we have our differences now*

And there's another aspect of the story that bears mentioning.

Not only did Begin and Sadat develop a personal relationship, so, too, did Cotler and Zeevi. At the time, Cotler was aligned with the Meretz Party, which was on the left wing of the Israeli political spectrum. Zeevi, of course, was a prominent Likudnik.

"We had our differences then, we have our differences now," Cotler said.

It took about two years before Egypt and Israel's rapprochement – the same length of time as Cotler's courtship.

On March 26, 1979, the day the peace treaty was signed in Washington, Cotler and Zeevi were married.

And while Cotler's cameo appearance in one historical event ended, he went on to play a more prominent role in the other. ■

Jewish high schools said to help attract families

CONTINUED ROM PAGE 8

Before coming to Toronto, Rabbi Buckman headed an Atlanta Jewish school that turned around its enrolment figures. While he is still learning about the Canadian experience, he said, "I would be very cautious about projecting a decline in enrolment for too many years out."

Vancouver, with 190 students in King David High School, up from 140 students four years ago, is proof that there are strategies that can reverse declining enrolment.

Ari Shiff, co-president of King David High School, said he found Jewish day schools were in difficult financial straits when he and his young family first moved to Vancouver from Toronto several years ago.

Applying the same principles he used to run his business, he and a group of like-minded community members began to overhaul the Jewish day school system.

One of the first things they did was to help the schools qualify for a higher level of government funding, which currently deposits an extra $500,000 into the schools' coffers annually.

Ottawa's main community high school announced last month that it is closing.

Even while the schools were in the red, money was spent to improve education, increase financial assistance and build fundraising departments in each elementary school. A concerted push to attract parents who could pay full tuition was also made.

To keep the high school healthy, growth must happen at both ends, with strong preschool programs in the elementary schools and innovative offerings at the high school, he said.

King David, for example, is initiating a new outdoor education program. "We go out and write grant proposals, and we bring in other donors. Eventually it grows the enrolment. It starts to attract a whole different crowd than we were attracting before," Shiff said.

Having a thriving high school changes the Jewish culture of the entire city, Shiff said.

Many years ago, his wife's family left Vancouver to find Jewish education for their teenaged children. Today, kosher bakeries, butcher shops, yeshivas and even a mohel are more likely to stay, when they know there is a high-quality Jewish high school in town, he said.

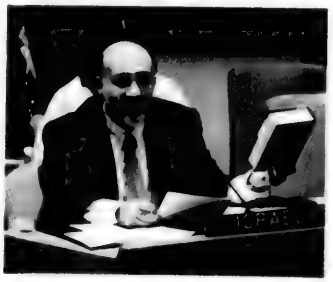
"Jewish professionals can now settle in the city." ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MARCH 26, 2015

Ron Prosor: envoy walks UN halls 'tall and proud'

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Ron Prosor serves as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. Before that, he was Israel's ambassador to the United Kingdom. Earlier this month, he was in Toronto as a guest of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to provide briefings to Jewish community leaders as well as members of the media. He sat down to talk to *The CJN*.



Ron Prosor defending Israel at the UN

Your colleague, the Israeli ambassador to the United States, Ron Dermer, is credited with helping arrange Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent address to the U.S. Congress. Did you have a role to play in that?

I'd like to focus on the fact that the important thing is what Prime Minister Netanyahu said about the Iranian issue. Let's zoom out for a second. What do you see? Today, Iran without nuclear weapons is taking over Yemen, through the Houthis. They are in Iraq, in Syria and in Lebanon.

The regime in Tehran is helping Syrian President Bashar Assad, the only ophthalmologist that I know who is cutting the vision of his people every day.

We see Iran, without nuclear weapons, conducting terror. We see Iran's record on human rights – hanging gays, stoning women – an appalling record on human rights. If you see their behaviour without nuclear weapons and a delivery system, just think how it will affect the whole region with nuclear weapons.

It's not just a problem for Israel. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and others in the region clearly want to defend themselves. It's going to change the whole strategic environment in the Middle East.

They control the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb [two choke points through which Middle Eastern oil flows to world markets], so it is absolutely important that the issue of Iran is on the table.

What has been the fallout from Netanyahu's speech?

It's not just Israel. Other countries are affected. You see a bit of it coming out in the Arab world, which is important.

Al Arabiya, the Saudi newspaper, came out with the stance to listen to what Israel is saying about the situation. Under the radar, in the Gulf, they're worried. You can understand their worries. They're on the front line.

The idea of focusing only on Israel's concerns is very narrow. The Arab world is quite united about a nuclear Iran.

Iran is radical Islam with a connection to nuclear weapons. It's a huge threat to world peace.

You recently sent a letter to the United Nations with Israel's concerns about Iran's role in arming Hamas and Hezbollah. Do you expect that to lead to anything?

Iran is not just sending weapons, missiles and money. Iran is arming Hezbollah. An Iranian general was found strolling near the Israeli-Syrian border.

Iran has created with Hezbollah a situation that Hezbollah has nearly 100,000 rockets, more than most NATO powers.

They give money to Assad and money and missiles to Hezbollah. Hezbollah is actively involved with Assad in butchering his own population.

Hamas has been testing rockets lately, shooting them into the Mediterranean Sea, so they are re-arming and trying to put longer ranges on those missiles.

They are taking cement that is supposed to be used for hospitals and schools and using it to rebuild terror tunnels.

We see repetition every day of the leaders speaking of the liquidation of Israel.

There was an operation in Gaza, Operation Protective Edge, and the idea was to stop missiles launched against Israeli civilians.

Hamas agreed to reconstruct Gaza. They're using the money, the cement, to build tunnels and reinvigorate the rockets.

We tell the UN so in the future they won't say they didn't know. The same thing in the north. That's crucial. Under UN Resolution 1701, you have UNIFIL to make sure Hezbollah does not introduce new weapons in the buffer zone. And we see them breaking those agreements every day.

The UN is about to receive a report about last summer's war with Hamas. Will the departure of commission chair William Schabas, who resigned after it was revealed he had given a legal opinion to the PLO, make a difference to the report's findings? Do you expect it to be fair to Israel?

> *Instead of pointing fingers, the world should embrace us, give us a hug, because we are on the front lines.*

We have a situation where Israel from the start said this chairman, this committee, is biased. The former chairman is on the record saying his dream is to have [former Israeli prime minister and president] Shimon Peres and Bibi Netanyahu come to the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

He resigned because it's obvious he's on the payroll of the PLO. It means the whole process from Israel's point of view is flawed.

We feel the commission of inquiry should be revoked.

U.S. officials say that under the current administration, the number of anti-Israel resolutions at the UN have gone down. Can you comment?

The United States, every day, stands with Israel in a different part of the UN, the Security Council, committees.

There is a triple standard versus Israel. There's one standard for democracies, another for dictatorships and another for Israel. The UN Human Rights Council has Saudi Arabia, Cuba and Qatar on it. It's like having Jack the Ripper run Scotland Yard.

The council's permanent agenda item 4 deals with human rights violations all over the world, and there's a special agenda item, No. 7, for every meeting that singles out Israel, the only country in the world singled out.

How difficult is it for you on a personal level to deal with this constant attack?

I walk the corridors of the UN tall and proud, knowing who I represent. Israel has nothing to be ashamed of.

Part of my strategy is to present what Israel is all about, apart from the conflict, such as sustainable development. I've introduced resolutions on entrepreneurship for development. One hundred and forty one countries raised their hands for an Israeli resolution, while the Arabs did everything they could to fight this resolution. It's part of their delegitimization and demonization of Israel.

But representatives of African countries said that while they don't agree with Israel politically, they said that what Israel is doing is absolutely amazing.

Another example, from the cultural side, was bringing in Rita, an Israeli diva, to sing in Farsi and Hebrew two years ago. One hundred and twenty-two countries were in the General Assembly hall, including the Secretary General, who opened the event.

Has all this made a difference at the UN?

At the UN, it's like Economics 101 with a demand and supply curves and the equilibrium. In the UN there's a demand for demonization of Israel but there's also demand for Israeli know-how. We're trying to introduce that, to get to the point of equilibrium.

You often appear on campuses to speak to Jewish students How can Jewish students stand up to the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement and pro-Palestinian groups?

There is not a campus from Cardiff to Edinburgh where I was not received by denunciations on the outside and hecklers inside. At the University of Edinburgh, someone ran at me.

I speak truth to people who one day will be future leaders. I tell them that on the Israeli Supreme Court we have an Israeli Arab. We have ambassadors around the world who are Arab and Druze. That women are in the judiciary. That all the banks today are headed by women.

Israel is a flourishing democracy.

Some don't know this. For some, it doesn't make a difference. From my point of view, success is having someone who listens to you, who question their positions, who asks more questions, and who questions their own suppositions.

Do you think people are coming to appreciate the kinds of challenges Israel is facing?

Israel is on the front line encountering phenomena that western democracies have yet to encounter.

We are trying to defend our citizens on the one hand and not go overboard on the other. Twenty-five years ago, we checked people at airports. People said it was an invasion of privacy, a violation of human rights.

Instead of pointing fingers, the world should embrace us, give us a hug, because we are on the front lines. ■

What my uncle's 'cause of death' by the Nazis really meant

Backstory

ELI HONIG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The 17th day of Adar came out on March 8 this year, and it marked the yahrzeit of my uncle Shlomo (Salomon) Scheinbach's death – or should I say his murder?

Remarkably, the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Germany, attests to him dying in Auschwitz at 2 p.m. on Feb. 22, 1943, with the cause of death listed as "pleuropneumonia."

As a hidden infant, I didn't know my uncle. My mother, sisters and I had been placed in different safe locales through the efforts of a large extended French family who risked life, limb and torture to save us. And, because I was born on Nov. 4, 1942 – some five months after my father, his siblings and their spouses were arrested in the infamous July 16, 1942 roundup across France – I couldn't know these members of my deported family, all of whom were sent to Auschwitz. My father perished there at 10:55 a.m. on Sept. 23, 1942. The cause of his death was officially recorded as "bilateral pneumonia."

To round up this haunting picture with its implausibly specific details, there was my uncle, Chiel Roth, whose death was registered as occurring at 9:45 a.m. on Oct. 9, 1942, due to "bronchopneumonia."

Finally, there was my Uncle Chanina, my father's brother. Though he had arrived in Auschwitz together with the others, he somehow survived even the death march following the evacuation of the camp ahead of the advancing Soviet army. He arrived in Mauthausen on Feb. 16, 1945 and died there on Feb. 25, 1945 at 7:10 a.m. Cause of death: "sepsis phlegmon on the right upper arm".

The other six members of my immediate family were listed by the International Tracing Service as having arrived at Auschwitz, but there are no records of their death. Presumably, they were dispatched in the gas chambers upon arrival.

I have long wondered about the meticulous death records that I have for my father and three uncles, one of which was recorded in February 1945 when the war's end was clearly visible to most observers, and in particular, to the near vanquished. The almost fanatical "need" of the Nazis to keep such records for those inmates who were not immediately murdered, while at the same time trying to hide even from their own people evidence of their horrendous crimes, is almost incomprehensible. It remains a haunting enigma for me to this day.

Still, when I first confronted what I thought were especially "lame" causes of death in the surreal world of the camp, I naively considered these to be crude euphemisms for masking the deeds of their perpetrators. I suspected that some weeks heart attacks would be the central cause of death, while in others, it would be strokes, or typhus or a host of different things.

Morbid reality set in when I remembered what my mother had relayed to me years before I had obtained such detailed information about my family. I hadn't realized then the full import of what she said. After the war, a survivor of Auschwitz told her that he had witnessed my Uncle Shlomo's death in February of 1943 when he was in a labour detail with a Polish inmate.

It seems that my uncle told the Pole that the Germans were going to "lose the war," and the fellow then reported this to a German officer. My uncle was subsequently brought to a large tub of water and his head was dunked in and held in place until he collapsed. Then he was pulled out, revived, and the process was repeated – dunk, collapse, revive, dunk, collapse, revive – until he was dead.

It is difficult to describe the additional horror I felt when I finally comprehended the macabre, recorded cause of death – "pleuropneumonia." A dictionary definition notes that the "pleural membranes enclose a fluid filled space surrounding the lungs," while pleuropneumonia is "a combined inflammation of the pleura and lungs."

I suspect as well that in their grotesquely imaginative and unfathomably evil minds, the "medical scribes" of the Nazis were fully aware that the term pleuropneumonia also describes an "acute febrile respiratory disorder of cattle." ■

Eli Honig taught physics at CHAT for 31 years, and for longer than that at the University of Toronto, where he continues to teach part time.

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Sone, Joyce	Jan. 22, 2015	2 Buchan Crt
Nusbaum, Edith	Jan. 23, 2015	31 Prue Ave
Reznikova, Ida	Jan. 23, 2015	Private
Feuerstein, Tibor	Jan. 23, 2015	2 Neptune Dr
Reti, Marianne	Jan. 24, 2015	Private
Weinman, Shereen	Jan. 24, 2015	Strictly Private
Gaum, Elliott	Jan. 25, 2015	1166 Bay St
Newman, Anne	Jan. 25, 2015	56 Duncan Dr
Heber, Morris	Jan. 25, 2015	17 Palm Dr
Baram, Harvey Walter	Jan. 25, 2015	32 Camden St
Rosen, Garry	Jan. 26, 2015	19 Invermay Ave
Lasky, Sam	Jan. 26, 2015	Private
Gorelik, Sergey	Jan. 27, 2015	79 Chaya Sara Gardens
Bespaly, Solomon	Jan. 27, 2015	Private
Volovik, Mila	Jan. 27, 2015	Private
Schwalm, William George	Jan. 27, 2015	115 Antibes Dr
Bicevs, Victor	Jan. 28, 2015	Private
Yutman, Gussie	Jan. 28, 2015	131 Torresdale Ave
Gerhard, Aron	Jan. 29, 2015	3181 Bayview Ave
Vinnikov, Yefim	Jan. 29, 2015	53 Skipperhill Cres
Vaisberg, Sonia	Jan. 30, 2015	35 Cedarcroft Blvd
Adler, Shlomo	Jan. 30, 2015	3560 Bathurst St
Kaufman, Lenka	Jan. 31, 2015	7420 Bathurst St
Keller, Lila	Jan. 31, 2015	318 Laurentian Blvd
Weiszberger, George	Jan. 31, 2015	Private
Magid, Jankiela Moishe	Feb. 1, 2015	493 Glengarry Ave
Farber, Lillian	Feb. 1, 2015	205 Cummer St
Landsberg, Reva G.	Feb. 1, 2015	18 Steeles Ave. E

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Moshe Proshetsky	Mar 6/15	
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Betty Berofsky	Mar 6/15	27 Cadillac Avenue
Ralph Paulin	Mar 7/15	68 Carrington Drive
Edith Silver	Mar 8/15	484 Steeles Avenue West
Nate Ash	Mar 9/15	7 Townsgate Drive
Stanley Gold	Mar 7/15	1 Emerald Lane
Murray Lazer	Mar 10/15	11 Townsgate Drive
Kenneth Saltzman Q.C.	Mar 10/15	500 Avenue Road
Lana Shapiro	Mar 10/15	7 Townsgate Drive
David Rosenfeld	Mar 11/15	660 Sheppard Ave. E.
Fay Bacher	Mar 12/15	85 Skymark Drive
Eli Adler	Mar 11/15	55 Delisle Avenue
Meryl Gangbar	Mar 12/15	541 Finch Avenue West
Charles Hanet	Mar 12/15	15 Canyon Avenue
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Sylvia (Porter) Molson	Mar 10/15	341 Randolph Avenue

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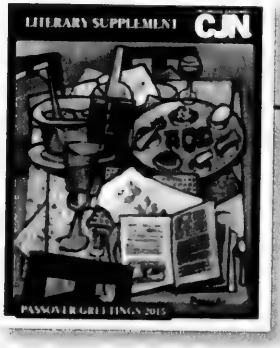

Fiction and poetry for your seder

Enjoy our annual collection of short stories and verse.

The CJN profiles 24 innovators who are taking Judaism in new and exciting directions. **PAGES 8 and 40-45**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	7:25 p.m.	8:30 p.m.
Montreal	7:06 p.m.	8:12 p.m.
Ottawa	7:15 p.m.	8:20 p.m.
Toronto	7:28 p.m.	8:32 p.m.
Winnipeg	7:45 p.m.	8:55 p.m.
Calgary	7:54 p.m.	9:05 p.m.
Vancouver	7:28 p.m.	8:37 p.m.

6 27843 39403 7

Jewish groups back Bill C-51

CIJA, B'nai Brith, Wiesenthal argue legislation combats increased terror threat. **PAGE 12**

Election fallout continues

Analysis and commentary PAGES 11, 26, 46, 47, 52
PLUS *The CJN* goes one on one with Ehud Barak, PAGE 77

A transgender first, and Kimye circus is headed to Jerusalem

Today she is a man

In what is believed to be a first, a non-denominational Jewish day school in California held a ceremony earlier this month marking a 13-year-old girl's decision to become a boy. Eighth-grader Tom (formerly Mia) Sosnik's ceremony took place before teachers, friends and family in the chapel of the Tehiyah Day School in El Cerrito, near San Francisco. In a speech at the March 13 event, Sosnik said he decided to come out as transgender after the December 2014 suicide of Ohio teen Leelah Alcorn, 17, who left a note saying she felt she had no other choice but to kill herself after her conservative Christian family forced her to undergo conversion therapy. In response to Sosnik's decision, the Tehiyah community has been learning more about gender diversity in partnership with Gender Spectrum, a local group that supports transgender kids and teens.

Vickers gets Wiesenthal award

Former parliamentary sergeant-at-arms Kevin Vickers received a Medal of Valor from the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles March 24 for his role in stopping an armed attacker on Parliament Hill last October. He's credited with shooting the armed gunmen dead, but has consistently downplayed his actions. "I've always said this is not about me, this is about a remarkable security team," he told *CTV News*. Vickers was appointed Canada's ambassador to Ireland in January.

Kanye and Kim to visit the Holy Land

Hip hop star Kanye West and his reality TV star wife Kim Kardashian are reportedly planning to visit Israel later this month. The celebrity power couple booked rooms at Jerusalem's high-end Waldorf Astoria Hotel for their entourage for April 12, *Yediot Achronot* reported. The hotel declined to comment. *Yediot* also reported that everyone involved in the visit has signed a multimillion-dollar confidentiality agreement and an Israeli security firm that specializes in protecting VIPs has been hired. The couple reportedly is visiting Israel before flying to Jordan. ■

Kim Kardashian

Gematria

40

Facebook says it will add 40 staff in Israel, in addition to the 75 in its Tel Aviv office.

11

The number of months in jail handed down last week to Sheikh Ra'ad Saleh, head of the northern wing of the Islamic Movement in Israel, for incitement and racism in a 2007 speech in Jerusalem.

Quotable

"The seder is extremely difficult to orchestrate precisely because it should be a three-ring circus."

— Noam Zion, author of *A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah*. See p. 76.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Count the Omer with Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

Inside today's edition

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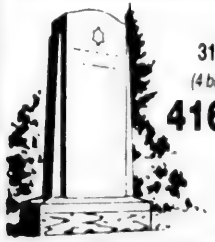

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Happy Passover!

Creative Ideas in Financial Planning

Letters to the Editor

The moral of Masada

In response to the letter "Bibi and Masada," (March 26), it's important to clarify that the storytellers of Masada were not "peacemakers," as suggested. They were Jews who hid to escape the mass suicide, but were later taken as slaves to Rome, never again to live another free day. They chose a life of slavery over death. They did not choose peace with their Roman conquerors.

Having just finished reading Josephus Flavius' *The Jewish War*, I feel it is important to present a more accurate analogy: a two-state solution with Hamastan in the West Bank is akin to the fall of Judea in 73 CE. It will inevitably bring about the fall of modern-day Israel.

When a nation lives without security, there can be no true freedom. Equating Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's declaration regarding the lack of a prospect of a two-state solution with national suicide is especially absurd. The opposite is true. A two-state solution without guarantees for Israel's survival will bring about its destruction.

Two thousand years later, we are still here to tell the story of Masada and the Roman Empire is not. I hope the same will be true in another 2,000 years should a Palestinian state ever be established alongside Israel. My doubts do not make me any less Zionist.

Steven Arie Glowinsky
Toronto

Modelling a Jewish life

Having worked in supplementary Jewish education for almost 40 years, I found the debate about education to be interesting ("How can we ensure the future of Jewish education?" March 19).

What I found lacking in both articles is that neither day nor supplementary schools take place in a vacuum. One of the keys to Jewish identity is what happens at home outside of school hours. The child who comes from a home where Judaism is practised with Shabbat observance in a way that's meaningful for the family, where holidays are celebrated at home and at synagogue, and mitzvot are modelled will have a strong connection to what is being taught and experienced at school. They see meaning in what they're learning. Add a Jewish summer camp, and you have an individual who is connected to Jewish life.

A child who comes from a home where there is little to no Jewish observance will have knowledge, but no examples of Jewish living outside of school. Jewish education needs to help children understand what it means to live a Jewish life all the time, not just at school, and the active participation of the family is essential.

Karen Goodis
Toronto

Problems at Baycrest

I have worked with people with dementia and their families and know all too well how vulnerable they and other residents of long-term care homes can be. As a volunteer with an organization that advocates for residents of long-term care homes, I am familiar with the regulations of the Ontario Ministry of Health and their inspections process ("Health inspection finds problems at Baycrest," March 19).

The Ministry of Health required Baycrest, like any other Ontario long-term care home, to implement a plan to protect its residents from abuse, for which there is zero tolerance. Yet Baycrest has not complied, despite an order to do so dating back to August 2014. There is no excuse for this failure. A spokesperson says Baycrest "is equipped to readjust its procedures when shortcomings are brought to its attention." If that is the case, the Jewish community should be hearing forthwith how Baycrest will be ensuring zero tolerance of abuse of our vulnerable elders.

Marcia Zalev
Toronto

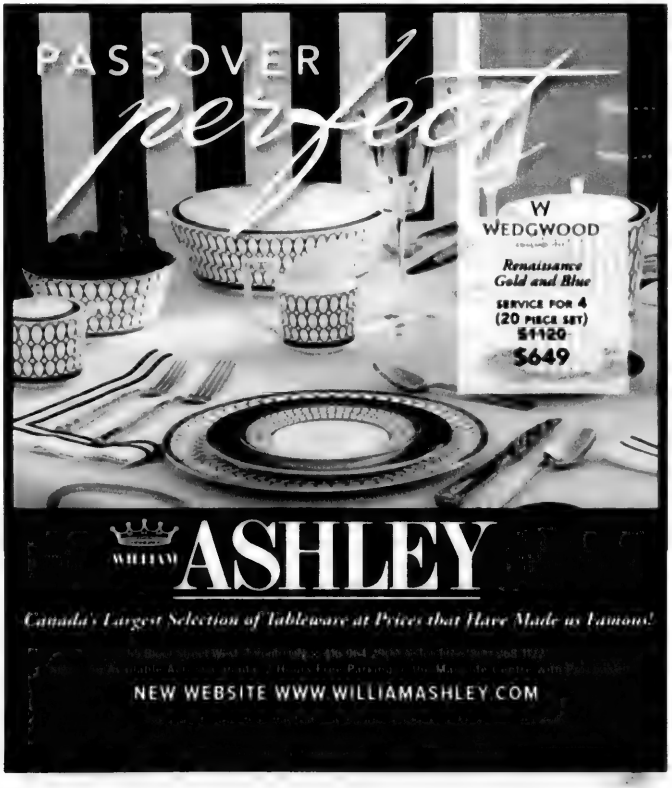
Not truly Orthodox

The *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne* ("A proudly Canadian Haggadah designed for all Jews," March 5) includes "commentaries from 20 rabbis (and one maharat, the title for ordained female clergy in modern Orthodoxy) from across... the denominational spectrum."

Modern Orthodoxy does not ordain women, nor would its members ever publish a Haggadah with input from clergy across the denominational spectrum. This movement, which calls itself "Open Orthodoxy" is open to practices that are not shared by mainstream Orthodoxy. Their Orthodoxy thus remains an open question.

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcomed; they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the writer's name, address and phone number.*



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RABBI-2-RABBI

There is no perfect Haggadah

Each Jew experiences the movement to redemption in a different way, and the best versions of the classic text force us to read deeply and connect an ancient message to life today

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Cutler: As an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, one week prior to Pesach I would bring the largest backpack I owned to Robarts Library where I would check out dozens of Haggadot to be used at my family's seders. Later, as a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary, I would do the same.

The Haggadah is almost certainly the Jewish book with the highest number of editions and commentaries. History provides beautiful illuminated Haggadot, feminist Haggadot and vegetarian Haggadot among many others, all focusing in their own way on the theme of redemption.

This year, we are blessed with the new *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne*, of which you are an author. Amid the crowded marketplace of Haggadot, why did you feel the need to produce another? What themes in the Haggadah particularly resonate with you? Do you ever notice a tension between one Haggadah and the next?

Rabbi Scheier: Like you, I love Haggadot. But at no point have I said, "Ah, I found the Haggadah that's perfect for me!" I believe that's because there is no Haggadah that is a perfect fit for everyone. Rather, Passover is the ultimate personalized experience. The objective is for each Jew to feel intimately connected with the experience of slavery and freedom.

In editing the *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne*, I did not endeavour to produce the ultimate Haggadah. Rather, I sought to connect with a part of me that I hadn't yet found in any other Haggadah: the experience of living in Canada and possessing a strong Canadian identity.

Rabbi Cutler: I opened my email this morning to discover a notice that Sefaria, a free online portal that bills itself as "a living library of Jewish texts," has just published a Haggadah complete with newly translated classical commentaries. It seems that the Haggadah itself is finding freedom from the printed page and moving into an interconnected space that will allow it to grow in perpetuity.

As you have alluded, there can never be a perfect Haggadah, as each of us experiences the movement to redemption in a different way. Of course, I do have my favourites, which tend toward the academic. I love reading how what we now view as the standard text developed over time and in different places.

And I'm equally excited when a comment in a Haggadah that I tend not to use on seder night excites someone else around the table. Ultimately, a great Haggadah is one that forces the reader to stop "davening" the Haggadah, to read it deeply, to engage with the words and to connect it to life today.

Rabbi Scheier: For me, the highlight of publishing a Haggadah has been seeing how it has been received and interpreted. I was so moved by how many who read it have found a piece of their own personal or family experience in the book. I hope that many others will continue to have this reaction.

Ultimately, our hope for the Haggadah is that it will engage people in the Jewish ritual of the Passover seder. Perhaps, by feeling that there is a Haggadah that speaks to a certain part of their identity and needs, some in our Canadian Jewish community might feel more connected to their tradition.

I have always seen the Passover seder as an opportunity for engagement. As a child, I recall it as the most engaged experience with Jewish ritual. I remember the thrill of searching for the afikoman, the excitement of being a young child allowed to stay up late, at the adults' table. I can still feel the bated-breath anticipation that all of the children had as we waited for the pinnacle of our seder experience: the friendly competition we held at the end, in which each child competed with my grandfather (and each other) in who could hold the final note of *Chad Gadya* the longest (the winner won bragging rights until next year's seder).

Writing the *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne* was a years-long process of challenges, successes and discovery. Ultimately, I think the project's success will be measured by its ability to inspire the conversations that, like those I recall around my grandparents' table, stay with the seder participants long after the afikoman is consumed. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Dubinsky seder table

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

The Dubinsky seder in the family home in Kirkland Lake, Ont., circa 1930. Pictured, standing, from left, are Barry Blitstein, Mania Blitstein, Min Dubinsky (m. Kushner), Goldy Helfie, Pearl Vellus, Carl Dubin and Al Dubin. Seated,from left are, Tillie Dubinsky, unidentified, Faye Rosenberg, unidentified, unidentified, Joe Dash and Ann Dubinsky (m. Goldstein).

SeeJN | Passover shopping

MARK NEYMAN/GPO PHOTO

The children from the early childhood centre at Holy Blossom Temple go shopping for the National Council of Jewish Women's Passover food drive.

From Yoni's Desk

A commitment to the traditions of Judaism

In this week's *CJN*, we profile 24 people who are making their mark in the Canadian Jewish community. On the surface, they don't seem to share much in common: some live in Toronto, others in Montreal. Some work directly in the Jewish community, while others are applying Jewish values beyond the borders of Canadian Jewry. A few are outwardly religious, others not so much. There are experts who have already established themselves in their respective fields and young upstarts just beginning to hit their stride.

There's Yehuda Azoulay, who is on a mission to bring Sephardi culture to mainstream Judaism, and Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold, at the forefront of the women's leadership movement in Orthodox Judaism. There's Risa Alyson Cooper and Stephan Ouaknine, each in their own unique way fusing Judaism and environmentalism. There's Sara Angel, who has worked tirelessly to recover Nazi-looted artwork, and Tamara Kramer, who's bringing the shtetl to your radio. And there are artists such as Eli Batalion, one half of the YidLife Crisis duo, and Zev Moses, who helms the Interactive Jewish Museum of Montreal, both of whom are bringing Jewish culture to entirely new creative platforms.

What unites them all is a commitment to the traditions of Judaism and to exploring new ways to express those traditions. And there's no better time of year to showcase their achievements than Pesach, when we honour our first steps as a nation and consider the next steps to come. Our future and our past are inextricably linked – that's the prevailing theme of the Passover seder, and what ultimately connects these 24 trailblazers.

And speaking of the future and new ideas, last week's cover story exploring shrinking enrolment at Jewish high schools across the country (with the notable exception of Vancouver's King David High School) underlined the need for creative vision to ensure the future of Jewish education. We know you have your own ideas about what schools, community institutions and individuals must do to strengthen Jewish schools – and we want to hear from you. Send your ideas to cjninfo@gmail.com, and we'll publish the best ones in a future edition.

• • •

This Passover edition marks the first anniversary of the new *CJN*. Looking back on the last 12 months, I think we have a lot to be proud of. Clearly I'm not alone.

Last week, *The CJN* took home a major honour at the 2015 Canadian Community Newspaper Awards. We were named the top overall publication in the highest circulation category. It's a testament to the gargantuan effort that goes into assembling these pages every week.

From the reporters and editors who bring you the best stories and commentary in our community to the designers and production staff responsible for packaging those words with compelling imagery – not to mention our advertising and marketing departments, who are out in the community strengthening our brand, and the accounting and office staff that help keep everything running smoothly – *The CJN* is blessed with a uniquely talented staff.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all. I hope this award will be the first of many in recognition of your incredible work.

Chag Samayach. ■ — YONI

SPEECH

'The award I always coveted was the Cy Young': Mordecai Richler

Jacob Richler

On March 12, 2015, Mordecai Richler was named an honorary citizen of Montreal, and the public library on Park Avenue renamed Bibliothèque Mordecai-Richler.

The following is excerpted from a speech delivered by his son at the dedication ceremony.

Just last month in the *Globe and Mail* I came across yet another story about how my father was unlikely to ever be honoured by the City of Montreal. And I got to thinking about that gazebo on the mountain, and what my father would have made of it. More particularly, if he would have wanted it at all. The line of thinking unexpectedly brought me back to a fall night in 1997, at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto, where my father had just won the Giller Prize for his novel *Barney's Version* – and with it, collected a $25,000 cheque from his old friend from Baron Bing High School, Jack Rabinovitch.

Upon taking the microphone Dad changed the topic to a preferred subject – professional sports. "Thank you," he said. "But the award I always coveted was the Cy Young."

This got me thinking. Maybe the sundry initiatives to honour him were in fact on the wrong track. And the best thing to do to get Montreal city council out of its self-created bind was for me to ring up my old high school friend from Westmount, Geoff Molson, and see if just possibly his Montreal Canadiens might step in instead. What I was picturing was my father's favourite old cardigan hanging from the rafters of the Bell Centre with the retired sweaters of the rest of *Nos Glorieux* – ideally, right alongside the one belonging to Jean Beliveau, who my Dad so enjoyed rooming with on his last salmon fishing trip to Newfoundland.

Admittedly this seemed like a long shot. So I returned to considering the proposals already fielded

One imaginative citizen suggested putting my father's name on the Metro station that now bears that of the Abbé Lionel Groulx. There was poetic justice to the suggestion. But it didn't feel quite right. The problem being that my father had never once set foot on the Metro, and didn't know what it was all about.

By which I don't mean to suggest he was not resourceful when it came to Montreal transit: for example, I distinctly remember him once faking a bad limp while hailing a taxi, because it was bitterly cold out and he didn't want to be declined for the fare from our downtown apartment to the Montreal Press Club, just three blocks away.

Anyway, the suggestion of street name seemed more appropriate. And if it was politically difficult, I thought that I had a solution, plucked straight out of Montreal history. My late friend, the long time city councillor Nick Auf der Maur once explained to me that the reason we have a downtown street with bizarre name of City Councillors was to combat a situation at city hall whereby councillors kept negotiating secret agreements to name streets after each other. Rue City Councillors was the truce – a street named for all of them, to put a stop to the re-naming frenzy once and for all.

So why not a rue Anglo Novelists? Everyone would understand that it was named for my dad, without it explicitly saying so. The English letters on his sign would be twice the size as the French ones. And as an added bonus, if in the future Montreal were to ever again be inconvenienced with another brilliant English novelist of the politically meddlesome sort, no awkward posthumous recognition would be required, for it would already be in place.

Jacob Richler with his mother Florence in the Mordechai Richler Reading Room at Concordia University in 2013.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

It might have worked – but it was a bit of a clunker. So I am profoundly grateful that at that point Mayor [Denis] Coderre finally entered the fray with a far more elegant and appropriate solution.

A library. In Mile End.

It's perfect. And the fact that it's located in a former Anglican church somehow makes it just a little more so.

This is a great honour for all of us Richlers – and I thank you especially on my mother's behalf, Mayor Coderre, for seeing this through in her lifetime. I also want to single out Counc. Marvin Rotrand for his efforts advancing the file

And before leaving I want to acknowledge something else. Many people are against this, and since the day my father died – if not before – been vigorously and vocally opposed to this city honouring him in any way at all. Some such people even sit on council. And to all of them I want to say one thing.

Make no mistake, my father loved this city – foibles and all. Maybe foibles especially. Admittedly, places without flaws and conflict are not much fun to write about. But writing about this city kept him happily busy for decades. Not just here, but abroad. And it was his desire and commitment to getting Montreal exactly right in his fiction that forced him to return his family here after two happy decades in London – another fine city, with quite a lot going on that's worth writing about.

He wrote about this place and shone a spotlight on its flaws precisely because he loved it. He preferred dialogue and impertinent questions to silent assumptions, and thought exposing and discussing painful truths was always better than letting them simmer silently, fomenting prejudice and hatred. In closing I will respectfully suggest that anyone who doesn't understand all of that has never cared about anything with anything close to the passion or intelligence that my father always brought to the table.

But if you count yourself in that unfortunate number don't despair. A solution is at hand. All you need to do is to get yourself a membership card to the Bibliothèque Mordecai-Richler.

Borrow some good books. Read them. Ask questions. Find answers. Share them. And please, pay your late fees. ■

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ROMSPEN

These 24 Jews are changing the world as we know it

Change may be inevitable, but it's not easy. It requires vision, inspiration and bravery to make it happen. Over the past few months, we here at *The CJN* have been thinking a lot about change in the Jewish community and how it affects where Canadian Jewry is headed in the future. And that's what prompted us to take a closer look at some of the young innovators taking our religion, and our community, in bold new directions.

The 24 visionaries profiled in this week's edition are re-examining age-old understandings of Judaism, with an eye to furthering our tradition in ways some of us probably hadn't even considered before. And in their enthusiasm, their passion – even their audacity – for a Jewish future, we find hope and excitement. If they can find a way to move Judaism forward, perhaps all of us can in our own unique ways.

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MELISSA SHIFF

Artist focuses on Jewish culture and ritual

Melissa Shiff, a Toronto-based video, performance and installation artist, said she chooses to focus her work on Jewish culture, memory and ritual because "memory is the means that preserves Jewish culture."

Shiff, 48, a research associate at York University's Sensorium: Centre for Digital Arts and Technology, said her decision to present Jewish themes through her art came out of an art school class she took called "Representing the Jew as Other."

"As an emerging artist, it struck me that I had a responsibility to add my voice and perspective to this history of representation," she said.

"What interested me was rather how identity is constructed and, for this reason, I began to make work about ritual and how this constitutes, along with cultural memory, an important method of identity construction."

Some of her projects include a performance art piece called *Times Square Seder: Featuring The Matzo Ball Soup Kitchen*, and another was an installation called *The Medium is the Matzo*.

But for the past three years, Shiff has been the lead artist on *Mapping Ararat: An Imaginary Jewish Homelands Project*.

"With *Mapping Ararat*, we are using the new technology of augmented reality to image and imagine what Mordecai Noah's 1825 plan to turn Grand Island, N.Y., into a Jewish homeland might have looked like," she explained.

"With the latest geo-spatial technology, one can now place virtual architecture anywhere on the globe, and visitors can see this virtual architecture on their smartphones or tablets with the precise GPS co-ordinates."

Shiff said she's working on a film that will show the walking tour and hopes to circulate it at film festivals. ■

ZEV MOSES

Curating a virtual Jewish museum

When Zev Moses founded the Interactive Jewish Museum of Montreal in 2010 his goal was to develop a Jewish museum unlike any other: one that would be "community-driven and participatory."

Executive director Moses, now 31, wanted to present the city's Jewish past in a way that would appeal, especially, to younger, tech-savvy people – Jews and non-Jews. Its major funding is from Federation CJA's Generations Fund and the Jewish community of Montreal as well as private foundations and individuals.

The museum is virtual (imjm.ca) and accessible on the Internet. The goal was to use archival material available in innovative ways, as well as do original research. The Museum of Jewish Montreal (MJM), as it is known today, has gone a long way to accomplish that.

One of its first projects, to "map" historic Jewish sites in Montreal, remains popular. The interactive map allows visitors to select a location and get tidbits of information, be it a famous writer's home, an iconic business or a long-gone community institution.

Coming this year are stories and photos on Jewish Montreal contributed by the public, to be shared electronically via an easy-to-use web tool and preserved.

"Much of the information that relates to Jewish life in Montreal has been passed down from generation to generation through photographs and storytelling," he said. "But most of them have never been recorded and therefore are at risk of being lost forever."

More recently, MJM has been emerging into the physical world. It has organized "pop-up" exhibitions: last year, a simulated 1930s clothing sweatshop and this year one on cantor/crooner Samy Elmaghribi. In summer, MJM's student interns lead walking tours of the old Jewish neighbourhoods. ■

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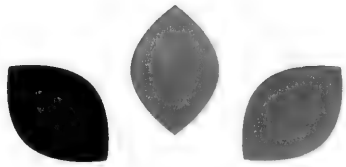

Best wishes to you and your family for a happy and peaceful Passover

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A compelling look at Lincoln and the Jews

Gil Troy

A classic Jewish joke describes aspiring zoologists writing term papers about elephants. The French student writes about the elephant's love life, the Canadian writes about elephants being so nice, and the Jew writes about "The Elephant and the Jewish Problem."

I thought of this gibe, satirizing Jews' gloomy self-involvement, when reading *Lincoln and the Jews: A History*, especially with a Canadian audience in mind. But this magnificent volume's magic comes from the way the two co-authors, Prof. Jonathan Sarna and Benjamin Shapell, use the story of "Rabbi Abraham" and his Jewish countrymen to illuminate 19th-century history, teaching about the growing American Jewish community, about the United States during the Civil War, and about the unique bond between Jews and non-Jews in North America, the greatest, most welcoming, most Jew-friendly landmass of freedom outside of Israel ever.

The work comes alive thanks to extraordinary primary sources, especially handwritten documents, many of which Shapell has lovingly collected over the decades for the Shapell Manuscript Collection, and has graciously exhibited widely. We who love history not only appreciate the power of yesterday's ideas but the texture of the past, which is rendered powerfully here thanks to dozens of colour photographs allowing readers to revel in these living links to history, to our story.

The Lincoln who emerges in this beautifully written and beautifully produced work is a mensch. Consider this defining exchange with the Canadian mystic and Christian Zionist, Henry Wentworth Monk, whose wild, bearded, Old Testament look captured Father Abraham's attention – and yes, Lincoln enjoyed his first name's biblical power. On discovering that his messianic visitor hailed from Ontario, Lincoln asked what Canadians thought of the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves – demonstrating a respect for America's northern neighbour Canadians still crave. Monk complimented the president, then proposed following up with the more "urgent.... emancipation of the Jew."

Thinking of his growing circle of Jewish friends and acquaintances, whom the authors have catalogued diligently, Lincoln was surprised, asking "Are they not free already?" Jews were free in America, but not in Europe, Monk said, expressing his hope the civilized world would "atone for what they have done to the Jews – for their 2,000 years of persecution – by restoring them to their national home in Palestine."

Lincoln, in words that remain true today and bear repeating in the Age of the ever more bitter Bibi-Barack battle, said, "That is a noble dream, Mr. Monk, and one shared by many Americans. I myself have a regard for the Jews. My chiropodist is a Jew, and he has so many times 'put me on my feet' that I would have no objection to giving his countrymen 'a leg up.'"

This short, spontaneous, interaction – blessed with Canadian content – shows Lincoln's wit, humanity, and generosity. Even ardent anti-slavery abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison could be horrifically anti-Semitic, calling Jews "descendant[s] of the monsters who nailed Jesus to the cross."

The exchange reveals Lincoln's proto-Zionism and testifies to the increasingly casual contact he – and millions of other Americans – had with Jews, as the North American community flourished.

Jewish history most honours Lincoln for overriding Ulysses S. Grant's anti-Semitic order expelling Jewish peddlers from conquered territory. This book shows that Lincoln's gift to the Jews was not only to protect them when harassed, but to accept them in everyday life

The great historian Sarna is a friend, while the publisher Thomas Dunne is publishing my next book. But these connections should not prevent me from saluting a work that teaches so much, in the most compelling and entertaining way, about who we once were, as a fledgling, more insecure community, and who we can be, thanks to the "noble dreams" of North America – and of Israel – realized by Lincoln and other heroes. ■

Bring the ushpizettes *to your seder*

Sara Horowitz

Maybe it was the Purim drinking that got me shuffling my holiday traditions, but this year I found myself thinking about developing a tradition of ushpizin – or, more specifically, *ushpizettes* – for Pesach

Ushpizettes is a word of my own coinage. Ushpizin, of course, is the Aramaic word for guests, and what do we invite guests to do but to come *zetz* – sit (Yiddish, not Aramaic) – around our table. The Sukkot ushpizin are the seven biblical guests symbolically invited to share our sukkah on successive evenings of the autumn festival: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David. Many people have added to this list of spiritual visitors the names of seven women, also invited to the sukkhah.

With the freedom that comes from developing a new practice, the list can vary – sometimes including biblical figures, sometimes prophetesses, sometimes historical or contemporary figures. I call these women, a bit flippantly, I confess, the *ushpizettes*.

I imagine them as hybrid – part yiddishkeit, part rhythm and blues backup, part revivalist, part trail blazer. Think Miriam, Deborah, your bubbie, Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, Rosie the Riveter and Diana Ross, rolled into one. They remedy the male exclusivity of the traditional ushpizin ritual. And they honour retroactively women like my bubbie, who cooked lavishly for the festival in a tiny kitchen, then schlepped the food down flights of stairs to the collective sukkah erected in the courtyard of her Brooklyn apartment building, where she served her husband and sons, but did not sit and dine with them.

But perhaps, I found myself thinking, we were focused on the wrong festival. If ever a holiday called for the spiritual presence of women guests, it is Pesach. There is, on the one hand, the unremitting maleness of the Haggadah narrative – the account of the coming into nationhood of our Israelite ancestors told with references to male agents, and the remembrance of the male rabbis who elaborated the story and codified the seder practice.

And how many of us still possess Haggadot that refer to the "master of the house" leading the seder. On the other hand, there is the long history of women's labour, so fundamental to holiday preparations, and the biblical backstory – missing from the Haggadah liturgy – of women's crucial role in resistance and redemption. And yet, the traditional seder ritual – the one most of us grew up with – passes over the place of women.

So let's bring the *ushpizettes* to the seder. Although the ushpizin ritual is traditionally linked with Sukkot and not Pesach, it fits in so perfectly with the themes and practices of the spring festival. The seder begins, after all, with a general call out to those needing a place at the table, offering to take them in. And midway through the evening, we welcome the prophet Elijah to share a l'chaim with us. Some of us already welcome the prophetess Miriam, as well. So developing a tradition of *ushpizettes* for Pesach seems like a natural progression.

I envision the Pesach *ushpizettes* less as a liturgical list to invoke, and more as a substantive presence to evoke. There are, after all, only one or two nights of seders each year (depending on one's geography, denomination or personal practice). The invitees can vary from year to year, evoked through storytelling, text study, singing or recitation.

I imagine the women of the Exodus, brought to life through their presence in midrash. Or a historical figure – Glückel of Hameln, the astonishing businesswoman and diarist, for example, available to us through her journals, written in Yiddish and translated into English. Or perhaps a poet, like Marge Piercy, whose cycle of seder poems focus on the elements of the seder plate and give them both transcendent and contemporary meaning. Or perhaps a guest more personally connected – the mother or grandmother linked to our first seder memories – whose voice, labour and spirit infuses our own links with Judaism and with the divine. ■

Justin Trudeau's skewed vision of liberty

Michael Taube

Another day, another dollar, another political misstep by Justin Trudeau.

It's reached the point where I can almost set my watch to the Liberal leader either going off script, badly misreading public opinion or putting his foot in his mouth. (As Paul Tuns, *The Interim's* editor-in-chief and author of an upcoming book on Trudeau, nicely put it, "I want [to] thank Junior for being both a joy and pain to delve into.")

In this case, it was Trudeau's recent speech to the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada that raised many eyebrows.

Trudeau's strategy was to create an "us vs. them" scenario with the Tories. For example, he claimed Prime Minister Stephen Harper's approach "to politics might work in the short term, but it is corrosive over time, especially in a diverse country like Canada. It stokes anxiety and foments fear. Instead of encouraging Canadians to fight for one another's liberty, it tells us to be suspicious of each other's choices."

These lines, which contain many inaccuracies, can be easily written off as political rhetoric. All parties engage in these tactics. It's part of the game we play. We're used to it.

Here's where things started to go downhill, however. Trudeau correctly mentioned that former prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King had set up Japanese internment camps during World War II "because they were popular… despite evidence from the RCMP and defence that they were unwarranted."

Then, he made this statement: *"So we should all shudder to hear the same rhetoric that led to a 'none is too many' immigration policy toward Jews in the '30s and '40s, being used to raise fears against Muslims today."*

Hold on. Did Trudeau juxtapose the Harper Tories' relationship with the Muslim community with the King Liberals' horrendous handling of Jewish immigration during the rise of Germany's Nazi party?

I'm sorry, but that's nuts!

First, there's a huge difference between Islam and Islamism.

The Tories strongly oppose the brutal, violent actions of Islamists, or Muslim extremists. There has never – repeat, *never* – been any opposition to the vast majority of moderate Muslims, who are peaceful, hardworking and benefit our society. We want to work with them, not against them.

Second, Trudeau's statement is clearly linked to the controversy involving Muslim women wearing niqabs and whether they should briefly remove them when taking our citizenship oath.

I believe they should. It would ensure that their full facial features are properly viewed for identification purposes. It's not an attack on their religious faith: they're free to wear a niqab in Canada. Rather, it's a small, insignificant way to maintain a degree of safety and security in our country.

Third, Trudeau has a severely skewed vision of what liberty means.

Canadian conservatives strongly believe in the important principles of liberty, democracy and freedom. Our liberties remain as strong as they were when the Tories were first elected in 2006.

The difference is our world is far less safe. The Tory government has to deal with the constant threat of terrorism, both at home (Ottawa shootings) and abroad (ISIS, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram). By making tiny adjustments to personal freedom and liberty, the government has increased the overall freedom and liberty that all Canadians share.

Hence, Trudeau's decision to weave the niqab controversy with King's openly racist policy on Jewish immigration was disgraceful. Combining it with an imaginary Tory campaign against the entire Muslim community was beyond the pale.

Here's some final food for thought.

A recent Global News/Ipsos Reid poll showed 88 per cent of respondents strongly or somewhat supported the "requirement that people show their faces during Canadian citizenship ceremonies." Meanwhile, 72 per cent strongly or somewhat agreed with the PM's position that niqabs and burkas are "symbols of oppression rooted in a culture that is anti-women."

Looks like the people have spoken. Care to comment, Justin? ■

Michael Taube is a Washington Times columnist, and a former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

After the election

Harold M. Waller

Observers and participants alike were surprised, and in some cases dismayed, by the outcome of the Israeli election. Many were confident that, based on numerous polls, the Zionist Union would emerge victorious and form the government.

What many overlooked, however, was past experience showing that the electorate is very volatile and vote preferences can change to a significant degree in a very short period of time. Furthermore, the electoral system can amplify the effect of relatively small changes in voter intention on the Knesset seat count.

As it turned out, there were significant shifts during the last few days of the campaign, after the last polls had been published. These shifts resulted in the two leading lists gaining votes at the expense of smaller parties (Likud primarily from the right and Zionist Union primarily from the centre). Likud, in particular, benefited from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's call to right of centre voters to vote Likud, even if they preferred another party on the ground, because such strategic voting would ensure that he rather than Labor's Isaac Herzog would be asked to form the government.

From the beginning of the campaign, it was widely accepted that this election was about broad socio-economic issues rather than the usual security, territorial and Palestinian questions. But by election day, at least some voters reverted to the more customary position that Israel is under threat and requires firm leadership.

The duo of Herzog and Tzipi Livni was not perceived as being capable of providing that kind of leadership. Moreover, despite a willingness in many sectors of the population to compromise for the sake of peace, there is considerable skepticism about Palestinian intentions and therefore a reluctance to undertake risks for what might well prove to be a chimerical peace. Last year's war with Hamas and current hostility from Ramallah do affect perceptions about peace prospects.

Another factor was the unprecedented involvement of foreign interests, both European and American, in the election campaign. Using the services of election professionals from abroad and raising money from foreign donors are not exactly innovations in Israeli electoral politics. But the scope and intensity of this year's efforts, especially those perceived as being associated with the interests of the Obama administration, were so large that voters could hardly ignore them. If U.S. President Barack Obama, who is rather unpopular in Israel, was so strongly antagonistic toward Netanyahu, would that not induce some voters to vote Likud to spite the president?

One of the by-products of the election was the rather nasty crisis in U.S.-Israel relations, purportedly caused by some unwise and unfortunate comments by Netanyahu. However, the intensity of the animosity emanating from the White House and certain media sources makes one wonder if the president was looking for a pretext to further distance his administration from Israel. It is hardly a secret that Obama eagerly anticipated a Zionist Union victory. Regardless of the merits of the two leaders' respective positions, the evident ill will requires substantial compensatory efforts by both sides.

Moreover, as the dispute intensifies, the American Jewish community is put on the spot. Divisions within the community over Israel's policies and U.S.-Israel relations have been a troubling feature of the last several years. These problems antedate the Obama period, but have been exacerbated since he took office. The community's leadership is just as likely as Israel's government to find navigating these rough waters to be a treacherous challenge.

The election outcome should enable the prime minister to form a government without too much difficulty. Moreover, the dominant position of Likud in the anticipated coalition might well make governing easier over the next few years. However, managing the relationship with the United States during the waning years of the Obama presidency is likely to prove a greater challenge to Netanyahu. ■

Harold M. Waller is a political science professor at McGill University, where he teaches Israeli politics.

News

Jewish advocacy groups testify in support of Bill C-51

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

The heads of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), B'nai Brith Canada and the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) all travelled to Ottawa last week to testify in support of the federal government's controversial new anti-terror law, Bill C-51.

Between March 24 and 26, David Cape, chair of CIJA; B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn, plus B'nai Brith's national legal counsel Marvin Kurz and honorary counsel David Matas; and Simon Wiesenthal CEO Avi Benlolo presented individual statements before the House of Commons standing committee on public safety and national security, which is reviewing the bill.

Critics say C-51 gives too much power without sufficient oversight to Canada's spy agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), which would be given the ability to disrupt threats instead of just informing police about them.

In addition, they say the bill would threaten free speech by making it a crime to advocate or promote terrorism, and would allows federal agencies to share information about potential threats. They also say it raises concerns about privacy and could lead to protest groups being targeted for actions and statements that have little to do with terrorism.

But although their arguments in favour of the legislation weren't identical, all three Jewish groups conveyed the concern that Jewish communities in western democratic societies are increasingly becoming the targets of terror, hate speech and hate crimes, and they argued Bill C-51 would offer viable and legitimate protective measures.

To bolster claims the Jewish community is especially vulnerable, all three statements referenced examples of recent terrorist attacks against Jews, such as the 2012 bombing of a Jewish tour bus in Bulgaria, the 2014 attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels, this year's attack on a kosher supermarket in Paris and the shooting of a Jewish guard in front of a Copenhagen synagogue.

They cite Al-Shabaab's recent call for attacks against Jewish-owned businesses in North America and the fact that during their trial, it was revealed that two men who were convicted of conspiring to attack Via Rail also had plans to kill "prominent members of Canadian society" and "rich Jews."

"I strongly believe that [Jews] are targeted," Benlolo told *The CJN*. "We're seeing that a terrorist will ultimately not only seek out a general target, but will seek out the Jewish community."

Here in Canada, he said, "we don't know if a terrorist might attack a Jewish school or institution at any time."

Although all three groups stressed the importance of the bill balancing civil liberties and the right to privacy and free speech with national security, they praised C-51 for its potential to root out terrorist threats.

Martin Sampson, CIJA's director of communications, said that in order to formulate its testimony, CIJA conducted community consultations and invited legal experts to provide insight on the bill.

Respondents' views varied widely, he said, and the resulting statement, which Cape presented March 26, represents "a significant consensus" in support of C-51.

In it, Cape outlines five areas that he said have "particular resonance with the Jewish community." For example, the bill's pledge to empower courts to remove materials promoting terrorism would enable the removal of "vicious materials, often [those] calling for violence against Jews."

Cape acknowledged critics' concerns that this provision could cause "the censorship of odious ideas not directly linked to violence," but he argued that the restriction "strikes an appropriate balance between freedom of speech and rights to life and security."

While supportive of the proposed expansion of CSIS' role to include disruption of potential terrorist attacks, Cape noted, "a concurrent and measured increase in the review of CSIS' activities would be beneficial [to prevent abuses]."

B'nai Brith Canada's submission, presented by Matas and Kurz on March 26, offered both support for the bill and several suggested amendments.

They first raised examples of threats to Jews worldwide, such as the Israeli Counter-Terrorism Bureau's warning last month that "global jihadi elements will likely seek to carry out additional attacks on Jewish and Israeli targets, particularly in western and northern Europe."

The Jewish community understands "the tie between speech and action" they said, and thus, "properly tailored laws that target the promotion of terrorism are both permissible and necessary."

They concluded with recommendations to help the bill avoid "vagueness and overbreadth" and "meet Charter [of Rights and Freedoms] standards." For example, they urged that its prohibition on the promotion of "terrorism offences in general" more clearly define which offences are intended.

CIJA's David Cape, left, with public safety committee chair Daryl Kramp

Benlolo, who spoke before the committee on March 24, outlined the threat to democracy posed by groups such as the Islamic State, Boko Haram, Hezbollah and Hamas.

Benlolo praised C-51's proposal to increase information sharing between federal government agencies, as well as criminalize the promotion of terrorism.

"My concern is that many of those who have opposed this bill simply are not aware of the increasing threat of terrorism and the rising tide of hatred here in Canada, particularly on university campuses," he said.

He emphasized the importance of having "sufficient legal and procedural mechanisms" to ensure that "our rights to privacy, peaceful protest and freedom of expression are in no way diminished." ■

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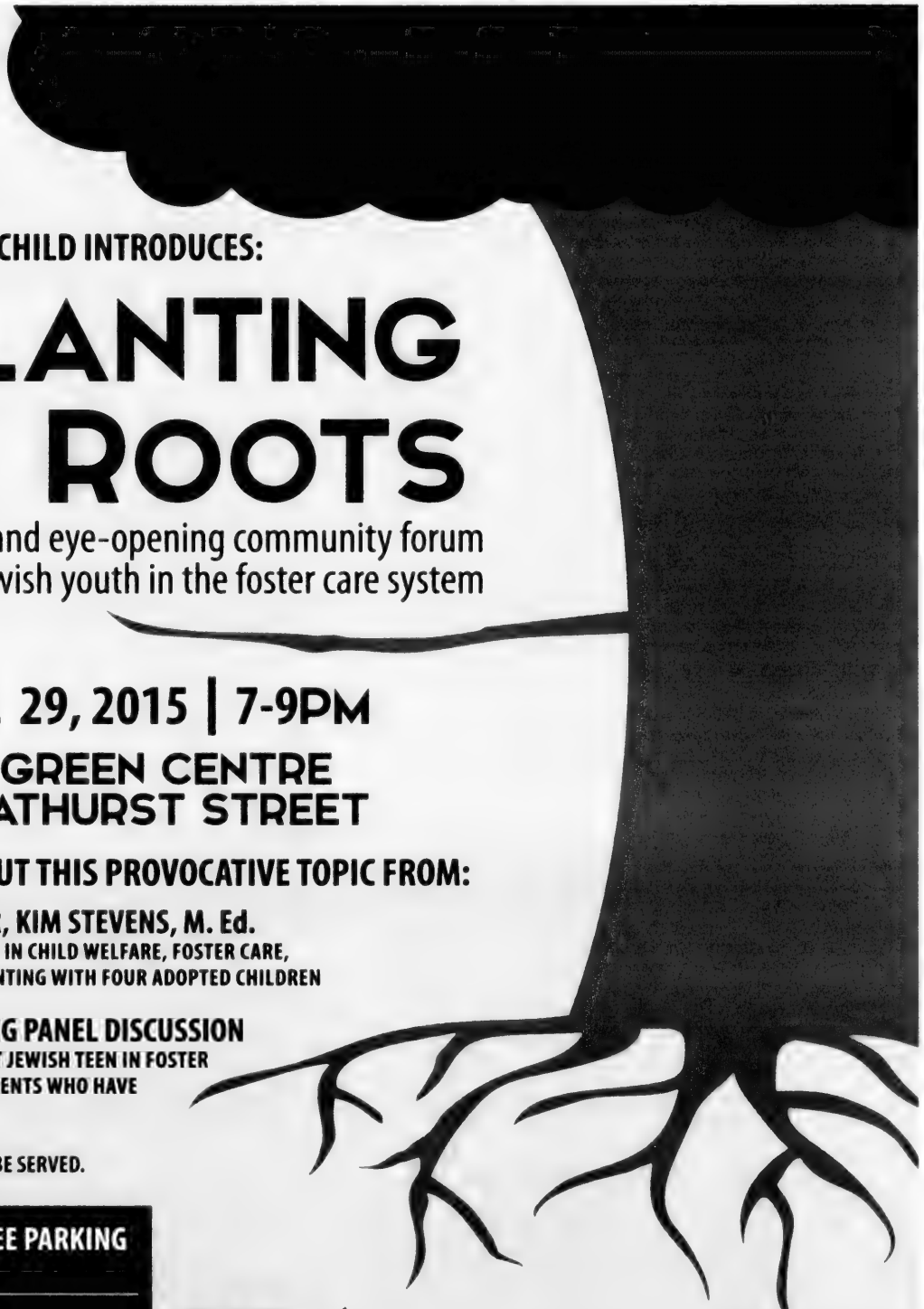

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 2, 2015

Hot plate fire deaths spur warnings for observant Jews

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The tragic deaths of seven siblings in a house fire in Brooklyn, N.Y., last month underscores the need for observant Jews to respect the dangers posed by fire, says the rabbi of an Orthodox Toronto synagogue.

Rabbi Yehoshua Weber of Clanton Park Synagogue, said Jews deal with open flames and long-running electrical appliances more than the general population, "so we have to be especially vigilant. We should have smoke alarms that are monitored, and be especially vigilant about it. I see it as a halachic imperative."

Rabbi Weber was commenting a few days after a March 21 house fire in Brooklyn claimed the lives of seven brothers and sisters. Preliminary investigations suggested a faulty hot plate, used to keep food warm during the Sabbath, was to blame.

More than a year ago, in a synagogue bulletin, Rabbi Weber warned his congregation about the dangers of not adequately respecting fire.

In his case, the carbon monoxide detector in his home went off on a Shabbat morning, the third day of a three-day yom tov (holiday).

The house was cleared and no one was hurt. Fire department officials said the alarm went off because of inadequate ventilation.

"The constant burning of the gas range and oven – even on a low flame, will over time emit unhealthy levels of carbon monoxide. I was told that the fire department was tending to many such calls over the last few days. The firemen implored me to please tell the rabbis and announce to the community that if people need to leave on the stove or oven over the holidays, they must ensure that the area is properly ventilated. Turning on an exhaust fan or even opening the kitchen window a bit is enough to prevent terrible danger," he wrote at the time.

In Brooklyn, faulty wiring of a hot plate is believed to have caused the fire. Rabbi Weber said such events, though tragic, are fairly rare. "I don't think it's statistically significant."

According to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the death rate caused by fire in residential structures was 6.8 per million in 2004 and 4.9 per million in 2013.

Narrowing the data even more, Stephen Welowszky, district chief responsible for public education at Toronto Fire Services, said from 2009 to 2012, there were 12 fatalities in the City of Toronto related to cooking incidents, or 19.4 per cent of all fire-related fatalities. A further 104 people suffered cooking-related injuries.

"Cooking is the No. 1 ignition in civilian fires," Welowszky said.

Jews have been dealing with fire for centuries, Rabbi Weber said. Candles are lit on Shabbat, yom tovim and Chanukah, while stoves are kept running over holidays. "We should not throw out the baby with the bathwater," he said.

Most members of his congregation keep foods warm by running their stoves and ovens on low heats, or on a *blech*, a covering placed on top of the heating elements. Crockpots are increasingly popular, but Rabbi Weber said hot plates, the culprit in the Brooklyn fire, are not as widely used.

According to Welowszky, "hot plates are generally safe. However, it's the way you use them that can be a hazard. Unattended cooking can be a hazard. We always say that when you're cooking, stay in the kitchen. Cooking should be supervised at all times, especially when there are children in the home."

Welowszky said leaving a stove or element on, even at a low setting, "is always a risk."

He recommended families look into acquiring a Safe-T-Element, which is available in Toronto and substantially reduces the risk of igniting flammable objects.

He also suggested cleaning grease off hot plates after each use and discarding any malfunctioning appliances or those with frayed power cords. And he recommended having working smoke alarms on every level of a home, as well as an escape plan that all members of the family are familiar with. ■

Gabriel Sassoon reacts near the fresh graves of his seven children at their funeral in Jerusalem March 23. The children, ages five to 16, died when flames ripped through their Brooklyn, N.Y., home. FLASH 90 PHOTO

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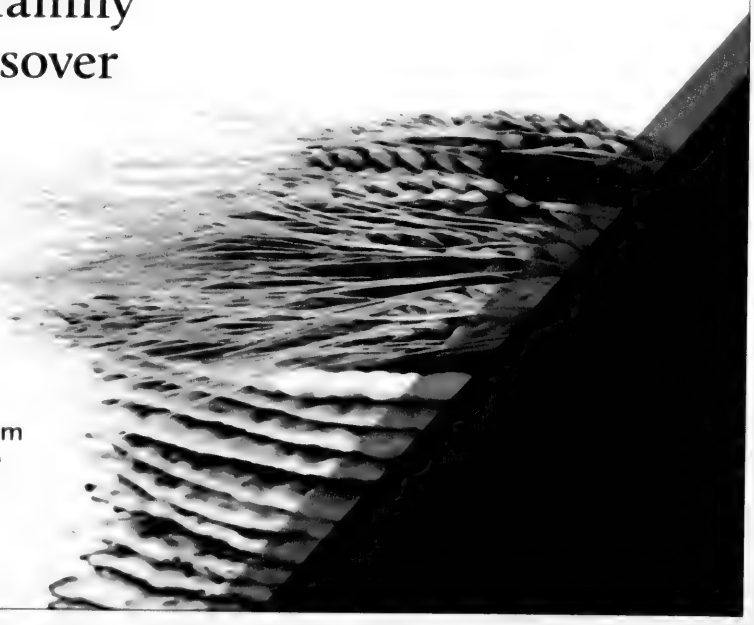

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Torontonian leads voting for NCAA's Hobey Baker Award

The University of Michigan's Zach Hyman led the Big Ten in scoring this season with 12 goals and 21 assists.

PAUL LUNGEN
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It's too early to plan the celebration and get outfitted for a tux, but with less than three weeks to go, the University of Michigan's Zach Hyman is the leading vote-getter for the prestigious Hobey Baker Award, given annually to the best NCAA Division 1 college hockey player.

As of March 26, Hyman led the final 10 nominees with 12,551 votes, well ahead of Michigan Tech's Tanner Kero's 8,330.

A 22-year-old senior, Hyman is enjoying a breakout season with the Wolverines. He finished the regular season as the Big Ten's leading scorer with 12 goals and 21 assists for 33 points in 20 games. Add out-of-conference points, and he totalled 19 goals and 30 assists, for 49 points. In his three previous seasons, Hyman registered a total of 35 points.

Recognition for the fine season Hyman is enjoying continued to mount last week. The Toronto-born player was named first all-star on the 2014-15 All-Big Ten Hockey Team, as selected by Big Ten coaches and a media voting panel.

Earlier this season, Hyman won a Big Ten Sportsmanship Award, and last year he received the Bates/Deskins Award as the University of Michigan's top junior student athlete, and a Big Ten Distinguished Scholar award.

His good marks are a factor in Hobey Baker voting. A selection panel takes into account scholastic achievement as well as character.

The 27-member selection committee will narrow the 10 finalists to a top three, known as the Hobey Hat Trick, which will be announced on April 2. The winner will be named on April 10 in Boston during the Frozen Four tournament.

The top 10 was chosen by a combination of Division 1 coaches and fan voting. Other finalists include Jack Eichel of Boston University, touted as a top two selection in the NHL entry draft this year, and two-time All-Big Ten defenceman Mike Reilly of Minnesota.

Hyman is a 2010 fifth-round pick (123rd overall) of the Florida Panthers. He is a former student at Robbins Hebrew Academy and the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 2, 2015

Temple Emanu-El to raise $6 million through land sale

PAUL LUNGEN
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Temple Emanu-El, the Reform congregation located in a leafy upscale neighbourhood in north Toronto, is selling off 1.5 acres of prime real estate at the eastern edge of the synagogue property.

The imminent sale of the land, which has been subdivided into three residential lots, is expected to raise $6 million. The funds will go toward an endowment fund that will ensure the synagogue's financial viability for decades to come, said president Pekka Sinervo.

As of late last week, the temple's board of directors had reviewed several offers and had put them before the temple membership, which must agree to the sale, according to the synagogue's bylaws.

If the members accept the board's recommendations, the deal should close in July, Sinervo said.

"The bottom line is that this creates a sustainable financial model for the congregation for the next half century," Sinervo told *The CJN*. "This is the goal of the board, so we're not worrying about finances, but what to do in our community."

Like other congregations facing an aging membership, synagogue leaders had been concerned about the temple's future financial health. Although the temple has no debt, it was becoming increasingly difficult to balance the budget, Sinervo said.

The infusion of funds and creation of an endowment, whose income stream will lessen the financial burden on current members, will mean the synagogue can renovate and improve the facilities, he said.

The funds will also permit the temple to better reach out to potential new congregants, who will know that the building's finances – and annual fees – are stable and unlikely to balloon, he added.

A little less than 10 per cent of the proceeds of the sale are earmarked for parking lot improvements – a condition imposed by the City of Toronto to approve the deal – while other funds will go towards "a facelift" of the social hall, renovations of washrooms, a new roof and "freshening up" the temple's school.

At one time it was thought the surplus land might be used for subsequent expansion, but the congregation now stands at 330 families, below the maximum 410 permitted by the temple's bylaws.

Sinervo said discussions over disposition of the land began in 1990. The eastern edge of the property was unused, except as a parking lot during the High Holidays, prompting some to call it "the most expensive parking lot in the city," he said.

In 2008, the temple concluded a strategic plan that recommended monetizing the surplus land.

A proposal was placed before city authorities in 2013, and in January 2014, the committee of adjustment approved the proposal, which included the creation of three residential lots. One had access from Vyner Road and two were accessible from Swansdown Drive. All the proposed properties will be at the end of cul-de-sacs.

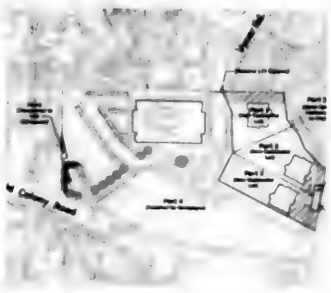
Each is approximately half an acre in size and would see construction of 5,000- to 6,000-square-foot homes, with plenty of land left over for yards or pools, said Sinervo.

The properties were listed for sale on March 10, and on March 24, the temple received multiple offers from builders and individual purchasers.

Sinervo expects all three houses to be completed in about two years.

Temple Emanu-El has been a fixture in the neighbourhood for more than 50 years. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the temple, located on six-and-a-half acres of land at the eastern end of Old Colony Road, took place in 1960, and the first religious services were held in 1963.

In 1969-70, Temple Emanu-El merged with the Beth-El congregation. For a time, the temple also housed Leo Baeck Day School. The congregation prides itself in being a "vibrant, progressive community committed to Jewish renewal at home" and dedicated to tikkun olam, or social justice. ■



Proceeds will go toward an endowment fund that's intended to help ensure the synagogue's viability for years to come.

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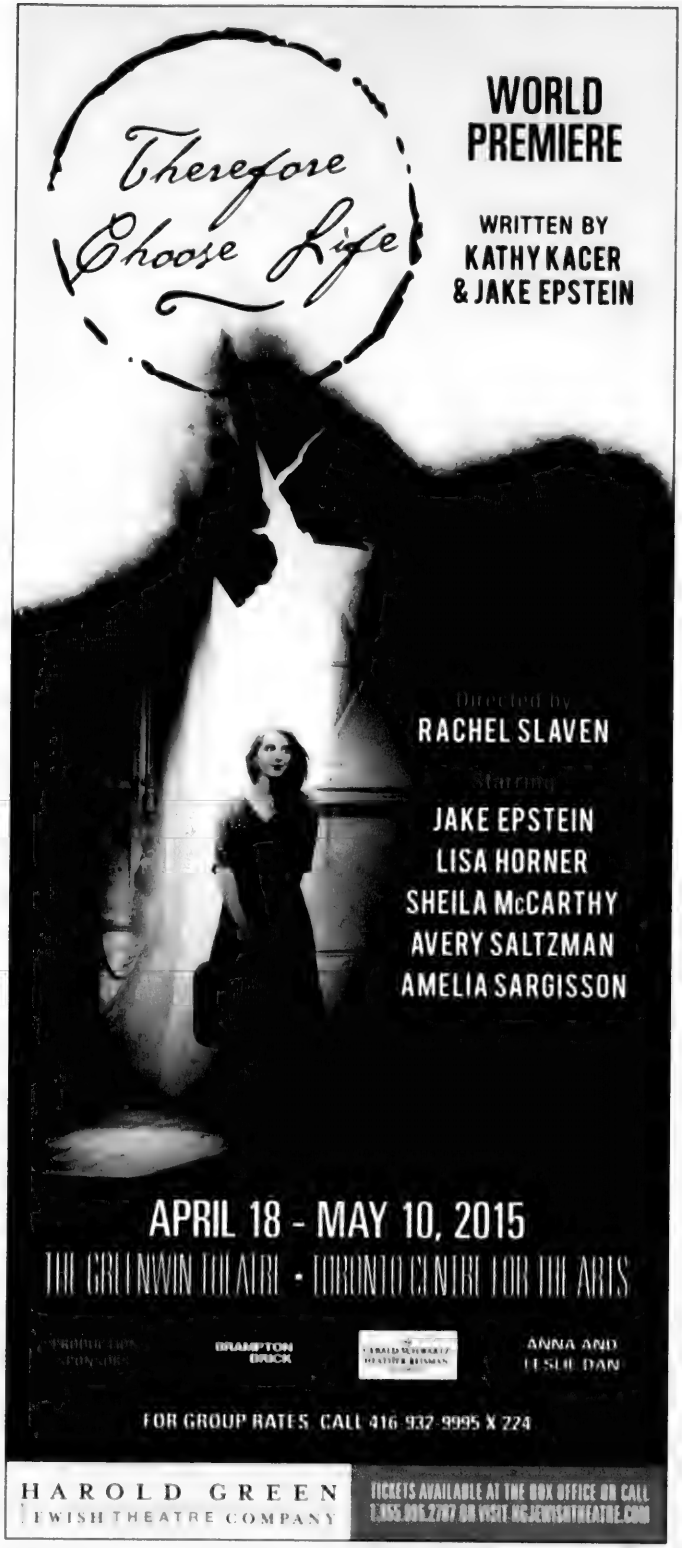
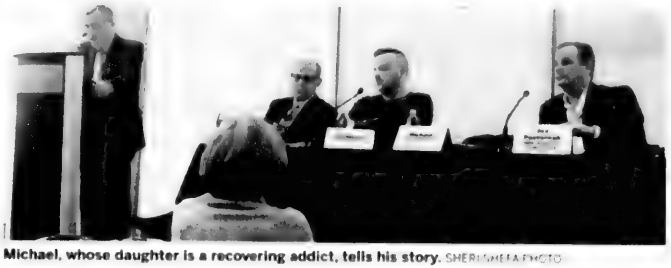


Panel advises parents on handling teen drug use



Michael, whose daughter is a recovering addict, tells his story. SHERI SHEFA PHOTO

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Parents concerned about teen drug and alcohol abuse gathered last week to hear from those affected by addiction and from professionals who work to help people overcome it.

Joe Rich, guest therapist on the television show *Cityline*, moderated the "Let's Be Blunt" event held at the Lipa Green Centre and introduced Matthew, who shared his story about addiction and his journey to recovery.

Matthew, who was adopted by Jewish parents in Thornhill, said that as a kid, he never felt like he fit in.

He said when his parents agreed to pull him out of Associated Hebrew School in Grade 7 at his urging, he began smoking marijuana with the friends he made at his new school.

By the 11th grade, he was smoking every day, and drinking regularly. By Grade 12, he was selling drugs, too. Eventually, he abused harder drugs such as cocaine.

"When I was about 18 years old, I weighed 115 pounds, and you could play the xylophone on my ribs," Matthew recalled.

"When my father finally confronted me, he asked me if I was doing anything more than smoking marijuana. I lied my *tuchus* off."

Following another confrontation with his parents that led him to leave home for a few days, he returned home in what he called a "drug-induced psychosis" and told them he needed help.

He found himself at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, where he met Jay Pasternak, an addictions counsellor with JACS (Jewish Addiction Community Services), who encouraged him to try rehab.

He agreed, but not long after he was released, he began drinking and abusing drugs again.

Following some brushes with the law that included being arrested for driving under the influence, he went in and out of rehabilitation programs, but it wasn't until he went to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in 2011 that things really turned around for him.

"I remember saying, 'Hi, my name is Matt and I am an addict,' and the only thing I could get out was, 'I really don't like myself anymore,' before I started bawling my eyes out."

When he went outside for a cigarette to collect himself, he was followed by a peer who agreed to sponsor him. He's been clean for the past 3-1/2 years.

Michael, a parent of a recovering addict, also shared his story about his daughter's struggle with addiction.

He said his daughter started to drink when she was 12 years old.

"At that time, I thought it was the beginnings of teenage angst. I was in denial. I didn't believe that Jewish kids did drugs. We don't do that sort of thing. Little did I know," Michael said.

Following a confrontation that led to her storming out of the house in the middle of a frigid December night, she met with her parents days later at a coffee shop, where she was told that she couldn't come back home until she completed a rehab program.

She finished the program, returned home, attended university, volunteered, got a job and has been clean for more than six years.

After Pasternak presented information about some of the more commonly abused drugs and explained what parents should look for if they suspect their teen is abusing them, the panel fielded questions from the audience.

One of the panelists, Michael Waxman, a JF&CS school social worker, said that when it comes talking to kids about drug and alcohol abuse, it's important to keep communication lines open and "not be too punitive," because kids may decide to hide it.

For parents who believe that it's better to allow their minor children to drink at home, rationalizing that it's safer for them to be drinking at home than unsupervised in a park, Waxman said that becomes a slippery slope.

"I always have a hard time when I hear about supervised drinking... If your house is known as the house where it is OK to smoke a joint and have a few beers, then it is the house where it becomes OK to do whatever. As a parent, you don't want that, and if anything, it becomes difficult for the parents to draw a line and say, well, this is OK but that is not." ■

GUEST VOICE

There's light at the end of the addiction tunnel

Lisa Steinberg

Imagine that for your whole life you never felt like you belonged. What would you do?

I was born in 1994 in Toronto. When I was young, my mother left my father because he was extremely abusive. She took care of me as if she had no struggles, and I never questioned anything about it.

I never did well in school, but I was one of the "good" kids. I never got into trouble. I had a very innocent mind. After I graduated middle school, I switched to a local religious day school. In my mind, I thought that going to a different school would let me start over and become someone new. I could be anyone I wanted to be.

In the winter of Grade 9, I became very close with a group of boys and girls. I found out they were getting high occasionally. They said I should get high with them. I was very nervous, but I knew I couldn't back out. If I did, they would think I was a loser. So I got high with them.

It was the first time I felt like I belonged and was accepted. After we did drugs together, I remember they said I was part of the crew now. I truly believed that my life was going to be amazing from that moment onward.

After that, I started getting high on weekends. Soon, my friends would come over and get high at my house while my mother was at work. I started skipping school to get high. My grades started dropping. All I wanted to do was sleep. My life was centred around getting high.

Eventually, my doctor found out and suggested that I go to JACS (Jewish Addiction Community Services). I attended one of their support groups for teens with drug abuse and almost immediately I felt in my gut that I truly belonged, that I was not alone.

When I graduated high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. So I decided to try to "find myself" through a gap-year program at an all-girls seminary in Israel. I felt that if I could situate myself in a new environment and find religion, all my problems would be solved. Unfortunately, that was not to be the case.

Quickly, alcohol became my new drug. I would drink most nights after classes ended. I began passing out in alleyways and other unsafe locations. I got very depressed and suicidal, and I was told it would be best to come home.

> *I would drink most nights after classes ended. I began passing out in alleyways and other unsafe locations. I got very depressed and suicidal.*

But once I arrived back in Toronto, I continued with my old patterns.

One night, I drank two bottles of wine and smoked weed. I began vomiting and passing out. I called a taxi to take me home. But since I was intoxicated, the driver felt he could take advantage of me. I finally realized he wasn't taking me home and wouldn't let me out of the car. When the police finally arrived, no one believed the drunk and high teenager. That was one of the last times I got high and drunk.

I decided to go back to JACS, get on my knees and ask for help. It was the best decision I ever made.

Now, I have amazing friends who understand what I am going through and support me through anything. I am studying to become a social worker, so I can help teens just like me. As the saying goes, "there is a light at the end of the tunnel." I am grateful to say that I saw the light and am now able to give back to JACS, because without JACS, who knows where my life would have taken me.

If you or someone you love is struggling with, or affected by, addictions, JACS is there to help. All contact with JACS is private and confidential. Just give us a call at 416-638-0350, and if you are not sure what to say, try starting with, "Hi, I was reading an article about JACS in *The CJN*." We'll help you with the rest. ■

Lisa Steinberg is a pseudonym.

ZIONA HAGLER

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Ziona Hagler has been a respected and loved member of the Bialik family for an incredible 49 years. She began her career at Bialik in 1966 teaching Grades 2 and 6, weaving her love of Hebrew and her passion for Israel into the core of the curriculum.

Ziona's role within the school expanded quickly as she began producing the plays and graduations for which she and Bialik have become famous. For her, Bialik has always been about the students. She has remained an anchor of continuity during the many wonderful transitions that Bialik has undergone.

Ziona's focus has never wavered; her dedication and energy have been extraordinary. Upon her retirement, she leaves a legacy of love for Israel and for all Bialik students. She is passionate about ensuring that every Jewish child be given the opportunity to receive a Bialik education. Proceeds from the Gala will go towards the "Ziona and Dan Hagler Tuiton Support Fund" at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

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UJA Federation OF GREATER TORONTO

Record 1,400 people attend CJPAC party

From left, Toronto Mayor John Tory, Joel Reitman and Richard Reitman

HADLEY HARRACK PHOTOS

SHLOMO KAPUSTIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

While the purpose can be obscured by the hoopla, the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee's (CJPAC) annual Action parties are serious business — especially with Canadians going to the polls this fall.

"It's important for us to get as many people involved in the democratic process during this particular year — volunteering on campaigns, getting involved," said the group's executive director, Mark Waldman.

"But the ultimate is to get people also involved in the party of their choice, getting involved in their local riding association and generally having more awareness."

CJPAC hosted its ninth annual Toronto bash March 26, as a record crowd of 1,400 descended on the waterfront's Sound Academy to reconnect with old friends, meet new ones and shmooze with a who's who of Canadian politicians. In May, the group's Montreal chapter will hold its Action party.

CJPAC's parties highlight a side of politics not showcased on TV or in political science classes: the fun side. Policy statements are verboten. Instead, partygoers enjoy hors d'oeuvres, desserts and an open bar. If attendees had been polled, the night's landslide winner would have been a drink: the "spring sour," a whisky sour variant with Canadian maple syrup and apple cider, garnished with a cinnamon stick.

More than 50 politicians from all parties and all levels of government turned out, including three federal ministers, three provincial ministers and an associate minister, and Toronto Mayor John Tory.

"It's a great opportunity to meet with and network with so many members of the Jewish community and beyond," said Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins, a Liberal MPP who represents Toronto's St. Paul's riding, home to a large Jewish population.

Hoskins noted the party's unpretentiousness. "It's a lot better than a lot of the events," he said. "Every MPP that has come here over the years will tell you that it's near the top."

Organizers say the less formal approach removes barriers to political entry for young professionals in the parties' sweet spots.

"Most events where you have politicians, it's more formal and they wouldn't have those opportunities," said Waldman. "And through this they can see how approachable the elected officials are, that they can just walk up to them, talk to them, start a conversation. But hopefully it doesn't stop there. It leads to them getting more involved."

With civic engagement low generally, CJPAC has dedicated "a large amount" of its resources to engaging younger Canadians, he added. "You do see within the political world, it tends to be the young people who are getting involved on campaigns disproportionately," Waldman said. "That's an important demographic."

Event co-chair Nick Kadysh, 28, is one of the group's success stories.

"Back when I was a university student, I started off as a CJPAC fellow," he said, referring to the group's year-long training program. "I wasn't very politically involved, but I sort of began getting involved through CJPAC, at first slightly and then more and more and more. And then through [the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs] I ended up working on Parliament Hill, and then I held a number of political roles, in campaigns and legislatures across the country. And now I'm in the private sector. But throughout, I maintained a relationship with CJPAC."

The party's enviable attendance, he said, reflects its fun vibe, but that's not the whole story. "We are not the only event in the world that is fun," Kadysh said. "I think you need to be at least curious about political engagement in order to want to come."

Part of Action's success, he said, stems from the people of different backgrounds in CJPAC's network. This year's organizing committee had more than 50 members. Among them was Brett Chang, a 23-year-old tech entrepreneur who once worked for Tim Hudak, former leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservatives. Chang, a self-described longtime Israel supporter, called CJPAC programs "the best training in the country." ■

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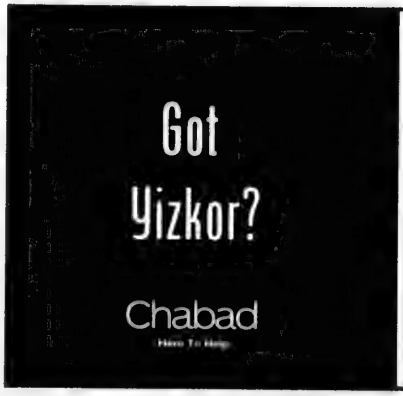

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 2, 2015

Embarrassing moments on stage for a good cause

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Anyone who has survived the agony of adolescence understands the urge to suppress that most awkward life stage deep, deep down into one's subconscious.

But Jewish Family & Child's (JF&CS) Emerging Leaders group has called on a number of the community's young professionals to exploit their most horrifically embarrassing moments for a good cause.

On May 21, JF&CS Emerging Leaders – young professionals in their 20s and 30s who aim to raise awareness and funds for the non-profit agency – will present *Cringe Worthy* at The Garrison in downtown Toronto.

Hosted by Toronto Poetry Slam founder David Silverberg, about 10 performers will present a comedy show featuring hilarious and embarrassing autobiographical stories live on stage in an effort to raise money to send Jewish kids to camp.

Jodi Klaiman, the communications and development co-ordinator at JF&CS, said performers will be sharing "embarrassing stories about their first crushes, super awkward, super weird things we do as teenagers, and there are some camp stories, but it's not entirely about camp. It's mostly just about being a weird teenager coming of age."

Although it is not a scripted show, as the presenters tell their stories, there will be photos and other images projected on a screen behind them.

"We've all gone through our awkward phase, so everyone can relate," Klaiman said. "It'll be a comedy show, there will be food, drinks… We'll have a little tuck shop for people to buy snacks… It should be a hilarious, cringe worthy event."

Klaiman said one of the stories involves a 13-year-old boy who had an intense crush on a girl and decided to confess his love to her over ICQ, an outdated instant messaging program.

"He wrote the message in WingDings, which is the font that is just symbols, because he thought she wouldn't understand."

Klaiman said the moment he sent the message, it occurred to him that if the girl copied and pasted the message and put it into another font, she'd be able to read it.

"So he freaked out, and of course, this was a time when people didn't know as much about computers, so he shut his computer off hoping it didn't send."

Lisa Winberg

Funds raised from this event will go toward a camp subsidy for underprivileged Jewish kids.

"Camp played such an important role in my childhood and truly shaped who I am as a person today. I wouldn't want anyone to miss out on that experience just because of their financial situation. Knowing that the money raised at *Cringe Worthy* will go toward sending kids to camp is something I feel really passionate about," Klaiman said.

"Last year, we sent 231 kids to camp, so we're hoping to send a few more with the money raised at the event."

Lisa Winberg, a 28-year-old member of the Emerging Leaders committee who is producing the *Cringe Worthy* show, said her mother, who is a past president of the JF&CS board, encouraged her to volunteer.

Having been involved in the community in a number of other initiatives including the Birthright leadership program and the Hoops for Israel basketball tournament, she said she was eager to get involved with a program that promotes the services provided by JF&CS.

"I think our biggest goal – if we raise a lot of money that would be wonderful… but ultimately, we want to make people aware of JF&CS and the great programs that are offered and to elevate it so people are more aware." ■

For more information, visit www.jfcsemergingleaders.com. Tickets go on sale April 21.

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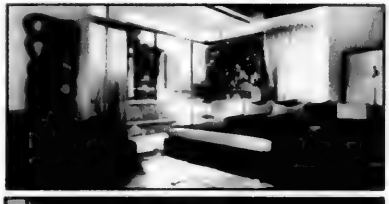

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GUEST VOICE

Election result is disappointing, but status quo isn't viable

Issie Lyon, Karen Mock and Hart Schwartz

In a few days, Jewish families will gather around their seder tables to teach their children about the pain of enslavement and the joy of freedom. As Jews, we prayed and worked toward the day when we could be truly free and live in peace and security in our own homeland. Now that we have achieved this prized goal, we have a responsibility to apply our own hard learned lessons to everyone, not just our fellow Jews.

Canadian Jews should take the opportunity of Passover to discuss how best to support Israel so that it can effectively and sincerely negotiate a peace agreement that will be a foundation for security and democracy in Israel and Palestine. The status quo – a military administration of millions of disenfranchised Palestinians – is not a viable option. We owe it to our community, and especially our children, to provide them with all the information they need to make responsible decisions, not just relying on the dogma they read or hear from the far right or the far left.

As representatives of JSpaceCanada, a progressive Zionist group that is pro-Israel, pro-peace and pro-democracy, we are disappointed with the results of the recent Israeli election. The Likud party, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, received 23 per cent of the total votes, while the hard-right parties combined garnered just one-third of the Israeli electorate's support (roughly the same as in the last election). Based on these numbers, voters cannot be said to have supported settlement expansion. And yet, political parties that espouse this view will most likely form the next government.

We understand why it was difficult for some Israelis to vote for change. And we recognize the legitimate security concerns of Israeli voters, especially considering the instability in the region. We share their distrust of Israel's sworn enemies, including Iran, Islamic State (ISIS), Hezbollah and Hamas. But we also believe that a well-negotiated two-state solution is in the long-term best interests of everyone in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the possibility of a sustainable, peaceful two-state solution has now been severely compromised.

> *We understand why it was difficult for some Israelis to vote for change*

Like most Jews in Canada, we believe in peace, justice and democracy. And so we are urging all Jews to discuss the results of the Israeli election openly around their seder tables. We should have the courage to discuss a variety of ways in which Canadian Jews can support Israel constructively, so that it becomes a true democracy for all its residents while, at the same time, continues to be a homeland for all Jews.

Similarly, Canadian Jewish community leaders also have a responsibility to reflect the wide variety of opinions that exist in the Canadian Jewish community. Our federal political leaders and the media ought to hear that there is an honest difference of opinion within the Jewish community on how best to support Israel.

In the Diaspora, supporting every action of the current Israeli government without deliberation is not necessarily being a good friend of Israel. The questioning of specific Israeli government actions by thoughtful Jews, including settlement expansion, is positive and productive.

We hope that Canada will continue to reinforce its official policy and encourage the new Israeli government not to give up on negotiating a two-state solution, while striving for safety, security, peace, justice and democracy for all.

Israel has a dynamic democracy for its citizens, including Arab-Israelis. We applaud the vibrancy of that democracy and respect the outcome of this election. And we look forward to future elections, which we hope will reflect a more positive outlook for the State of Israel. ■

Issie Lyon, Karen Mock and Hart Schwartz are on the co-ordinating committee of JSpaceCanada.

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"In brainstorming about the type of facility in which to accommodate the growth of our sales force, the one thing we kept coming back to is that the new home for our agents and brokers should be more than just another four-wall office environment," says Broker of Record Murray Goldkind. "It occurred to us that most of the new real estate offices being built to sell more homes don't feel like home themselves."

"A great salesperson will be successful regardless of his or her surroundings," says Sol, "but creating an office environment that feels like home puts everyone in a house-selling frame of mind."

A growing number of talented agents and brokers agree. The spike in Sutton Group Admiral's growth curve since the opening of the new Centre Street office proves that "if you build it, they will come." In recent months, Sutton Group Admiral has welcomed aboard numerous industry stalwarts like **Andrea Halpern, Essie Sher, Evelyn James, Michael Benchimol, Alex Chalmiev, Rick Shapiro, Ella Bendersky and Emily Paskarou.**

Murray Goldkind
Broker of Record

Andrea Halpern, formerly of Remax Realtron, has settled into her new digs without skipping a beat. Except she doesn't "settle."

"Never" says Andrea. "My customers don't settle for less than the best, nor do I. Sutton Group Admiral provides a level of technical and administrative support that allows me to maintain a singular focus on my customers' needs. As a brokerage, I can't ask for anything more."

This eye-on-the-prize philosophy is nothing new at Sutton Group Admiral. "It's always been about the customer," says Murray. "Their needs come first."

Serving those needs means getting the seller's best return on their property and the buyer the best value. "Our people can only do that if all of their energies are focused on their clients' needs. You can't operate at a fast clip if you're looking for paper clips."

"Since Day One," says Sol, "we have never rested on our laurels. "In this business, if you're not three steps ahead of the game, then you're behind it."

In the case of the new Centre Street office, "three steps ahead" might be an understatement. In its 15,000 square feet of state-of-the-art office space, the new Centre Street office houses the kind of cuttingedge services and facilities that Admiral agents need to further enhance the top-drawer service they give their clients.

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Murray prides himself on his ability to read and respond to the needs of home buyers and sellers. Says Murray: "Today's home buyers are looking for one thing: VALUE. The agents and brokers who give them maximum value for their hard-earned dollars will earn their business. Those who don't, won't."

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Restoring an architect's legacy

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Toronto architect Benjamin Brown (1890-1974) designed many elegant edifices across the city, including the Balfour and Tower buildings on Spadina Avenue, the former Primrose Club on Willcocks Avenue, the former Beth Jacob Synagogue on Henry Street, the Hermant Building (eastern tower and annex) in Dundas Square, and scores of residences, theatres, factories, hotels and low-rise office and apartment buildings.

Possessing a trove of about 1,500 of Brown's blueprints, drawings and renderings, the Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA) Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre has launched an $80,000 fundraising campaign to conserve and digitize his somewhat precarious paper legacy as well as to celebrate his significant but largely unsung contribution to Toronto's urban fabric.

Towards the latter end, the OJA is preparing to spotlight Brown's works in an exhibition in a prominent city venue, possibly the Gladstone Hotel, in the spring of 2016.

"The idea is to show the recently conserved drawings that will help explore Benjamin Brown's process," said OJA director Dara Solomon. "The larger narrative – what we really want to do with this exhibition – is to position Brown as one of Toronto's important early architects, because he died in obscurity."

Brown's art-deco Balfour Building and his Tower Building, which salute each other across the Spadina-Adelaide intersection, are considered the architectural gateways of Spadina Avenue. The city has designated both buildings, along with the Beth Jacob (now a Russian Orthodox church) and the Hermant and Commodore buildings, as heritage properties.

One of Toronto's first Jewish architects, Brown began his career soon after graduating from architectural school in 1913, initially in partnership with architect Robert McConnell. He did much of his work for the Jewish community and seems to have attained his professional peak during the 1920s and 1930s.

Upon his death, Brown left his entire life's work to Jim Levine, a fellow architect and friend. When Levine went to Brown's home to retrieve the drawings, he found – according to a brief essay by Levine's son Jay – "a dusty and deteriorating collection piled around, on top of and even inside of an old Edsel."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The Primrose Club blueprint ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

The Balfour Building on Spadina Avenue ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Levine stored the collection for 13 years before offering it to the Centre for Canadian Architecture in Montreal. They rejected it, dismissing Brown as "a minor regional talent." Next Levine contacted the OJA's then-director Stephen Speisman to see if there was anything worth saving. "When Dr. Speisman saw what we had, he could hardly contain his excitement," Jay Levine writes.

Brown's works include the Brunswick Avenue Talmud Torah, the Rubinoff department store, the Old Spain restaurant for Lazar Levinson, a fur factory with apartments for the Schipper brothers, renovations for the Beach Hebrew Institute and McCaul Street Synagogue, and numerous service stations, warehouses and garages.

He also drew posh residences for Louis Gelber, Mendel Granatstein, Henry Greisman, Samuel Lavine, Ira Levy, Mandel Mehr, Sophia Rochman, Morris Spring, Irving Stone, Jacob Tenenbaum and many other clients. These are among the roughly 150 projects, large and small, represented in his prolific and varied oeuvre.

Brown also dabbled in theatres but, contrary to urban legend, he may not have had a huge part in the design of the Standard Theatre, the storied Yiddish theatre that opened in 1922 at the northeast corner of Dundas and Spadina. (Later a movie theatre and burlesque house, the heritage-designated structure now houses a bank and some shops.) Although Heritage Toronto names Brown as the architect– as did the *Globe* in a glowing account of the theatre's opening – the dozens of detailed blueprints in the Brown collection bear the unmistakable architectural imprint of J. M. Jeffrey.

Based in Toronto early in his career, Jeffrey left in the early 1920s for the United States, where he participated in the design of such buildings as the Sherry-Netherland and Pierre Hotels in New York, and the Biltmore chain of hotels.

Did Brown only put the finishing touches on the Standard after Jeffrey's departure? "It's a bit of a mystery," concedes archivist Donna Bernardo-Ceriz as she carefully unfurls some of the Standard's delicate blueprints on a large table. "We're hoping that an architectural historian will be able to fill us in on that." ■

This is the fourth in a series of articles to be published periodically about Toronto's Jewish institutions, funded by the J. B. & Dora Salsberg Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. This series is in partnership with the Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre and draws on their collections: www.ontariojewisharchives.org

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TALKING ABOUT ISRAEL

THE NEED FOR A NEW CONVERSATION

Instead of uniting us, Israel often divides us. How do we develop a new way of talking about Israel, and what should be the boundaries of this conversation?

Join Donniel Hartman for a dialogue on the need to create a framework that opens the discussion for those of us invested in Israel's success to also fight for the Israel we want.

***Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman** is President of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and the Director of its iEngage Project. He has a Ph.D. in Jewish philosophy from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a Master of Arts in political philosophy from New York University, a Master of Arts in religion from Temple University, and Rabbinic ordination from the Shalom Hartman Institute.*

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McMaster undergrads endorse BDS motion

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Boycott supporters celebrate. TWITTER PHOTO

Although a motion in favour of the boycott, sanctions and divestment (BDS) campaign against Israel was passed March 23 at the McMaster Student Union's general assembly, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is raising questions about its legitimacy.

The BDS motion received 622 votes in support, 28 against, and 77 students abstained.

Last year, students voted in favour of a BDS motion, but the assembly did not have quorum, making it a non-binding resolution.

This year, the assembly did have quorum – more than 633 students – and students voted overwhelmingly in favour of the motion, but CIJA's associate communications director Steve McDonald said the people who introduced the motion did so in violation of the undergraduate student union's bylaws.

The bylaws state that public notice of any general assembly meeting must be given through student email, in the student newspaper and on the MSU website at least 10 school days in advance of the meeting. Otherwise, quorum must increase to 10 per cent of the MSU membership.

"When this was raised as a point of order, the chair made excuses for why proper notice was not given and decided to ignore the bylaw requirements in favour of some vague clause in the student union's constitution," McDonald wrote in an email to *The CJN*.

"Our perspective is that this motion passed at a meeting in explicit violation of the student union's own bylaws and constitution. This puts into question the legitimacy of the entire motion."

The motion, endorsed by Hamilton-based organizations and McMaster student groups including Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights, Independent Jewish Voices Hamilton and Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War, called on the student body to "commit to identifying and divesting from companies that support or profit from Israeli war crimes, occupation and oppression of Palestinians."

Raphael Szajnfarber, McMaster Hillel's director of Jewish student life called the vote "undemocratic" because no time was allowed to debate the issue, "silencing all other student opinions with over an hour still remaining in the meeting."

He said this, as well as the fact the bylaw about prior notice of the meeting was not enforced, undermined the vote's legitimacy.

McMaster student Jacob Klugsberg said he drafted an amendment to the BDS motion outlining a general ethical purchasing policy that would have applied to all countries and companies equally.

But Szajnfarber said it was rejected.

"The BDS activists showed their true interest, which has nothing to do with human rights and everything to do with demonizing Israel, and Israel alone, based on discrimination and hate," he said.

Despite the endorsement of the BDS campaign by the student union, Szajnfarber said he is encouraged by McMaster's recent commitment to increase partnerships and joint initiatives with Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Technion Israel Institute of Technology.

Judy Zelikovitz, CIJA's vice president, university and local partner services, said there isn't a single North American university that has endorsed the BDS movement.

"The McMaster administration should explicitly state that the student union's discriminatory resolution will have no effect on the university's policies and programs," Zelikovitz said.

McMaster spokesperson Gord Arbeau said the university would not be issuing a formal statement against the BDS motion, but he told *The CJN* that this is a matter for the student union to handle.

"Certainly, we welcome and reaffirm their right to have these discussions and debate these issues, but it is separate from the day-to-day business of the university. It's a student union matter... and now the students union will determine how to move forward," Arbeau said.

Last month at McMaster, tensions flared between pro-Israel and anti-Israel students after students staged a die-in to protest a visit by a delegation of four Israelis whose aim was to promote their country's diversity.

In recent years, student unions at universities such as York, Carleton, Trent, Concordia, the University of Regina and the University of Toronto have endorsed similar resolutions to boycott Israel.

At McGill University last month, however, students rejected a BDS motion at the winter semester general assembly Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU). It was the second such motion introduced at a SSMU general assembly in the current academic year. A motion in the fall was also defeated. ■

UBC students reject boycott against Israel

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT, VANCOUVER

A student referendum at the University of British Columbia on boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel failed to pass last week after the yes side didn't get the required percentage of votes.

Among students who chose to vote on whether they want their student union to support the BDS campaign against Israel, 3,493 voted "yes" and 2,223 voted "no." The referendum required a quorum of 4,130 "yes" votes, or about eight per cent of UBC's 48,000 students, in order to pass.

"We are proud to announce that after a long and rough campaign period, we have succeeded in keeping BDS off of our campus!" the group UBC Students Against BDS said in a statement. "This is a great day for peace and dialogue at UBC."

Students were asked to respond to the question: "Do you support your student union (AMS) in boycotting products and divesting from companies that support Israeli war crimes, illegal occupation and the oppression of Palestinians?"

The vote was held March 23 to 27 by the Alma Mater Society (AMS), which represents all students and says its mission is "to improve the quality of the educational, social and personal lives of the students of UBC."

The referendum was a contentious issue even among members of the AMS executive committee, which received the request for a vote from a student member of the campus club Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR). A referendum is granted when the AMS receives a petition with a minimum of 1,000 student signatures.

SPHR said in a statement that "boycotts and divestments have and continue to be a powerful, peaceful method for change in the world" and that "UBC students have a history of utilizing referendums to garner support for marginalized groups."

"Subject to continued military occupation, annexation of land, underdevelopment, discriminatory treatment, and military assault, the Palestinian people, including students on our campus, deserve the solidarity of UBC students. By voting 'Yes' on this question, you encourage investigation into UBC's ties with any companies that might maintain the occupation of Palestinian territories, set a precedent against any future involvement with such, and show symbolic solidarity with Palestinians."

On March 4, the AMS council gathered to discuss the question and released a statement saying that the "passing of this referendum will go against one of the primary objectives of the society, to promote unity and goodwill amongst our members."

The AMS council endorsed "any vote but yes," but said it "could not launch a full campaign and further direct the executive committee to release a single communication statement that states the AMS' stance on the BDS referendum."

Rabbi Philip Bregman

On March 24, the council amended this vague wording by adding that "a yes vote would isolate certain members of the AMS and go against the ideals of inclusivity and the promotion of a safe and discrimination-free community for our members."

Rabbi Philip Bregman, director of Hillel UBC, said the AMS could have rejected the referendum. "We've been fighting this referendum since November," he told *The CJN* as the vote was ongoing. "The AMS could have chosen not to put out the referendum on a number of bases we gave them, but it was their choice to put it out. It contains the phrase 'Israeli war crimes' despite the fact that Israel has never been convicted of war crimes. It targets Israelis and Jews on campus and puts a toxicity into campus."

Rabbi Bregman cited a number of recent incidents on campus in response to the referendum, including swastikas that were found in two campus residences.

As well, earlier this month, another campus club that had planned to collaborate with the Jewish Students' Association in making peanut butter jelly sandwiches for the homeless was pulling out. "They said they didn't want to be seen with Jews this week during the voting. We believe this referendum is about hate," he said.

Darren Mackoff, director of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), Pacific region, said his organization has been working to confront BDS at UBC.

"From ongoing outreach to the student government, school administration, other student groups and leaders and the campus body at large, the message has been clear: BDS stands for hate, closes down dialogue and flies in the face of UBC's longstanding academic, democratic and multicultural values. It's a message which has resonated strongly at UBC."

The AMS declined to be interviewed. ■

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Crafting brings smiles to sick children

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Pamela Bielak knows a lot about crafts. She is the founder of Crafting for a Cure (CFC), a not-for-profit, registered charity that helps give children a positive experience when a hospital visit is necessary.

The charity donates craft kits for sick children and teenagers to 90 hospitals across North America, Israel and Kenya.

"We create and supply craft kits, which are used in emergency rooms, clinic treatment rooms and operating waiting rooms," Bielak explained.

CFC registered its 16-year-old organization five years ago.

Bielak, 44, is the mother of twins, who are also 16 years of age. At the time of their birth, one of the twins was diagnosed with a lung condition, and Bielak found she needed something to occupy her time during her lengthy visits to the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

"Daniel was a severely asthmatic child, experiencing collapsed lungs and seizures. For years, we found ourselves in and out of SickKids. During my visits, I had to find something for my daughter, Naiomi [Daniel's twin], to do. I started to bring crafts to pass the time, and parents would ask if I brought any extra," Bielak recalled.

Frustrated with the lack of activities and resources in the lung clinic playroom at SickKids, Bielak set out on her first creative initiative: the renovation of the playroom.

At the time, she was creating a scrapbooking line, and she shared it with children at the hospital. Crafting for a Cure evolved from that.

"I designed cutouts for kids. I had a Jewish line, one for kids [who were] amputees and an asthma line. If there was a child with asthma, there would be a picture of a child with his/her puffer running across the finish line saying, 'I did it.' If there was an amputee child, there would be a special prosthetic leg showing them running a race. And I had cutouts for all the Jewish holidays.

"I don't like to see any child not smile," she said.

Today, with a house filled with crafts and a packed storage unit with related products, Bielak has seen her passion multiply, as her organization supplies some 40,000 craft kits a year.

Having never drawn a paycheque, Bielak relies on corporate sponsors to help supply the craft materials and community volunteers to help package and assemble the craft kits in preparation for shipments that cost an average of $5,000 to ship.

CFC volunteers also promote school-and community-wide programs such as Creating Breathing Space and Kilometers for Kids (K4K). Creating Breathing Space provides a space for teens who suffer from mental health illnesses. K4K is a mini-marathon fundraiser held at schools, where students raise money through sponsorship.

Craft kit shipments go out four to five times a year across North America, while Kenya receives one shipment of 5,000 craft kits a year.

Armed with supplies including glass and crystal beads, yarn, foam, stickers, crayons, wires, puzzles and other materials, Bielak along with her friend Serena Farberman and numerous CFC volunteers – often visits hospitals to craft with patients.

Last year, Bielak and Farberman travelled to Israel to personally deliver more than $20,000 worth of art supplies to both the Wilf Children's Hospital at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center and Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel. Bielak told *The CJN* about a 12-year-old Jewish boy who had only a few days to live.

"I was told the child probably wouldn't respond; nevertheless, I went into his room hopefully, with crafts and a smile. He was lying in bed looking peaceful, with no tubes or anything to suggest he was ill. We started talking. His English wasn't so great, but neither was my Hebrew. I gave him a puzzle and he told me how much he loved to do 3D craft puzzles. His parents started crying, saying they hadn't seen their son smile in weeks. The boy passed away in his sleep approximately a week after my visit, but he finished that puzzle I gave him, and that was his goal. He died with a smile."

Pamela Bielak, second from right, at Shaare Zedek Hospital in Israel last year with a young patient named David holding his puzzle craft with his parents at his side.

Crafting together can have many rewards. "Seeing Jews and Muslims engaged with their kids, one is forced to forget politics, even for a brief moment. Crafting is an amazing distraction. Kids are smiling, not focusing on their illness, and are even giving the parent an extra break as well," Bielak said with a smile. ■

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Ex-Winnipeg Jewish Theatre head charged with theft, forgery

Police allege former artistic director embezzled more than $85,000 and had issued warrant for his arrest in January

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

After his abrupt dismissal last year, rumours swirled about the circumstances of Michael Nathanson's abrupt departure from the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre (WJT), and it now appears that there was substance to them.

Nathanson, 48, the former artistic director of the WJT who was fired in February 2014, was arrested March 27 and charged with theft and forgery. Several media outlets have reported that he stands accused of embezzling more than $85,000 from the 27-year-old theatre company. It was forced to shut down temporarily at the time of Nathanson's firing due to a financial crunch whose details were unspecified.

As reported in *The Canadian Jewish News* at the time of his firing, Nathanson was hired as artistic director for the 2006-07 season, succeeding longtime artistic director Kayla Gordon who left to pursue other ventures in the theatre world.

A former Winnipegger, Nathanson had been living in the United States, where he was trying to make it as a playwright, before being hired by the WJT.

He came aboard at an earlier low point in the WJT's financial health. Over his first four seasons, the WJT enjoyed an artistic revitalization. Productions of *Death of a Salesman* in January 2008 and *Lenin's Embalmers* in October 2010 were the two best-attended shows of the past decade.

In the spring of 2012, Nathanson and the WJT staged the ambitious and costly *Angels in America: Millenium Approaches*. While the production received much critical praise, it lost money, as did *Perestroika*, which kicked off the theatre's 25th season the following fall.

Reports by both the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *CBC News* said that, according to police, Nathanson took advantage of his dual position as artistic director and general manager in charge of the theatre company's finances to embezzle thousands of dollars and covered up the thefts by forging documents to make the company's books look like they were in order.

Michael Nathanson

Nathanson, who has dual citizenship, left Winnipeg for Texas shortly after the thefts were brought to the attention of investigators early last year.

In January, police issued a Manitoba-wide warrant for his arrest. He was arrested last Friday when he tried to return to the province.

Police told the *Winnipeg Sun* that he still has children in the city that he may have been returning to see.

He has been charged with theft over $5,000 and forgery and remains in custody.

The board of the WJT is declining to comment on the matter, said board vice-president Greg DiCresce, as the case is before the courts.

The WJT itself has bounced back from the setback. Last fall, it announced a new season under the direction of interim (and former) artistic director Gordon.

Last December, the theatre company staged a very successful three-day run of *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*, starring Jake Ehrenreich.

In May, the WJT will be staging the Canadian premiere of the New York hit play *Bad Jews*.

And last month, as reported in *The CJN*, the theatre hired Torontonian Ari Weinberg as its new artistic director. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 2, 2015

Figure skating pioneer designated 'national historic person'

PAUL LUNGEN
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There's a vintage photograph of Louis Rubenstein that captures his era beautifully. Rubenstein is wearing a blazer bedecked with an assortment of medals. He sports a bowler hat and his visage is dominated by a thick moustache that the heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire might have worn. And, to top it off, so to speak, he's wearing a pair of figure skates.

Whether his costume was considered as flamboyant in his day as those worn by today's sequin-studded ice dancers is an open question. But Rubenstein, who lived from 1861 to 1931, was certainly the spiritual ancestor of today's elite Canadian figure skaters.

A multiple national champion in the 1880s, he went on to win the unofficial world figure skating championship in 1890, defying the anti-Semitic Czarist government in St. Petersburg to do so.

Recently, if not belatedly, the government of Canada designated Rubenstein "a national historic person."

A bronze plaque will be erected in his honour at a location yet to be determined, said Julie Dompierre, director of the commemoration branch of Parks Canada. Rubenstein will then join a select company of only 2,000 people, places and events with the national historic designation, she said.

Rubenstein not only excelled as "a fancy skater," the name given to figure skating in the day, but also played an important role as a builder of the sport. He helped organize the Amateur Skating Association of Canada, the forerunner of Skate Canada. "It was a significant factor in why [we] felt his contribution was above and beyond his athletic ability," Dompierre said.

Rubenstein, the son of Polish immigrants, was born and grew up in Montreal. According to a report by a board recommending his designation by Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq, Rubenstein won Canadian championships from 1883 to 1889, as well as the North American title in 1885 and the U.S. championships in 1888, 1889 and 1891.

In 1890, he attended the first ever World Figure Skating Championship in St. Petersburg, Russia. There "he faced anti-Semitism and was able to participate only through the intervention of Lord Stanley, the British ambassador to Russia," according to a report prepared for the minister.

Louis Rubenstein

Rubenstein was nominated by University of Toronto historian Bruce Kidd, a former track star and Olympic athlete.

Kidd said he has long taken an interest in Canadian sports history and felt that the combination of Rubenstein's accomplishments in competition and his work to build the sport merited inclusion as a designated historic figure.

"He was a giant of the sport. He competed all over North America. He was a household name. Wherever he skated, he attracted huge crowds...He contributed to Canadian sport his whole life," Kidd said.

Rubenstein was inducted into the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame (IJSHF) in 1981, and the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame in 1984.

"He was a career sportsman," said the IJSHF. "After retiring from active skating, Rubenstein held the presidency of various Canadian organizations representing tenpin bowling, curling, bicycling, tobogganing, lifesaving, and ice skating. He is called the Father of Bowling in Canada."

Rubenstein was a partner in the family firm of silver platers and manufacturers, and was a Montreal alderman from 1914 to 1931. ■

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GUEST VOICE

Rebranding signals a newer Ve'ahavta

Robyn Segall

When I first learned about Ve'ahavta, about 12 years ago, I was a non-Hebrew-speaking, culturally affiliated young adult in Toronto. I had just returned from the first ever cohort of Birthright Israel and a dynamic Jewish world suddenly opened up to me.

I wanted to volunteer in the community, but didn't know where to start. I knew I wanted to do something Jewishly meaningful, but not necessarily in a shul environment. A friend told me about Ve'ahavta, that I could go there and make sandwiches for the homeless.

I was welcomed with warm open arms and felt at home immediately.

My initial volunteer experience on the Mobile Jewish Response to the homeless outreach van penetrated my heart in a profound way. I felt empowered and purposeful, and I wanted more. I then volunteered for nearly every Ve'ahavta program and department. Two years later, I left my corporate job and started as a full-time employee. It's been 10 years, and I have never looked back.

Often people ask me what keeps me here after so many years. This is what I tell them: my Judaism continues to be defined and re-defined, but one thing which remains constant is the inherent value of tikkun olam – repairing the world. I believe that as a relatively privileged community, we have the obligation to reach out and help all those in need, regardless of who they are.

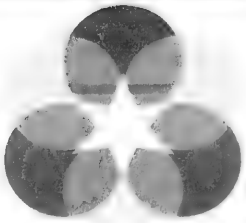
When Ve'ahavta was founded by Avrum Rosensweig in 1996, the concept lacked support, perhaps because it was misunderstood. Many naysayers thought it was ludicrous to think the Jewish community would want to support an organization that helps non-Jews. In that sense, Ve'ahavta was something of a "rebel" organization in the Jewish community.

Our original logo – a black Torah scroll with an illuminated heart in the middle – was designed as an expression of our bold nature, and our commitment to be a "light unto the nations." Unlike the typical Jewish agency logos, Ve'ahavta's stood out and became a brand people associated with our unique personality. However, it also caused confusion for some – what is that black blob? A splash of paint? An apron? Is that a Torah scroll is this a yeshiva? And what does that tiny writing say underneath the name?

Despite the challenges, our original logo served us well for 18 years. But now it's time for change.

When I founded Ve'ahavata's marketing department in 2011, I recognized we were heading down a path of growth and that our brand needed to keep up with us. A rebrand was one of our first objectives. The question was: how do we remain true to our unique identity, our values, and our rich history? How do we maintain the soulfulness people know us for and avoid the myriads of mainstream logos and catalog marketing that seems to prevail in our industry?

The bright colours of our new logo represent the vitality and hope the organization stands on. Yellow is reminiscent of the original brand. Blue is evocative of the Jewish community. The blending of the two creates a vibrant green, which represents the bridging of diverse groups and individuals. The overlapping circles represent the inclusivity and collaboration integral to Ve'ahavta's humanitarian ideals. And at the heart of the circles, a stylized Star of David represents the light of the Jewish soul shining through and guiding our actions.



The new Ve'ahavta logo

Our name, of course, has not changed. "Ve'ahavta" is derived from the line in the Torah "*ve'ahavta lere'acha kamocha*" "and you shall love your neighbour as yourself."

A rebrand does not mean a "new Ve'ahavta," but a "newer Ve'ahatva." Progress demands change, and change demands progress. This rebrand is our commitment to progress, an evolution deeply rooted in our past, lessons learned, and achievements that have brought us to this point in time.

Shehechiyanu. ■

Robyn Segall is Ve'ahavta's director of communications and operations

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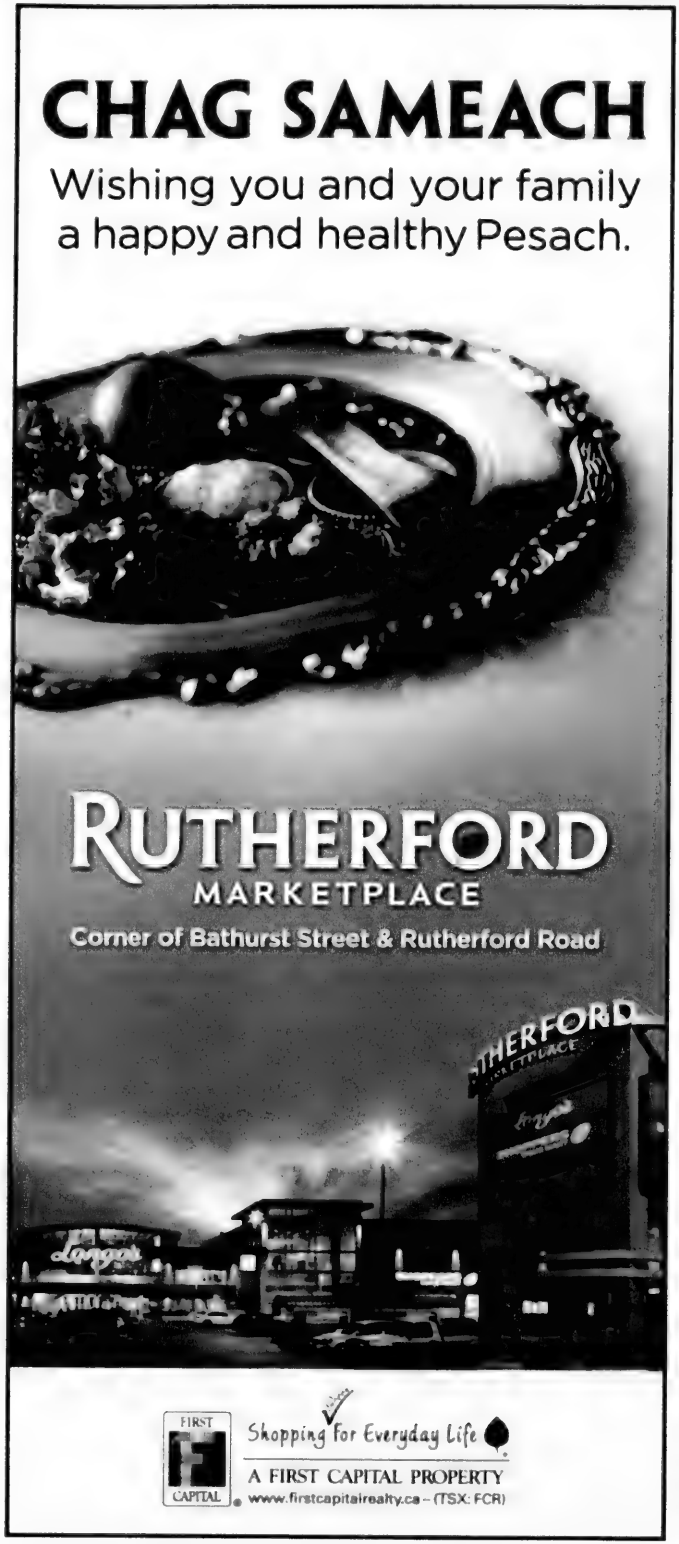

Roy Salomon first Canadian honoured by Maccabi USA

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN BOCA RATON

Roy Salomon

Although former Maccabi Canada president Roy Salomon has been recognized numerous times in his own country, he became the first Canadian citizen to be honoured by Maccabi USA in a recent ceremony here for his 46-year involvement with Maccabi Canada and the World Maccabi Union.

Salomon was cited along with 14 other outstanding Jewish athletes, organizers and volunteers at the Legends of the Maccabiah Gala Brunch.

Salomon represents part of the rich history and tradition of excellence of Canadian Jewish athletes and organizers at the Maccabiah Games in Israel.

Held every four years following an Olympics year, the Maccabiah Games is considered the third largest sports movement in the world, behind only the Olympics and Pan American Games.

Maccabi USA presented Salomon with the Maccabi Spirit Award for being one of the few people in Canada to have contributed to the Maccabi organization on the local, national and international levels.

"From the moment I represented Canada in basketball at the 1969 Maccabiah Games, I felt moved to be with the Maccabiah Games for a lifetime. The thrill of hearing and seeing 60,000 spectators cheer all the athletes at the opening ceremonies is a thrill I will never forget," said Salomon, 78, at the tribute where the other honorees were Americans.

Salomon moved to Montreal from Brooklyn in 1960 to form a real estate development company that established the Cavendish Mall in Côte St. Luc, among other commercial properties.

A past president of Maccabi Canada for eight terms from 1993-2001, Salomon always was close to the many athletes he recruited to the Maccabiah Games for decades.

He is credited with pushing for the addition of junior athletes (14 and under) with athletic competitions in separate categories. The first juniors competed at the Maccabiah Games in 1985.

"The popularity of junior athletes has grown so much that they represent close to a third of the athletes that go to the Maccabiah Games," he said. "Many of the junior athletes, moved by the trip and competition in Israel, often return to the Games in the open category and fare well because of their experiences at the junior level."

Salomon was a key player on the international level at the Maccabi World Union for mediating relations between Australia, four of whose Maccabiah team members were killed as a result of the 1997 bridge collapse at the Games' opening, and Israel.

"Australia continued to fund teams for the Games and we have paid tribute to their athletes since the accident," he said.

Salomon, who was the honorary vice-president of the Maccabi World Union, won the Yakir International Award for his efforts with the Australian Maccabi organization.

Salomon also is credited with raising the profile of Maccabi Canada by inviting hockey great Jean Béliveau to serve as the Canadian team's chef de mission at the 1985 and 1997 Games.

The 1997 Games was another milestone for Salomon as the Canadian hockey team won gold under the tutelage of coach Jacques Demers, who also coached the Montreal Canadiens to their last Stanley Cup in 1993.

"It really was the Maccabi Canada organization and not me that was responsible for both Jacques [Demers] and Jean [Béliveau] being involved with the Maccabiah Games," he said with characteristic modesty.

Along with Maccabi USA president Bob Spivack, Salomon was the honorary co-chair at the last Maccabiah Games in 2013.

He also founded the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame originally at the Davis YM-YWHA in 1979 and was honoured at the 2013 Sports Celebrity Breakfast, benefiting the Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors Foundation.

Among the others feted at the brunch were: former 1956 Wimbledon doubles tennis champion Angela Buxton, former professional golfer Bruce Fleisher, (who competed at the Canadian Open golf championship many times), and former National Basketball Association player Danny Schayes, who played against the Toronto Raptors before his retirement in 1999. ■

To learn more about Salomon and Maccabi Canada, visit www.maccabicanada.com

Camp Wingate will carry on Pripstein's traditons

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Camp Wingate, on the site of the now-closed Pripstein's, looks onto picturesque Lac des Trois Frères in St. Adolphe d'Howard.

It's not a revival of Pripstein's, but the new Camp Wingate will open this summer on the same Laurentian site and carry on many of the former camp's traditions.

Camp Wingate director Laurie Wiseman said registration is sufficient to allow the new private sleepaway camp in St. Adolphe d'Howard to begin operations this season. "We only started in February, which is a little late," said Wiseman, "but we have enough campers to go ahead. We are a relatively small camp."

The camp, which can accommodate up to about 200 children, is continuing to accept registration, she said.

The co-ed camp for kids aged 7-17 years will run for 6-1/2 weeks, with two 4-1/2 and full-session (June 25-Aug. 10) options available.

"The bulk of those registering are Pripstein's returnees – they are a very loyal group but we have new people as well," she said. "We're trying to reach out to others."

Wiseman, who attended Pripstein's for 13 years during which she became the camp's first female head counsellor, and another ex-camper and counsellor Cory Pecker, a former professional hockey player, are the prime movers behind Camp Wingate.

Like Pripstein's, the camp is open to everyone, but will have a Jewish vibe.

Both were shocked when majority owner Ronnie Braverman announced in December that he was closing Pripstein's Camp Mishmar – its formal name – after 74 years. Braverman, who is a grandson of founders Chaim and Pearl Pripstein, said enrolment had been declining for decades, blaming that on the decline of the camp's traditional market: anglophone, relatively secular middle-class Montreal Jewish families. It was the last of the private Jewish camps that once flourished in the Laurentians.

Wiseman, who has owned and directed the Sunny Acres Day Camp in Ste. Anne de Bellevue since 1996, which now has 800 campers, and Pecker, who ran Pripstein's popular hockey program for some years, believe that there is still a niche for a camp like that.

"We are keeping the best of Pripstein's, its spirit and great facilities, and infusing our own ideas. The concept needed an overhaul, to be freshened up a little," said Wiseman. "But I think there is still a market. It's very doable."

Wiseman said they are leasing the property, which remains on the market for sale. She expects this arrangement to continue for "a few years" with purchase of the property part of the long-term plan.

Should a prospective buyer come along, Wiseman said Pecker and his brother Robby have "the first right of refusal," that is, they have the right to purchase the property on the same terms as offered by the third party. The camp is located on 200 lakeside acres.

Cory Pecker, who played for 15 years in the Ontario and American Hockey Leagues before ending his career in Switzerland, is director of athletics at Wingate, which has an ice hockey rink. Other amenities are an indoor pool and basketball court, outdoor tennis courts, an inline skating park, and water sports facilities. The hockey program is open equally to boys and girls.

The camp is named for the Wingate Institute, a sports training centre near Netanya, Israel, said Wiseman. Wingate was the name of an athletic program at Pripstein's sometime during her time there from between about 1980 to 1993.

The camp's logo is a winged "W" and the colours are blue and gold.

Wingate will maintain Pripstein's Jewish orientation. The food will be "kosher style," brachot will be said before meals, Israel's national anthem *Hatikvah* will be sung at the dinner-time flagpole, and an Oneg Shabbat will be held every Friday night, where prayers will be recited over candles and challah at a traditional Shabbat dinner, and Hebrew songs sung afterward.

While the sports component is strong, Wiseman said Wingate caters to a wide range of interests, in particular the visual and performing arts.

A special guest will be young adult novelist Sarah Mlynowski, a Montreal native now living in New York who spent 10 summers at Pripstein's.

All staff are at least 18 years old, she added. The "camp mother" is Josie Gold, who was a Pripstein's camper and staff member from 1972 to 1987, and remained the camp's graphics designer until it closed. She is married to another Pripstein's alumnus, Cleve Ziegler.

"We know what it takes to build a strong camp and we are committed to creating a truly special place for our campers, a camp that is small in size and where all campers are known and cared for, each for their own unique personality," said Wiseman. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 2, 2015

Son of Canada's first black Jew recalls happy childhood

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

Like most other Jewish kids growing up in Winnipeg's north end in the 1940s and '50s, Bill Mahon attended public school by day and cheder in the evenings, went to shul with his dad on Shabbat, had a bar mitzvah, went to St. John's Tech for high school (where he was president of the student council) and hung out with his friends.

The only difference between Mahon and his friends was that his father was a black man – Emerson Swift Mahon.

Emerson Mahon was the subject of a feature in the Feb. 25 edition of *The CJN*, where he was profiled in honour of Black History Month and described as "Canada's first black Jew."

Originally from the Caribbean island of Grenada, Mahon, who was raised as an Anglican, came to Canada in his early 20s. He enlisted in the Canadian armed forces in World War I, where he met the Jewish chaplain, Rabbi Abramowitz, who inspired him to convert to Judaism.

Mahon underwent a formal Orthodox conversion in Montreal in 1921.

"This was no watered-down conversion," says his son, Bill. "He had to learn Hebrew and be able to recite the prayers."

Emerson Mahon

Mahon later moved to Winnipeg, where, in 1934, he met and married Faiga (Frances, in English) Golbert, who had recently arrived from Russia.

Although he earned a degree in science and a teaching certificate from the University of Manitoba, the only work he was able to find was as a porter on the trains.

The union of Emerson Mahon and Golbert produced two children, Bill – who is a financial planner in Winnipeg, and older sister, Ethel, who left Winnipeg for the United States after graduating from the General Hospital School of Nursing. She passed away in 2002 at the age of 64.

> *He rarely spoke about his parents, but he did speak fondly about one grandmother who was once a slave who was owned by Jewish plantation owners who treated her well.*

Bill, who was born in 1940, said he had some family on his mother's side in Winnipeg, but that his father had no relatives here.

"He rarely spoke about his parents," Mahon said of his father, "but did speak fondly about one grandmother who, he said, was once a slave who was owned by Jewish plantation owners who treated her well. Perhaps that was a factor in his choosing Judaism."

Mahon, who has two daughters – one in Vancouver and another who lives in Toronto with her family – added that his father had five brothers and one sister.

Bill did get to meet three of his uncles and several cousins.

One favourite uncle converted to Islam about the same time that Emerson chose Judaism.

"That uncle was stationed in the Middle East in the Great War," Mahon said. "I have learned to be more tolerant of all religions."

Bill remembers his late father, who passed away in 1963 at age 71 following a lengthy illness, as a voracious reader who at bedtime read his kids stories from Greek and Roman mythology.

"I can still recite the old poem, *King Bruce of Scotland*, which was one of my father's favourites," Mahon said.

"Certainly, my family was different from my friends' families," Mahon noted. "That was neither good nor bad. I had a wonderful childhood.

"There were some redneck Jews in the community. The bottom line, though, is that my father was a practising Jew." ■

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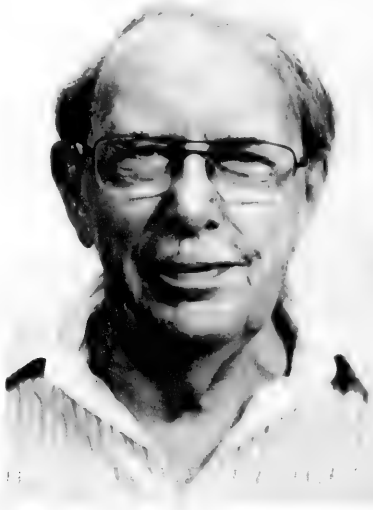

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Heads of Reform movement head west

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

As he prepared to embark on his first trip to western Canada as president of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), Rabbi Rick Jacobs said he hoped to convey to the Reform synagogues he'd be visiting in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton that the movement sees its core work as strengthening congregations.

"I want to help them thrive and adapt to the new realities of the 21st century, to the opportunities [for our synagogues] to engage people outside our walls and practice a kind of audacious hospitality," he explained.

Last weekend, the New York-based Rabbi Jacobs, along with Paul Leszner, the Toronto-based president of the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism (CCRJ) – which represents 26 Reform congregations across Canada – took a whirlwind trip to visit Vancouver's Temple Sholom, Calgary's Temple B'nai Tikvah and Edmonton's Temple Beth Ora.

In addition to building bridges across the network of Reform congregations in North America – the roughly 900 member synagogues represented by the URJ – the trip was timed to let Rabbi Jacobs and Leszner help the shuls mark their respective milestone anniversaries: Temple Sholom, with 680 families, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, while both the 340-family B'nai Tikvah and Temple Beth Ora and its 200 members are commemorating their 36th years.

"[This visit] is a chance for me to see the vitality and unique work being done in our various congregations and to increase our impact," Rabbi Jacobs said, adding, "In Canada, the Reform movement is not as large as in the U.S., but I want these shuls to feel part of the North American Reform Jewish community and to see what's growing throughout the movement."

To that end, Rabbi Jacobs, who planned to speak at all three congregations, said he would be emphasizing to the shuls that the movement is deeply involved in tikkun olam and "standing for profound, prophetic social justice values."

Further, he wanted to stress that it's extremely committed to Israel and to showing Jews worldwide "the uniqueness and strength of Reform Judaism past, present and future."

Leszner, who noted this trip was the fourth or fifth Canadian tour he's helped arrange for Rabbi Jacobs, said that having the head of the movement visit is "a very large deal."

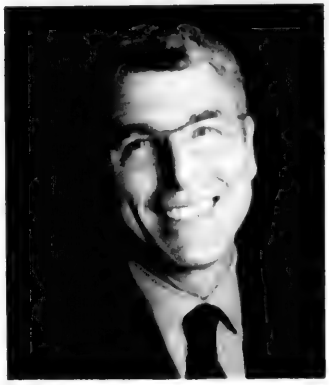
"I don't want to refer to him as the pope, but he has a huge impact," Leszner joked. "He leads all of us in the movement in terms of the standards, codes and vision for Reform Judaism on things like Israel and progressive Judaism."

He outlined their itinerary, which included a meeting with the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, dinner and services at Beth Sholom, Shabbat services at Temple B'nai Tikvah and a meeting with the shul board and dinner, *Havdalah* and a 36th-anniversary celebration at Beth Ora, as well as a meeting with its board.

The purpose of the board meetings, Leszner said, was for he and Rabbi Jacobs to address things the synagogues are concerned about, such as the future of Jewish leadership, sustaining membership numbers, synagogue economics, how to attract millennials and how to respectfully deal with interfaith marriages.

"[The latter] is a popular topic right now," Leszner said. "[Reform rabbis officiating at] interfaith weddings isn't done here in the GTA, but it's happening throughout the United States. So the question we're looking at is how to address this with the proper respect."

The boards will have the chance, too, to seek advice from Rabbi Jacobs and Leszner on issues particular to their congregations.

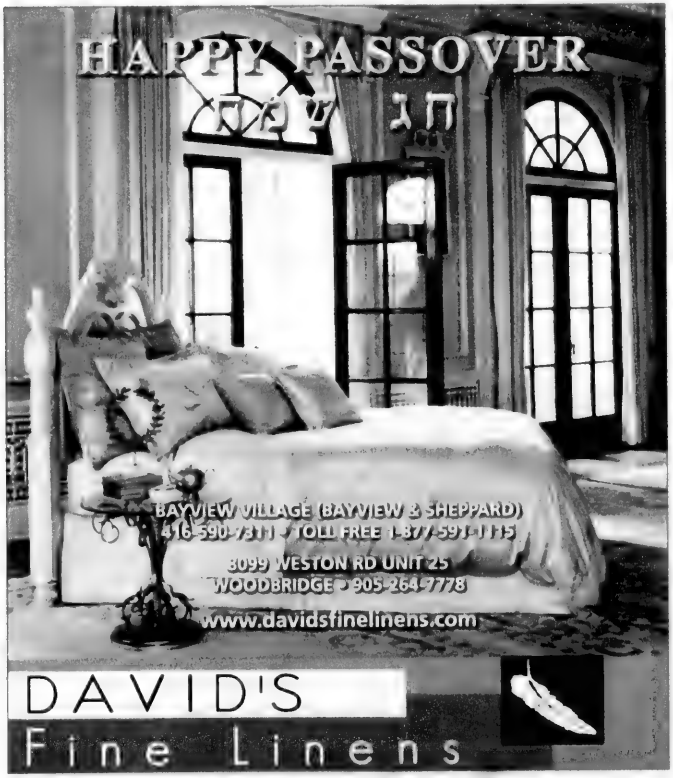


Rabbi Rick Jacobs

Rabbi Jacobs said he sees the Reform movement in Canada as being somewhat more traditional, in terms of religious observance, than its U.S. counterpart, and he noted the Canadian Reform movement's strong connection to Israel.

Despite the shuls in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton being relatively small and more removed from larger Jewish centres, Rabbi Jacobs said he sees a real sense of strength and unity among them.

"We don't measure congregations by the number of households they have, but by their vibrancy and commitment to their activities." ■



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

SYDNEY WARSHAW AND KATHERINE (KAT) ROMANOW

Using food to explore Jewish culture

The duo of Sydney Warshaw and Katherine (Kat) Romanow are dedicated foodies who run the Wandering Chew, a Montreal program started in late 2013, sponsored by Federation CJA's Generations Fund and the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal.

They research Jewish cuisine in its international variety and the cultures that nourished it. Then they organize intimate "pop-up" dinners at different venues suited to the theme, cook the meal with the help of a professional chef, and invite other young adults to learn about different Jewish communities around the world through what they eat. The goal is to engage those who might otherwise not be attracted to community activities.

Warshaw, 25, comes from a long line of Jewish cooks. Her great-grandmother was one of the editor's of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO's (CHW) classic cookbook *A Treasure for My Daughter*. A McGill University graduate in cultural studies and music history, she is currently studying law. She was previously social action co-ordinator in the federation's outreach and engagement department.

Romanow, 30, describes herself as a scholar of Jewish food. Her Judaic studies master's thesis at Concordia University was on the post-Passover Mimouna tradition among Montreal's Sephardim.

Iraqi, Mexican, U.S. Southern and, most recently, Scandinavian Jewish cooking have been featured at the dinners. The pair also teamed up with CHW to hold a Shavuot dinner last year, coinciding with the 14th printing of *A Treasure*, using recipes from that cookbook.

"We care about Jewish food, the culture that surrounds it, and its preservation and modernization," said Romanow. "Montreal has a diversity of Jewish communities whose food and culture deserve to be recognized." ■

JULIE GREENBAUM

Fighting Cancer- one party at a time

Five years ago, Julie Greenbaum was just 19 and living in Montreal when her mother died of ovarian cancer. Ten months after her mother's death, still reeling from the loss, she and her family put on their first event at a local nightclub, to raise money for cancer research.

"It started naturally. I wanted to engage my generation, so I threw a party... it was a fun, interactive way to raise money for a good cause and have fun."

That event for 350 people led to another, three times larger, and soon Greenbaum had a full-time non-profit organization on her hands, which was named Fuck Cancer.

"I really believe [the name] embodies the aggression and emotions that most people who've experienced the disease feel," she said.

Meanwhile, in Vancouver, another Jewish woman, Yael Cohen Braun, had started an identically named charity, inspired by her mother's bout with breast cancer. Braun's charity was largely web-based and encouraged young people to learn more about early cancer detection and prevention and to discuss cancer screening with their own parents.

About a year ago, the two charities merged, combining the women's formidable and complementary talents.

"It was pretty obvious that by joining forces we could achieve our goals more quickly," said Greenbaum. "It was a no-brainer."

In the last eight months, since the two charities merged, they have raised $500,000 for cancer screening programs, some of it earmarked for people who cannot afford tests.

Just a few weeks ago, Greenbaum moved to Los Angeles, to further expand the scope of the charity. A fundraising event is being planned for May in the city.

"The goal is to continue making the greatest impact we possibly can." ■

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JODY SPIEGEL

Helping people key to director's career

Looking back on her career choices, Jody Spiegel knows she could have been in the world of corporate law, billing big numbers and doing well.

But it's likely none of her clients would have crocheted a baby blanket for her when she had her first child.

When you work with Holocaust survivors, helping them get their stories out to the public, you strike up personal relationships. That's what happened with Rachel Shtibel, who was so excited about Spiegel's pregnancy that she made a little welcome-to-the-world gift for her.

Those are the kinds of connections that make her job as director of the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program particularly worthwhile.

The program takes survivors' memoirs and turns them into books for schools, libraries, and for sale commercially as first-hand accounts of the Holocaust.

So far, the foundation has published 51 books in French and English. This year's *As the Lilacs Bloomed*, is a memoir written in 1945 by Anna Molnar Hegedus, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor whose

story had stayed within the family until recently. Hegedus wrote the memoir while waiting for the return of her daughter from a wartime death march.

Becoming a mother helped make survivors' stories into something she could better relate to, Spiegel, 36, said. Stories of mothers turning over their small children to the care of strangers in hopes for their survival touch her deeply.

Helping survivors tell their stories has given her own life more meaning. Working for the Azrieli Foundation and not for a big law firm was the best decision she made, Spiegel said.

"I wanted to help people whose voices were not being heard." ■

MITCHELL MARCUS

Love of theatre dates back to his youth

It didn't take long for the acting bug to hit Mitchell Marcus. He was only five when he dragooned his nanny to sit as his audience for a show he put on in the family basement. His younger sister, Dara, handled the lighting.

Not long after, his parents had an extra ticket to the *Buddy Holly Story*, a Broadway extravaganza. Young Mitchell was available and the performance – the spectacle, the acting, the music – stirred feelings of wonder. He was hooked.

Today, Marcus is 32, and his passion for the theatre continues unabated, though he no long treads the boards.

Marcus is the founding artistic director of Acting Up Stage Company, a not for profit outfit that focuses on "entertaining and poignant contemporary musicals."

Since 2004, Acting Up shows have attracted 37 Dora Mavor Moore Award nominations, eight Toronto Theatre Critics' Awards and seven Dora Mavor Moore Awards.

The company's greatest success came in 2012 when it staged *Caroline, or Change*. The plot involved a black maid

working for a Jewish family in 1963 and included themes of family, work and current events, and it uses the kind of intelligent writing that Marcus relishes.

Audiences appreciate shows that are "meaningful, thought-provoking storytelling about relationships," he said.

Next up on Acting Up's agenda is *Ballad of the Burning Star*, an autobiographical show written by Israeli Nir Palvi.

The show is based on Palvi's personal interactions with Palestinians. It's a "crazy cabaret," Marcus said. "Without giving answers, it looks at his internal conflict, from being persecuted to being a persecutor."

Thought-provoking indeed. ■

HANNAH ALPER

12-year-old is a veteran blogger, activist

"Hi, I'm Hannah, welcome to my blog!

"I'm nine years old and just finished Grade 3! I launched this blog at the Digital Family Summit in July 2012."

Whoa! Stop right there.

A nine-year-old running a blog, speaking at the Digital Family Summit. What gives? She goes on: "I am passionate about the environment, and I was in a eco club in school. I also have interests in dogs, technology, I'm a big baseball fan! My favourite kind of music is pop. I have been to a lot of concerts!"

"Passionate" is a word that comes up frequently in a conversation with Hannah Alper, who is now 12 and in Grade 6. You can practically hear the exclamation marks as she describes her latest projects.

For a 12-year-old, she's done a lot interesting things and met a lot of fascinating people. She's met Martin Luther King III, son of the legendary civil rights advocate,and Martin Sheen, the actor who played the president on *The West Wing*, and she's talked with Oscar-winning actress Marlee Matlin – "she was really, really nice."

Alper started her blog, callmehannah.ca, to raise concerns about the environment and the effects of environmental degradation on wildlife.

Since launching the blog, she's branched out into other areas that motivate her – anti-bullying, Earth Day, clean water, children's rights.

One of her most satisfying ventures in the world of public advocacy was her participation in the We Create Change Tour, part of Free the Children initiative, which aimed to celebrate the way Canadian youths are helping their contemporaries around the world.

Alper has become something of a celebrity among young people. She's not shy to tell them that you, too, can make a difference. ■

NEIL CLOSNER

Medical marijuana business is growing

Neil Closner has run a lot of businesses, but his current role as CEO of MedReleaf is the most satisfying.

Not only is the licensed cannabis producer doing well financially, he also provides a product that has helped his mother cope with a chronic autoimmune disease.

Thanks to the marijuana she now ingests, she's able to get a good night's sleep for the first time in 10 years, and it has alleviated her pain to a great extent, Closner said.

In only a year and a half, MedReleaf has grown quickly. From three people, it now employs 80, and it's "the largest supplier of cannabis in Canada," Closner said.

MedReleaf is a privately held company and Closner is a minority shareholder, in addition to his role as CEO. He won't reveal the partners, but said one is Tikun Olam, an Israeli company in the medical marijuana business.

"They provide us with a lot of the intellectual property and we grow some of their genetic material," Closner said.

A native of Toronto, Closner, 41, began his business career on Wall Street in investment banking and venture capital. He's been CEO of several startups in Miami and Toronto in the technology and health-care fields.

He has served as vice-president of business development at Mount Sinai Hospital and he's a member of the board of directors of Technion Canada.

Despite success elsewhere, Toronto beckoned. Running a business like MedReleaf seemed like a good fit for someone with an interest in business and health care, who was close to his ailing mother.

"I thought it had the potential to help her," he said. ■

YEHUDA AZOULAY

Preserving Sephardic culture

Yehuda Azoulay, founder of the Sephardic Legacy Series Institute, is on a mission to preserve and promote Sephardic culture and bring it to the mainstream Jewish community.

About a month shy of his 29th birthday, Azoulay, has been working since 2007 to bring information about Sephardic history and culture to the forefront.

By the time Azoulay was 20 years old, he had written his first book, *The Legacy of Leaders*, a biographical history of Sephardic rabbis. To date, he's written five books, with his most recent titled *Maran – The Life and Scholarship of Hacham Ovadia Yosef*, a biography about the late Baghdad-born rabbi.

"I think what motivates me is a combination of everything: family, what Sephardic Judaism could offer to the world. [The Sephardic voice] is lacking. People are always are always preached to by Chabad, there is so much reform within Conservative Judaism, and we don't often hear about Sephardic Judaism. It has a lot to offer simply because... it offers a balanced

way of life," Azoulay said.

But writing books is not where it ends for Azoulay. Earlier this year, for the first time in Canadian history, an official delegation of 30 Sephardic community leaders, activists, philanthropists and spiritual leaders visited Parliament Hill and met with the prime minister, ambassadors and other dignitaries.

Looking forward, Azoulay said he plans to head back to Ottawa to meet with Defence Minister Jason Kenney to inquire about security grants for Sephardic community institutions, as well as obtain a PhD in Sephardic studies and continue to write books and lecture about his cultural heritage. ■

ELI BATALION

Web comedy in the mamaloshen

Actors Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman finally found a practical use last year for the Yiddish they learned at Bialik High School in Montreal. They created and starred in *YidLife Crisis*, an irreverent web comedy series – in the mamaloshen.

Batalion, 35, and Elman, 38, play, respectively, the uptight Leizer and impish Chaimie, who tangle over the relevance of Judaism today while munching their way through treif in Mile End's eateries, starting with a famous poutinerie.

They pack a lot of humour and food for thought into the four 5- or 6-minute episodes, subtitled in English (and now French), which were released between Rosh Hashanah and Chanukah.

They believe they are expressing their generation's conflicts about their Jewish identity, and contributing to better understanding between Jews and other Quebecers.

They call *YidLife* their "love letter to Yiddish language, culture and comedy," which has influenced much of modern American humour.

"We were trying to imagine what con-

versational Yiddish would be like today for secular Jews, if it had not been wiped out by the Holocaust," Elman said.

With *YidLife's* surprising success, the pair is now planning to film another similar series this summer.

Elman, who has lived in Los Angeles for 15 years, has had roles in such TV shows as *Student Bodies*, *American Dreams* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and in film, most recently, in the 2013 *Saving Lincoln*.

Batalion, who divides his time between Montreal and Toronto, is also a composer and has used his talents in his Montreal Fringe Festival show with Jerome Sable, *Job: The Hip-Hop Musical*, and in his feature-length horror/comedy musical movie *Stage Fright*, which came out last year. ■

RISA ALYSON COOPER

Judaism and environmentalism united

Environmentalism and Judaism intersect in many ways, and Risa Alyson Cooper, executive director of Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs, a non-profit that works to respond to contemporary food and ecological issues, said her organization is a prime example of that.

"In the Torah, it says that HaShem finished creating the world and took Adam, the first human being and told him... to work the land and protect the land," Cooper said.

"And we definitely see the work we do at Shoresh as honouring that dual mitzvah of working the land – using it to provide our food – and protecting the land, growing everything organically and making sure that we are creating habitat spaces for native pollinators."

In the six years since Cooper founded Shoresh's Kavanah Garden, at the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan, Ont., she's been working to expand its programming and reach.

In addition to offering educational and hands-on programs, workshops and events and producing more than 500 pounds of vegetables each season for

community members in need, Shoresh has recently developed a rural centre at Bela Farm, a 100-acre farm in Hillsburgh, Ont., an hour northwest of Toronto.

Cooper, 33, has a master's in contemporary Jewish environmental ethics. She's excited about a new project that has Shoresh managing beehives to produce local, Jewish-grown honey.

She said they also hope to offer local, organic matzah, herbal teas, pickled products and organic horseradish for Pesach.

"We're also scaling up our food production, both at Kavanah and Bela. We're thinking about how we can affect the issue of hunger relief in a real and meaningful way," Cooper said. ■

MAHARAT RACHEL KOHL FINEGOLD

Carving out a new role for women

Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold, 34, a member of the clergy at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Montreal, was one of the first three graduates of a new modern Orthodox yeshiva that ordains women.

The Brooklyn, N.Y., native was appointed director of education and spiritual enrichment at the Shaar, a congregation of more than 1,400 families, in August 2013, two months after completing the four-year program at Yeshivat Maharat in the Bronx, N.Y., founded by Rabbi Avi Weiss.

The ordination of women, even at a level beneath the rabbinate, has been controversial in the Orthodox movement, including its liberal wing. (Maharat is a Hebrew acronym denoting a female leader in Torah, spirituality and religious law.)

Maharat Kohl Finegold downplays any trailblazing role and insists the duties entrusted to a maharat are in keeping with Halachah.

"I'm not really changing anything," she said, "it just looks different. There may have been skeptics at the beginning, but people see that I am deeply Orthodox... and not trying to make a statement or

waves, or be the token woman."

She is qualified to determine halachic issues, teach Torah, officiate at life-cycle events, and provide spiritual and pastoral counselling.

She prefers to be addressed simply as Maharat Rachel (pronounced the Hebrew way).

Most of her work at the Shaar has been spent in education, including overseeing the synagogue's supplemental schools, developing programming for youth, and engaging with young families.

Maharat Kohl Finegold was previously education and ritual director at Chicago's Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation.

She and husband, Rabbi Avi Finegold, a Montrealer, have three young children. ■

DALIA KRUSNER

An advocate for youth leading youth

At 24, Dalia Krusner, executive director of Heart to Heart, a program that aims to address the divide between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, understands the value of youth leadership.

"I am a big advocate of youth leading youth, youth leadership and the power of youth," said Krusner, who also works at Ve'ahavta as its youth leadership manager.

"I've had a lot of experience with Israel and Palestine in many different ways. It is something I've studied in school and I've lived in Israel for various short periods of my life... This is one of the only things I've experienced that has given me hope and some idea of how to move forward."

Founded in 2011, Heart to Heart is a program born out of a partnership between Hashomer Hatzair/Camp Shomria in Canada and the Givat Haviva Education Foundation in Israel, an Israeli non-profit organization dedicated to promoting equality, and co-operation among Israelis.

Each summer, a group of 20 14-year-old Israelis – half of whom are Jewish and half of whom are Palestinian – fly to Canada and spends about three weeks together at Camp Shomria in Perth, Ont.

Krusner grew up in Toronto and was involved with Camp Shomria and Hashomer Hatzair, which she said was a big influence on her Jewish identity.

She was deeply influenced as a former Camp Shomria camper, and said one of the most rewarding parts of her work with Heart to Heart is seeing how quickly the campers grow.

"Seeing that massive transformation and how they treat each other and how they interact with the world in just three weeks [is rewarding]," she said. ■

AARON ROTENBERG

Approaching Judaism with intention

Aaron Rotenberg believes there's merit to stepping out of one's comfort zone, and that Judaism can be approached through a variety of lenses, including art, sustainability and social justice.

The Thornhill native, 28, is one of five friends who came together in November 2013 to found The Orchard, an intentional Jewish home in downtown Toronto.

It's an undertaking that Rotenberg, who's doing a master's in film production at York University, said he conceives of as "an experiment in pluralism and diversity."

Driven by a desire to foster a strong, inclusive downtown Jewish community, the house members come from a range of Jewish backgrounds, and Rotenberg said they're constantly engaged in conversation about how they want to live as a house, but also, how to "have influence that radiates outwards, serve as a model and bring other people in."

Currently, The Orchard hosts a monthly Shabbat service and dinner and holds events on some Jewish holidays, like a ninth of Adar session on constructive conflict, a Purim party and an annual Chanukah party, replete with live klezmer and a Jewish henna ceremony.

They're also planning an art beit midrash program, to explore the intersection between Judaism and artistic practice.

"It feels like there's a mix of people who come to our events, those who lean on the more religious end, those who lean on the more secular end and all the permutations in between," Rotenberg said.

"There's so many different ways to engage in Judaism...I think that's part of what we're trying to offer." ■

RABBI AARON LEVY

Serving Toronto's downtown community

When Rabbi Aaron Levy founded Makom: Creative Downtown Judaism to meet the needs of Toronto's growing Jewish community, he said he had no idea what it would become.

But today, the 39-year-old Maryland native who lives just outside of Kensington Market with his wife and two boys, said he's thrilled that Makom "has grown tremendously."

Makom, founded in 2009, is a grassroots community that works to build Jewish life in Toronto and create an "inclusive and diverse space, committed to Jewish learning, arts and culture, spirited prayer and ritual, and social and environmental activism." Services are held at the historic Kiever shul in Kensington Market.

Rabbi Levy, an educator on a variety of topics including environmentalism, spirituality, pluralism, social justice and even percussion, said the programing is geared toward people of all ages, all denominations and orientations.

"One of the things that has enabled Makom to reach such a wide spectrum of Jews is the diversity of our programming, and especially in the past year or so, we've really amped up our programming for families with children," he said.

"We're into our fourth year of running our five-day-a-week, after-school Hebrew immersion and pluralistic Jewish learning program called Downtown Jewish Playschool."

There are two locations – one at College Street and Spadina Avenue, another near Bathurst Street and Davenport Road – and there are plans to open a third location next year in the Annex.

"I'm excited for the ever-increasing vibrancy of downtown Jewish life and I'm thrilled that Makom is very much a part of that and I'd like to see that keep growing," Rabbi Levy said ■

YAEL MACHTINGER

Taking an academic approach to agunot

Yael Machtinger, 28, wants to enlighten Toronto's Jewish community and tell them that, even in 2015, there are women who are chained to their husbands (agunot) and who do not have a religious divorce (*get*).

"*Get* refusal is the ultimate form of domestic abuse," the PhD candidate in socio-legal studies at York University said. "In interviewing dozens of women [who are agunot], there isn't one woman who hasn't suffered some other form of abuse in her marriage."

Machtinger has become an expert on the controversial area of agunot, speaking about the problem at both academic and community events.

Her thesis compares the situations in Toronto and New York and finds that women in New York generally fare better in the religious court, which has endorsed prenuptial agreements, while the Toronto beit din has not.

Machtinger, who grew up in Toronto, fell into the study of agunot by chance when she studied the marriage laws of different religions, in a class on legal pluralism.

What started as a "little term paper," grew to become a doctoral dissertation.

"It's become an explicit goal [of mine] to put the stories of women at the centre of academic analysis," she said.

In her fifth (and "hopefully final") year of her PhD, Machtinger hopes her work will be published as a book or a series of scholarly articles and that she lands a job as a professor.

"Every time I try to move on, it pulls me back. This is an issue I'm totally passionate about." ■

SARAH LAZAROVIC

Tackling the news unconventionally

Sarah Lazarovic's portfolio is so diverse that even she has a hard time explaining to people what she does for a living.

"I don't have a single focus... This year I'm considered a journalist, maybe next year an artist. I consider myself an artist/journalist. I do a bit of everything... I kind of let the projects guide what I'm going to be defined as," said Lazarovic, a 35-year-old Montreal-born, Florida-raised illustrator, writer and filmmaker who moved to Toronto in 2003.

"I think most people think of me as a comics person. It's kind of what I'm known for."

As a "visual journalist," Lazarovic won an Ontario Newspaper Award for a sketch diary piece for *Maclean's* about then Toronto mayor Rob Ford's speech to the Economic Club of Canada.

"I try to tackle the news in an unconventional way," she said.

Having published a graphic essay late last year titled *A Bunch of Pretty Things I Did Not Buy*, Lazarovic is busy writing a proposal for her next book while doing a journalism fellowship at the University of Toronto.

"My first book was getting people to think about why they buy what they buy and how they can buy a little bit less, so my next book is building upon that and how to be a little bit more active, an active citizen," Lazarovic said.

"My next book will still be illustrated and funny but it will have a little... more girth when it comes to putting these ideas into practice when it comes to consuming less." ■

DANNY RICHMOND

Helping youths pursue social justice

Danny Richmond, 29, wants to ensure that young Jews interested in effecting positive change in the world are equipped with the appropriate tools, be it through education or direct opportunities to take action.

The Toronto native has spent over a decade working in youth leadership, community mobilization and international development.

At 24, he was one of 30 young leaders from across North America and the United Kingdom to be a fellow at the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, and through the program he worked to build interfaith co-operation in Toronto and develop a national campaign for malaria prevention.

Two years ago, Richmond brought his passion for social justice to the Jewish charity Ve'ahvata, where he founded a department of youth leadership and became its director. In this role, he helps facilitate a range of programs designed to engage young Jews in community-building and global citizenship. The department is currently developing workshops directed at Jewish day schools, youth and bar/bat mitzvah groups, which will address issues of poverty, social inclusion and homelessness.

It's also working to integrate aboriginal history and education into Jewish day school curricula.

"I think a lot of our Jewish institutions have spent time building a strong community," Richmond said, "but it can sometimes seem like we only interact with the wider world when we feel threatened...We'll talk about poverty, but it'll only be Jewish poverty.

"I'd rather see a discussion around poverty in general being a Jewish issue, whether or not the poor people are Jewish...We need to widen our circle of responsibility." ■

RACHEL ROSENBLUTH

'Neo-Chassid' seeks to make prayer joyful

Toronto-born Rachel Rosenbluth, says a challenge facing many young Jews today is finding ways of being Jewish that feel meaningful, relevant and spiritual.

"I think for a lot of us, Judaism is about culture or amazing traditions or family, but we end up turning to yoga, meditation or Buddhism for spirituality, for living lives more joyful and meaningful," the 25-year-old aspiring rabbi and self-described "neo-Chassid," said.

"For many of us, Judaism has a ton to offer, but we don't realize it."

Rosenbluth, who is currently studying at a yeshiva in Jerusalem and working towards getting smichah, is intent on sharing with others the elements of ecstatic prayer, mindfulness and contemplation, which she says are rooted in chassidic tradition, and the ways these can integrate into a "modern, progressive lifestyle."

A passion for farming and sustainable agriculture led her to serve, previously, as director of education at the Toronto non-profit Shoresh Jewish Environmental programs.

Currently splitting her time between Toronto and Israel, Rosenbluth has co-founded a beachside Tel Aviv minyan that includes dancing, singing and the option of traditional davening or seaside meditation.

Last year, she ran alternative Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services at Toronto's Beth Tzedec Congregation, in which she weaved textual study and meditation. "I see the chagim as tools for mindfulness," she explained, "for guiding us to be more self-aware and compassionate."

Rosenbluth's ultimate goal is to establish a centre for Jewish spirituality that leads "joyous, spirited Shabbatot, meditation, mindfulness... that sees Judaism as a path to stepping outside our egos and expanding consciousness." ■

JOSHUA DOLGIN

Performer fuses musical genres

Joshua Dolgin, also known by his stage name, Socalled, is tired of being asked whether he considers himself part of the Jewish community.

"[The assertion that I'm not], came from an interview I gave once, and the quote was totally taken out of context," the 38-year-old, Montreal-based rapper, singer, record producer and multi-disciplinary artist said.

Known for fusing hip-hop, klezmer and genres ranging from classical to folk, Dolgin has released five albums, is the subject of a National Film Board of Canada feature documentary and has collaborated with artists from an eclectic range of backgrounds and styles.

"I'm not religious or affiliated with a particular synagogue," Dolgin clarified. "But if you look at my career, I'm constantly performing in every Jewish music festival around the world, I've collaborated with Jewish artists, made Jewish-themed records."

He fell in love with hip hop in high school, he said, but "happened upon" klezmer 10 years later, while rummaging through old records at the Salvation Army. "I started to find all this Yiddish theatre music, cantorial music... this culture that was lost and forgotten," he said.

Dolgin stressed the Jewish community is too heterogeneous to paint with one brush, and that he's unable to answer the oft-posed query, What do Jews think of you? "If I play an instrumental Yiddish beat with someone rapping on top of it," he said, "maybe a traditional Jew from Poland won't like it, but they might when I sing a traditional song by a Yiddish folk singer... It's all about the audience, the platform." ■

TAMARA KRAMER

Journalist makes cool shtetl radio

For Montrealer Tamara Kramer, what started seven years ago as a goal to produce "one hour of cool radio, on a regular basis" has evolved into a personal exploration of what it means to be simultaneously Jewish and part of the greater world.

The 38-year-old journalist developed *Shtetl on the Shortwave*, a bi-weekly Jewish arts and culture radio program she produces and hosts, after a slot opened at Montreal community station CKUT for Jewish content of a "young, progressive, 'cool'" quality.

Kramer said the show and its accompanying online magazine broach the question: "How do you have all your identities fit together? For example, your social activism, love of music *and* being Jewish?"

Through the lens of art, culture and especially music, *Shtetl* examines everything from Jewish-Arab relations to the intersection between secular Jews and Chassidim, workers' rights to gender politics.

Shtetl aspires to a highly inclusive vision of Judaism, and Kramer's interview subjects are accordingly diverse, including non-Jews, Palestinians, rabbis, politicians, activists and people across the political spectrum.

By featuring viewpoints not often heard in mainstream Jewish spaces, Kramer hopes listeners access a broader sense of "what Jewish culture and community could be, and is.

"For many Jewish people I know, there's an alienation from Jewish life and culture," she said, "But especially from religion. There's this tendency to throw out the baby with the bathwater… But I also see this push to do meaningful, cool stuff around food, history, ecology – all these things young hipsters are into – but from a Jewish perspective." ■

STEPHAN OUAKNINE

Entrepreneur focuses on clean-tech

Stephan Ouaknine is a risk-taker. Calculated risks to be sure and risks that offer handsome payoffs if they pan out, but risks nevertheless.

Or as he puts it, "I like to go toward a burning building while others are running away."

Ouaknine, a Montreal-based entrepreneur with an impressive record of launching successful telecom startups, is banking on continued technological innovation to bring down the costs for alternative energy sources.

Inerjys, the company he founded and manages, is developing and marketing technology solutions for clean and sustainable energy, such as wind, solar and "the next generation of hydro."

Given that governments around the world are cutting back on subsidies, there is more than a little risk involved in financing them. His solution to making sustainable energy pay? Invest in companies that reduce the cost of energy and in the projects where it will be applied.

Creating commercial opportunities is something Ouaknine has been doing since he was a kid.

"I was born with a feeling of entrepreneurship," he said. "I've always like to build things, since I was a kid – forts in the snow or Lego [structures]."

A graduate of McGill University, he moved to Israel and was part of "start-up nation," the name given to the country's entrepreneurial high-tech sector.

"I cut my teeth in Israel. It has the best combination of engineering talent and guts," he said.

Israeli entrepreneurs challenge the status quo and believe they can do things better than others around the world, he said.

Ouaknine uses those skills to develop technological solutions to energy demands. It's a bit risky, he acknowledged, "but there is no zero risk. We've created a vehicle that takes just the right amount of risk, but mitigates it." ■

JASON ROSENBLATT

Artist embraces diversity of Jewish music

One of Jason Rosenblatt's claims to fame is his virtuosity on the diatonic harmonica. He can coax music that ranges from klezmer to bluegrass to jazz out of this humble instrument.

But Rosenblatt, 41, is also an accomplished pianist, composer and producer, devoted to bringing Jewish music to a wide audience. He is an exponent of "the new Jewish music." Rosenblatt is the former artistic director of KlezKanada, the week-long summer camp in the Laurentians where hundreds from around the world annually converge to enjoy traditional and not-so-traditional eastern European Jewish music.

Rosenblatt, who divides his time between Montreal and Philadelphia, is a "graduate" of KlezKanada, a scholarship recipient in 1998. Four years later, he founded the band Shtreiml, of which he remains musical director. It is renowned for his original blues/rock-infused arrangements of klezmer music, with a dash of Turkish music. His wife Rachel Lemisch is the trombonist.

Shtreiml has played throughout North America and Europe. Rosenblatt also heads Jump Babylon, a newer band that has a rock/country vibe.

In 2010, Rosenblatt spearheaded the first Montreal Jewish Music Festival, now an annual event, with support from Federation CJA's Generations Fund, the Azrieli Foundation and others.

"I define Jewish music by a fairly narrow definition, but one that allows for a broad range of styles," he said. He considers language and lyrics, but especially the melody. "Even if the style is jazz, bluegrass, African beat or funk, at the core, all of this music has a melody that is Jewish."

Rosenblatt's goal is to present the diversity of Jewish music by leading artists at venues that will attract people of all origins and ages. ■

SARA ANGEL

The business of Nazi-looted art

By the time Sara Angel finishes her doctoral dissertation next year, she will have compiled a unique handbook on how to restitute Nazi-looted art.

Angel, 45, a journalist and art historian, became fascinated by the story of Max Stern, a Jewish art dealer whose art collection was sold at a forced auction in Dusseldorf, Germany, in 1937. About a dozen works of art have been recovered by his estate.

Stern was interned when he arrived in Canada in 1940, but he became a renowned dealer in Montreal, representing Emily Carr among other artists.

Angel was working on a different topic for her PhD, but she wrote a magazine article on Stern and the project to restitute his collection. She changed her topic midstream to examine the problems of Nazi-looted art.

"I'm using the Max Stern Restitution Project as a case study in order to look at how different countries are looking at restituting art," she said. "Every country has a different way of dealing with it. There has not yet been created one standardized, global policy."

In some cases, artwork has been returned to heirs because of moral suasion, in other cases there has been considerable litigation, she says.

As the founding director of the Art Canada Institute, an organization based at University of Toronto's Massey College, dedicated to the promotion of Canadian art history, she also wants to raise awareness about Stern.

"Max Stern was an amazing Jewish-Canadian hero. His legacy will have an impact on restitution studies around the world." ■

INTERNATIONAL

Is U.S.-Israel crisis a sign of long-term conflict?

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Barack Obama at the White House in 2013

RON KAMPEAS
JTA WASHINGTON

U.S. President Barack Obama's refusal to accept Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ostensible recommitment to a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has watchers of the U.S.-Israel relationship wondering if the recent crisis is a mere speed bump or a sign of a deeper shift in ties between the countries.

Netanyahu moved quickly last week to emphasize that his statement on the eve of his re-election that no Palestinian state would be established on his watch did not represent a policy shift away from a two-state solution. But Obama administration officials were unwilling to accept that clarification, a point the president emphasized in a press conference on March 22 when he said that differences with Israel were "substantive" and not easily papered over.

"The central question is whether this is a temporary blip on the radar screen or whether there's something deeper and more structural going on," said David Harris, the American Jewish Committee's executive director. "We have to know the answer to that in order to know whether we can put the U.S.-Israel train back on track, as we all would like."

Along with other Jewish organizational leaders and pro-Israel lawmakers, Harris has been urging the White House to tone down its rhetoric in recent days, but Obama's comments last week – his most detailed on the rift since the Israeli election – suggest the administration is not heeding those warnings.

"I have conveyed to the White House that it's time to cool it," Representative Nita Lowey, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, told *JTA*. "The U.S.-Israel relationship is based on shared values and an unbreakable bond, not on personalities."

Last Friday, Israel agreed to release tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority, a step several insiders had hoped to see as a goodwill gesture to help repair the rift with Washington. The State Department opposed Netanyahu's decision in January to suspend the transfers, a response to the Palestinian Authority's decision to join the International Criminal Court, which in turn opened the door to an examination of whether Israel has committed war crimes against the Palestinians.

Yet with Obama saying that a re-evaluation of U.S. policy is in the works, it's unclear whether such a gesture will be sufficient.

"I'm worried things get worse before they get better," said David Makovsky, until last year a member of Obama's Middle East negotiating team, and now an analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

The crisis comes as another major bone of contention between Washington and Jerusalem, negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, neared a crucial threshold: the March 31 deadline for a framework agreement between Iran and the major powers.

Netanyahu's deep skepticism of those talks – particularly his fears of a so-called sunset clause that would limit the duration of restrictions on Iranian nuclear activity – led to his controversial speech before Congress earlier this month, which infuriated the White House.

"If the administration doesn't engage Israel over some of his concerns, Netanyahu will go the congressional route," Makovsky said.

It is the Palestinian issue, though, that now has Obama's attention. In a press conference last week, the president made clear that while security and intelligence co-operation between the countries would not be affected, he isn't about to let go of Netanyahu's pre-election rejection of a Palestinian state arising on his watch.

"This can't be reduced to a matter of somehow let's all hold hands and sing *Kumbaya*," Obama said.

"I am required to evaluate honestly how we manage Israeli-Palestinian relations over the next several years," Obama said. "Because up until this point, the premise has been both under Republican and Democratic administrations that as difficult as it was, as challenging as it was, the possibility of two states living side by side in peace and security could marginalize more extreme elements, bring together folks at the centre with some common sense and we could resolve what has been a vexing issue and one that is ultimately a threat to Israel as well. And that possibility seems very dim."

What the evaluation means precisely is not entirely clear. But the president would not count out a shift in diplomacy in international arenas, including possibly backing recognition of Palestinian statehood at the U.N. Security Council.

That would represent a major policy shift that has pro-Israel lawmakers worried.

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Netanyahu expresses concern about Iran deal to U.S. senators

JTA
JERUSALEM

The framework deal on Iran's nuclear program is worse than Israeli leaders feared, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet.

"This agreement, as it appears, confirms all of our concerns and even more so," Netanyahu said Sunday morning at the weekly cabinet meeting.

Netanyahu also said he had just come from a conversation with U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell and that he had spoken over the weekend with Sen. Harry Reid.

"I heard from both of them about strong and continuing bipartisan support for Israel, and, of course, this is very important. I expressed to them our deep concern over the agreement being formulated with Iran in the nuclear talks," he said.

Netanyahu told the delegation of U.S. senators in Jerusalem that a proposed deal on curbing Iran's nuclear program "paves Iran's way to the bomb."

Netanyahu met on Sunday morning in Jerusalem with the delegation led by McConnell, the majority leader. Israeli Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz also attended the meeting.

"We are very much concerned for our common interests by the developments in the Middle East," Netanyahu told the senators, according to a statement issued by his office. "As we are speaking, Iran is rampaging through Yemen; it is conquering the Middle East. This is correctly seen by all the countries in the Middle East as a strategic move to dominate the region, and therefore we are witnessing something quite unprecedented.

"And as Israel and the Arab countries see Iran progressing with its aggression to conquer Yemen and the Bab el-Mandeb straits, talks continue as usual and go on, on a deal that from everything that we hear paves Iran's way to the bomb."

McConnell told Netanyahu that relations between the two countries remain strong.

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OPINION

Why Netanyahu won again

Gerald Steinberg

Although the polls and pundits predicted defeat and opponents were rejoicing, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu emerged with a decisive victory in last month's election. In a bitter and exhausting campaign, Netanyahu was confronted by hostile journalists, including accusations that he and his wife had mismanaged their official residence. In the middle, he went to Washington to challenge U.S. President Barack Obama's policies on Iran, for which he was widely attacked, and returned to travel up and down Israel every day seeking support.

He also overcame the impact of millions in foreign money used for advertising, organizing mass rallies, and sending anti-Netanyahu activists door to door (a failed attempt to import American practice). But as he has done in the past, Netanyahu turned the attacks into weapons against his opponents. He understood that for many Israelis, including those who had differences with his policies and with his party, the images of blatant foreign manipulation were red flags. Although Netanyahu has his own foreign funders, their involvement was less visible.

The opposition, led by Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni, was more formidable than in previous elections. Their campaign focused on economic issues, such as the impossibly high cost of housing, and the vast gap between the well-paid middle class, including high-tech workers, and low-level workers earning a minimum wage and unable to support their families. A new party formed by Moshe Kahlon, who broke away from Likud over economic failures, emerged and gained traction.

But while Israelis talked economics, many again voted on the basis of security. In this dimension, Netanyahu trumped Herzog, who lacks experience and the image of strength seen as necessary to defend Israeli vital interests. Netanyahu benefited from the leadership he showed during the gruelling summer war in Gaza. For 51 days, through 4,563 rockets, terror tunnels, and 72 Israeli deaths, every one painful, Netanyahu was attacked from all sides. Coalition partners Naftali Bennett and Avigdor Liberman accused him of being too cautious and not crushing Hamas, while international pressure, primarily from the United States, constantly demanded ceasefire agreements that would leave Hamas with the capability to resume attacks at any time. But neither claim convinced Israelis who support Netanyahu's tough pragmatism in dealing with Hamas and responding to wider threats of terror, including on the Golan Heights along the Syrian border.

Herzog was careful to avoid the lofty rhetoric and promises of ideal peace that Israelis see as entirely unrealistic. But the Labor party, which added Livni's faction under the heading of the Zionist Union, remains associated in the public eye with the Oslo disaster. Livni's record added to these concerns, including her actions as foreign minister during the 2006 Lebanon war, which ended with a largely unenforced agreement and UN resolution pretending to disarm Hezbollah. The rotation agreement that would have made Livni prime minister after two years was viewed with great concern, and in the last days of the campaign, she declared that this agreement would not be implemented.

Ethnic, social and cultural factors (a form of Israeli class conflict) also remained important. The religious and traditional voters who make up the majority of Jewish Israelis continued their allegiance to the right of the Israeli political spectrum, not trusting or feeling comfortable with the secular or anti-religious westernized left. The money and campaign gimmicks (pizza and beer parties) that were imported, at great expense, from the United States, under the slogan "anybody but Bibi," added to this alienation.

In a marathon at the end, Netanyahu put all of these concerns together, convincing voters who do not trust Labor and the left to abandon the smaller parties and vote Likud. Against the odds, he won a fourth term as prime minister. Now, he must apply the intensity he showed in the campaign not only on Iran, Hamas, Syria and other external threats, but most importantly in seriously addressing the housing crisis and other core economic concerns. ■

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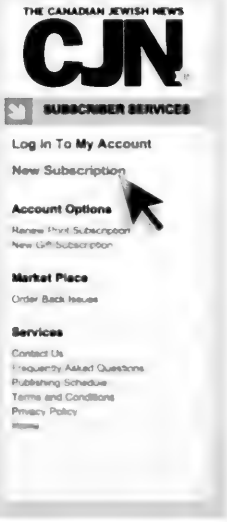

U.S. needs to tone down, ADL's Foxman says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

Last week, representatives Ed Royce and Eliot Engel, respectively the top Republican and Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, wrote to Samantha Power, the U.S. envoy to the United Nations, seeking assurances that the United States would continue to block resolutions critical of Israel.

"Only a solution negotiated directly between the Israelis and Palestinians can result in a lasting peace," the letter said. "We are seeking an assurance from you that the United States will veto resolutions at the United Nations that are biased and one-sided against Israel."

In an interview with *JTA*, Engel said it was critical to get beyond the current crisis.

"We need to move on," Engel said. "We need to emphasize the many close ties we have with Israel, we need to end recriminations and finger pointing."

Abraham Foxman, the Anti-Defamation League's national director, said Netanyahu's walk-back should be enough to move forward.

"The U.S. now has to climb off, climb down, tone down and find an opportunity to say something positive," Foxman said in an interview.

But Makovsky said the trip to Israel by Republican House Speaker John Boehner this week, could further inflame tensions.

"Boehner's visit to Israel is going to reframe this issue in partisan terms, when really, there should be a substantive critique of the Iran talks," Makovsky said.

Boehner slammed Obama's "reprehensible" relations with Netanyahu on Sunday.

"I think the animosity exhibited by our administration toward the prime minister of Israel is reprehensible," Boehner told CNN's *State of the Union*.

"And I think the pressure they've put on him over the last four or five years have frankly pushed him to the point where he had to speak up," he added. ■

Netanyahu also voices concern about Yemen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 46

"I want to assure all Israelis that the U.S.-Israel relationship is still, no matter what's been said recently, in very, very strong shape on a bipartisan basis in the U.S. Congress. The group who are here share your concerns about this potential agreement, and there are options that the United States has in a wake of an agreement and if there is no agreement."

The United States and five other world powers (China, Russia, France, Great Britain and Germany), known as the P5+1, have set March 31 for reaching an agreement.

According to reports emerging as *The CJN* went to press, Iran has agreed to limit uranium-enriching centrifuges to 6,000 at its main nuclear site for at least 10 years, as well as running centrifuges at its underground Fordo nuclear site. Nuclear material may be produced for energy, science and medicine. The sites would be subject to international inspection, and no work could be done that would lead to a nuclear bomb.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met early last Sunday morning in Lausanne, Switzerland, the site of the current talks, with his Iranian counterpart, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. Kerry cancelled a trip back to the United States, where he was to attend an event honouring the late senator Edward Kennedy, in order to remain at the talks.

At the cabinet meeting, Netanyahu also cited the takeover last week of large parts of Yemen by the Iran-allied Houthi militia.

"After the Beirut-Damascus-Baghdad axis, Iran is carrying out a pincers movement in the south as well in order to take over and conquer the entire Middle East," he said. "The Iran-Lausanne-Yemen axis is very dangerous for humanity and needs to be stopped." ■

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IN THE SILENCE BETWEEN THE WORDS: THE ADULT CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Family Matters

By

John Syrtash

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Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

One of the tasks of true friendship is to listen compassionately and creatively to the hidden silences.
Often secrets are not revealed in words, they lie concealed in the silence between the words or in the depth of what is unsayable between two people.
– John O'Donohue (1956-2008) Irish poet, author, priest, and philosopher
From Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom

Common sense informs most of you that Divorce hurts children of younger years for obvious reasons. Formerly, it was thought that breaking up a bad marriage was much better for children than waiting until they grew up, at least until they moved out. Long term studies, such as Judith Wallerstein's "Legacy of Divorce" have proven that in the absence of violent/abusive situations, this myth may be very problematic. Quite the opposite is true. Children of divorced parents have been shown to be at far greater risk of divorce themselves, criminal behaviour, substance abuse and other problems than those kids whose parents with troubled relationships who either stayed together or deferred separation until the children had move out permanently.

However, far fewer studies have been published on the effect of divorce on adult children. Children who have moved out or have "grown up" often suffer in silence when their parents separate. Although no longer living at home, many parents of such adult children forget the boundaries they taught their children by putting them "in the middle" of disputes arising from the separation or by using their children as shoulders on which to cry. Such behaviour often shatters an adult child's own sense of stability and identity with which he or she has identified all his/her life. That stability is based on the marriage that nurtured their very being and much of who they have become. By attempting to force such an adult child to take sides, offspring can develop an enormous degree of stress, leading to emotional problems and occasionally, stress in their own marriages. Sometimes such stress can be a factor leading to divorce with their own spouses. Moreover, in cases where an adult child has already been alienated when young by one parent against the other, such conduct by parents can further intensify such feelings of alienation.

So what to do? Is there such a thing as a healthy divorce?

In the quote above, Irish poet John O'Donohue describes what two friends mean to each other, how the secrets of friendship blossom "between the words." It means to "listen compassionately and creatively to the hidden silences." In a remarkable Shabbat morning speech, Rabbi Daniel Korobkin of Thornhill's BAYT schul recently remarked that it is between the words where one finds God. As applied to the adult children of divorce, I interpret such wisdom to mean that in order to protect your adult child's stability and sense of self-worth keep your mouth shut. No matter how close you may be to your kids and no matter how badly you want them as your "allies": don't. As difficult as this is to read, a child does not owe you any greater allegiance when you separate.

Your only comment? "Mom/Dad and I will work things out. That's all you need to know." And you say it even if your spouse fails to play by the same rules. Why? Because the silence between each of those words will be quietly understood as your gift of love as a parent, no different than the tuition or hockey fees or braces you paid so long ago, or maybe it was just those bedtime hugs and nighttime stories. It is "unsayable" because your silence is your expression of parental love and selflessness. The adult child will listen very intently to that silence. He or she will appreciate it more than you can imagine. Meanwhile go hire a professional therapist and lawyer to whom you should complain, not your adult child. Don't "parentify", be a parent.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit ***www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.***

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Amnesty International says Hamas showed disregard for civilians

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

In a new report, Amnesty International said that armed groups in the Gaza Strip, including Hamas, displayed a "flagrant disregard for the lives of civilians" in Israel during last summer's 50-day conflict. The report also investigates one case in which a rocket fired by Hamas landed in a Palestinian refugee camp, killing 13 Palestinians, 11 of them children.

"Many thousands of rockets and missiles were indiscriminately launched into Israel and killed six civilians during that time," Kate Allen, the director of Amnesty International in the U.K. told *The Media Line*. "It was impossible for those armed groups to know where they would land, and they had no control over them. We're saying very clearly...that putting civilians at risk with those missiles and rockets is a war crime."

In previous reports, Amnesty International has sharply criticized Israel for its actions in Gaza, saying its air strikes could also constitute war crimes. The new report came just a few days before the Palestinians were set to join the International Criminal Court where they say they will push for war crimes charges against Israel for its conduct in Gaza. The Amnesty report is a reminder that Israel can level similar charges against Hamas.

In Israel, Amnesty International is seen as being overly critical of Israel, and some in Israel speculated that the organization was trying to even the score.

"Our traditional way of operating is that we cover abuses from all involved, here or anywhere else in the world," Allen said. "It is the case that the Israeli government is critical of Amnesty but when we talk about Hamas or other armed groups, we are not doing that in response to the criticism, we are doing it because it is important that abuses on all sides of the conflict are exposed and documented."

Amnesty International also cited "credible reports" that rockets were launched from within schools and at least one hospital.

A Hamas spokesman reacted angrily to the report, calling it "biased" and "full of lies," while Israeli officials welcomed it. Allen said Hamas had refused to co-operate, and Israel did not let Amnesty officials into Gaza, both of which made gathering information a challenge.

Some analysts in Israel said they did not believe the report went far enough in its condemnation of Hamas.

"We don't need a report to tell us that Hamas indiscriminately fires at civilians," Jonathan Rynhold, a professor of political science at Bar-Ilan University told *The Media Line*. "The report is too little and too late."

He said he would have been more impressed if the report had cited how hard Israel works to minimize civilian casualties, as compared to Hamas.

"I want to see real fair play," Rynhold said. "Israel is not above criticism, but I don't want to see a group that's weak [Hamas] being given a pass. In the past, Amnesty has singled out Israel and has not been proportionate in its criticism."

The report called on both Israel and Hamas to investigate their actions. ■

The Media Line
Themedialine.org

GIL YOHANAN/YNET/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Olmert found guilty

On March 30, two-and-a-half years after he walked free, and seven months after the case was re-opened, Jerusalem District Court found former prime minister Ehud Olmert guilty in the so-called Talansky case, in which he was accused of accepting envelopes filled with money from American Jewish businessman Morris "Moshe" Talansky.

Boteach ad urges Obama not to appease Iran

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach

JTA
NEW YORK

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach published a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* calling on U.S. President Barack Obama to refrain from appeasing Iran.

The ad, published March 28 by Rabbi Boteach's World Values Network foundation, comes as the United States and other world powers worked to achieve an interim deal on curbing Iran's nuclear program before a March 31 deadline.

Last month, Rabbi Boteach apologized for an ad in the same newspaper accusing National Security Adviser Susan Rice of turning a blind eye to genocide, calling it a "personal attack" rather than a policy disagreement. Most major Jewish organizations condemned the ad.

In the new ad, the words "Mr. President: Fighting Al Qaeda made you like Churchill. Appeasing Iran will make you like Chamberlain," appear with a photo of a determined-looking Obama. Superimposed over part of the Obama portrait is a reproduction of a *Times* newspaper article from Sept. 30, 1938, detailing the signing of the Munich Agreement, which allowed the Nazis to annex portions of Czechoslovakia, which became known as the Sudetenland.

The ad calls on Obama not to sign a deal with Iran until its supreme leader, Ali Hosseini Khamenei, renounces "all genocidal threats against Israel" and Iran ceases its support of terror around the world. Also, the ad says, Obama must not sign a deal that contains a one-year weapons breakout period for Iran.

"Don't allow Iran to become a nuclear power," the ad concludes. ■

White supremacist pleads not guilty in JCC killings

JTA
KANSAS CITY

Frazier Glenn Miller has pleaded not guilty to charges that he murdered three people outside two Kansas City-area Jewish institutions.

Miller, 74, entered the plea on March 27 in the U.S. District Court in Johnson County, Kansas. He asked for a speedy trial, within 150 days, despite objections from his lawyers, *Reuters* reported.

Judge Thomas Kelly Ryan set an Aug. 17 trial date. The judge denied Miller's request for Internet access while he is in jail awaiting trial.

Earlier this month, the judge ruled that there was enough evidence to try Miller, who also goes by the name Frazier Glenn Cross Jr., for the April 13, 2014 murders – two in the parking lot of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City in Overland Park, Kan., and one in the parking lot at Village Shalom, a Jewish assisted-living facility a few blocks away.

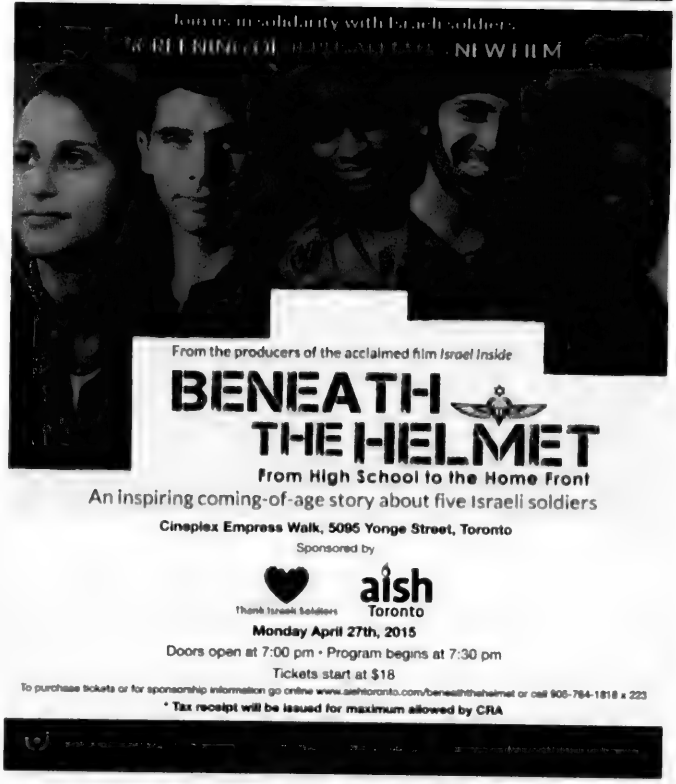
In addition to capital murder, Miller is charged with three counts of attempted first-degree murder, one count of aggravated assault and one count of criminal discharge of a weapon at a structure.

State prosecutors have said they will seek the death penalty.

Miller, a former Ku Klux Klan grand dragon, told the *Kansas City Star* that he began planning the attacks when he became so sick with emphysema that he thought he would die soon and that he conducted reconnaissance missions of the JCC and Village Shalom in the days before the shootings.

"I wanted to make damned sure I killed some Jews or attacked the Jews before I died," he told the newspaper.

None of his victims was Jewish. ■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OPINION

We need a coalition that unites all Israelis

Benjamin Netanyahu, left, met with President Reuven Rivlin at the president's residence in Jerusalem on March 25 where he was tasked with forming a government. FLASH90 PHOTO

Donniel Hartman
JERUSALEM

Words. On the surface, campaigns and elections are about words, and much attention has been given to the words that were spoken. The clearest words were spoken at the ballot box, as Israelis clearly articulated who they wanted as the next prime minister. Many words were also spoken during the campaign. Hurtful words, angry words, aggressive words, arrogant words, and even racist words.

As Jews we believe that sticks and stones will break our bones, and words will harm us more. That said, the culture of political discourse has denigrated to such a level that a free pass has essentially been given to politicians. For the sake of victory, they are allowed to say anything, with the comfort of knowing that they will not be held accountable for their words.

When viewed from this context, while esthetically repulsed, I am neither shocked nor overly disappointed by the polluting words spoken during the campaign by our politicians in general and our prime minister in particular. Many of these words simply reflected their commitment to win.

Herein, however, lies a problem that must shock us into immediate action. Even if the words that were spoken were "merely" words, these words worked. They may not have represented the true beliefs of those who used them, but they did convince the population to vote because of them. The words say less about our politicians and more about us and what we have become.

Why does an "us-them" dichotomy between Israeli Jewish and Arab citizens motivate people to vote? Why does a campaign which designates half of Israeli society as outside the true Zionist camp inspire? What does it say about us when a leading party campaigns under the slogan, "No more apologies," as if loyalty to Israel entails an assumption of its infallibility? What does it say about the way our society understands Judaism, when under its banner we advocate for inequality and xenophobia? What does it say about the value of peace and justice in our society, when rejecting a two-state solution outright, regardless of the circumstances, makes a candidate more rather than less attractive?

A common mantra over the last decade has been that Israeli society has rejected both the right and the left and moved to the centre. But one of the clear lessons of this election is that this is no longer true. At the very least, 30 per cent – if not more – of Israel's Jewish citizens have adopted beliefs about Judaism and nationalism antithetical to core principles of liberal democracy and modern Judaism.

Israel has spoken, and it's time to speak back. As Israelis and as Jews, we must understand we are in the midst of a cultural battle over the soul of our people, our country, and our tradition. This battle will not be won with words or by imposing policies which our citizens have rejected.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

'We are in the midst of a battle over the soul of our people'

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

This is not a battle between U.S. President Barack Obama and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is not a battle which will be won in the political arena, but an educational battle over the ideas and ideals which define who we are, who we want to be, and the democratic nature and moral fibre of the homeland of the Jewish people.

Is Judaism a religion which believes that the equal treatment of all Israeli citizens regardless of their religious, racial, gender, and national identities – is the ultimate expression of the biblical idea that all humanity is created in the image of God? Is Judaism a religion which believes that if our legitimate security concerns can be met, our commitment to justice and equality must override our commitment to holding on to all of the Land of Israel? Is Judaism the maid-servant to nationalism, or rather its greatest critic, challenging it to ever-higher moral heights?

Is the Jewish idea of Chosen People one that fosters a false sense of superiority, self-aggrandizement, and alienation from the world, or is it an idea that challenges us to be more, and obligates us to engage and contribute to the betterment of our world? Is Judaism a religion where one truth monopolizes God's word, or are we a tradition where "these and these are the words of the living God"? Is Judaism a religion that embraces and incorporates the best of modernity, or do we believe that the more insulated we are, the more authentically Jewish we are?

> *Is Judaism a religion that embraces and incorporates the best of modernity or do we believe that the more insulated we are, the more authentically Jewish we are?*

A coalition is now being formed which represents the voice of the people. We need to create a new coalition which will speak to the people, and which will work to reclaim a place for a modern, moral, and liberal Judaism at the heart of Israel.

Good people, intelligent people, can reach different conclusions about many of the most contentious issues facing Israeli society. To believe that a two-state solution is not implementable today given the current political conditions does not entail a denial of the values of justice and equality. However, to cease to aspire toward it, and to undermine its possibility to be actualized one day through policies and legislation, does entail a marginalization of these values.

To believe that the Middle East is a dangerous place, and that the strengthening of Israel is a national priority, is a reflection of the highest values of our tradition. However, to believe that these interests are served by seeing Judaism and democracy, and loyalty to Jews and a commitment to equality for all, as zero-sum games, is to adopt the lowest values of our tradition.

We need a new coalition whose aim is to educate, a coalition that unites people from across party lines, which unites Jews and Arabs, which transcends traditional right-wing, left-wing distinctions, which combines Israel and world Jewry. The people have spoken. It is time for this new coalition to begin the slow educational work of speaking to the people and fighting for the soul of Israel. ■

Rabbi Donniel Hartman is president of Shalom Hartman Institute of Jerusalem and director of the Institute's iEngage Project

Jewish Life

From melons to Mozart

Opera comes to a famed Jerusalem market

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

The only singing usually heard in the crowded alleyways of the Machane Yehuda fruit and vegetable market is that of vendors yelling out competing prices for cucumbers. But on a recent afternoon, costumed performers belted out arias from *The Elixir of Love* by Donizetti, as well as Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

The event was a plug for an upcoming opera festival in Jerusalem, and meant to broaden opera's reach beyond the well-heeled, and often elderly, crowd that frequents the Israeli Opera House in Tel Aviv.

"Opera is the most accessible and wonderful art form that exists," Michael Eisenstadt, the artistic administrator of the opera said. "A lot of people hear the word opera and shriek or turn away because they have all kinds of misconceptions."

The crowd at the market was appreciative, especially when the soloists brought them into the action. At one point, Tal Bergman, dressed as a soldier, serenaded an elderly woman, tenderly cradling her head at the end of the song, as many in the crowd smiled.

"Who's that?" one observer asked her neighbour. "That's not one of our uniforms," she added worriedly.

Soloist Alla Vasilevitsky moved to Israel seven years ago from a region of the former Soviet Union that borders on China. She says she hopes that more Israelis will learn to like opera.

"We want people to like opera and to connect with it," she said.

The audience seemed appreciative, applauding after each song, and taking selfies with the performers.

"It was beautiful, very beautiful," Adar Acrech, a Canadian tourist said. "It's nice to be part of the culture here and experience something beautiful."

Her daughter Gabriella said it was her first time hearing live opera.

"I loved it," she breathed, her eyes shining.

Shopper Ilana Kattani said she had made a last-minute decision to come to the market, famed for its colourful fruits and vegetables alongside stalls selling nuts, olives, and spices.

"I'm really glad I came today," she said. "I enjoyed it and I think most people did."

Opera artistic director Eisenstadt said he had some trepidation about bringing the young soloists to the market.

"People were a little skeptical, but you could see that once they started singing everyone was captivated," he said.

Some of the vendors in the market said they felt more captive than captivated by the performance.

One owner, who did not want to be quoted, said he couldn't wait for the performers to move away from his store, and that he had lost business after shoppers turned to other stalls.

But others said they were glad for the diversion.

"This music isn't my style – I like Mizrachi (Oriental music)," Yakir Yaacobi said as he reorganized his pistachio nuts to the tune of an Israeli pop singer. "But people here seemed to enjoy it." ■

The Media Line
Themedialine.org

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE, NEW PLAY BY KATHY KACER

A letter from the past poses a heartbreaking dilemma for Holocaust survivor Joseph, the protagonist of a new play by author-playwright **Kathy Kacer** and her son, actor **Jake Epstein**, both of Toronto. The letter is from Joseph's first and true love, Chava, whom he thought had perished in the Holocaust. Joseph must decide whether to stay with his wife of 25 years and their son, or to return to his former love.

That is the essential plotline of *Therefore Choose Life*, which the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company is presenting later this month with co-playwright Epstein taking the role of the son; it also features actors **Sheila McCarthy** and **Avery Saltzman**, the company's co-artistic director. The play's director is **Rachel Slaven**.

Kacer is the award-winning author of more than a dozen books for young readers that focus on stories of World War II and the Holocaust. Slaven is a Canadian director based in Toronto and New York. *Therefore Choose Life* previews April 18 to 22 and runs April 23 to May 10 in the HGJTC's new home, the Greenwin Theatre, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. Tickets $25 to $67. www.hgjewishtheatre.com or 1-855-985-2787.

• • •

Holocaust Authors to Read: Second Story Press presents "Stories from the Shoah for Young People and Adults" to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the end of World War II. Second Story presents four new books that focus on the experiences of the war both in Europe and at home in Canada. Highlights will include readings from *The Choice* by **Kathy Clark**, *War in My Town* by **E. Graziani** and *The Farmerettes* by **Gisela Sherman**. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, April 13, 7 p.m. Free admission, refreshments. www.secondstorypress.ca/events

• • •

Names in the News

When the late Israeli film producer-director **Micha Shagrir** donated a rare 350-year-old Tanach to the University of Haifa Library, librarians were amazed to discover that a near-duplicate copy of the book was already in the library's possession.

Printed in Frankfurt in 1677, the volume came to be reunited with its twin in a circuitous way. A month after Egyptian president Anwar Sadat visited Israel in 1977, Shagrir and other Israelis made a secret trip to Egypt. In Cairo, he met an antique book dealer of Armenian descent who had admired a film Shagrir had produced about the Armenian genocide. The dealer gave Shagrir a wrapped copy of a book, but made him promise not to open it until he returned to Israel. When Shagrir returned and opened the package, he was stunned to find the ancient volume. Shagrir, who gave the Tanach to the university in 2014, died recently at the age of 77.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Pianist-singer **Fern Lindzon** and band perform at Jazz Bistro, 251 Victoria St., for two nights, April 8 (8 p.m.) and April 9 (9 p.m.). $15 cover. jazzbistro.ca

• "We Remember Together," a Yom Hashoah program, features local survivor **Claire Baum**, author of *The Hidden Package*. Guests will receive a complimentary copy of Baum's memoir. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, April 16, 2 to 3 p.m. Free. Please RSVP to anniem@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 388.

• *Little Death*, a new play by **Daniel Karasik**, asks fundamental questions about marriage, fidelity and intimacy. Theatre Centre BMO Incubator, 1115 Queen St. W. $15 and up. April 18 to May 3 (preview April 17). 416-538-0988. The Koffler Centre of the Arts is a leading supporting partner.

• This year's Hot Docs Festival will screen 210 films from 45 countries at various venues, April 23 to May 3. They include *Best of Enemies*, focusing on a first-ever political debate on American television in 1968, featuring **William F. Buckley Jr.** and **Gore Vidal**, all the more shocking and riveting for being live and unscripted. The film *Censored Voices* features intimate conversations with Israeli soldiers returning from the battlefield one week after the 1967 Six Day War. www.hotdocs.ca ■

Kathy Kacer and her son, actor Jake Epstein, have written *Therefore Choose Life*

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 2, 2015

A ground-breaking study of Jewish-run taverns in Poland

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Despite various expulsions, evictions and repressive tax measures meant to force them out of business, Jewish-run taverns were a ubiquitous presence in Poland from roughly the 17th to the late 19th centuries. Polish historians have often underestimated the curious staying power of these persistent relics of Poland's feudal society. To paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of their demise were greatly exaggerated. While some historians had asserted that many of the taverns had faded out by the 1850s, evidence shows they were still operating years and decades later in the same places where they had been supposedly shut down.

American scholar Glenn Dynner, author of a groundbreaking new study on the subject, went far beyond the usual government documents relied upon by earlier historians, which, he says, were "often merely a gauge of official aspirations." His sources include traveller's memoirs, court documents, petitions, early newspapers, obscure records of civic and criminal matters, and scenes from Polish and Yiddish literature. (Evidently, Jewish tavern-keepers were stock figures and their premises were stock locales in 19th-century Polish romantic literature.)

This diverse spectrum of viewpoints is what brings Dynner's book to life. Although scholarly, *Yankel's Tavern: Jews, Liquor, & Life in the Kingdom of Poland* makes for fascinating reading, particularly if you are among the many modern Jews whose ancestors were tavern-keepers. Apparently, selling liquor was once as common a profession among Jacob's children as tailoring. While never part of a global chain, Jewish-run drinking establishments were almost the Starbucks or Second Cups of pre-modern Polish society.

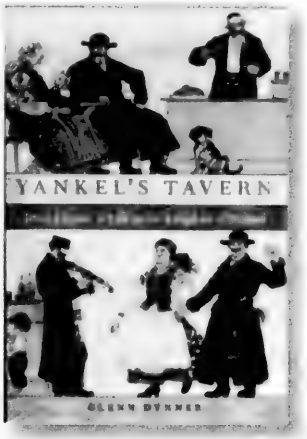
Prevalent across eastern Europe in the 19th century, liquor-serving roadhouses run by Yankel and his cousins were especially prolific in the Kingdom of Poland during most of the partition era (1772 to 1918). According to some first-hand accounts cited by Dynner, the phenomenon was already well established in the early 1700s. "All the towns, large and small, are filled with nobody but Jews, who also run the village breweries, roadside taverns, and inns, so that our Poland is more like Jerusalem than a Polish state," observed Polish chronicler Stefan Garczynski in 1754.

An integral social institution, the taverns served a clientele of mostly Polish peasants and were typically owned by nobles who turned over their management to Jews. Every major crossroads of every village and town had at least one such establishment, which typically became the centre of local social life, hospitality, business, leisure, even religious celebrations.

At the beginning of the partition era, the leases to about 85 per cent of all taverns in Poland were in Jewish hands and well over a third of Jewish families were engaged in tavern-keeping, Dynner estimates. In 1808, there were nearly 20,000 registered taverns in the Duchy of Warsaw alone, of which more than 13,000 were in villages.

"As any traveller through partitioned Poland knew, a tavern was more than a tavern," he writes. "It often constituted a bar, distillery, country store, hotel, stable, post office, and bank wrapped into one. Like the famed caravansary found along the Silk Road, it supported the flow of commerce, news, and people. It was frequently the sole entertainment venue within miles and the only place that one could take care of problems incurred on the roads. . . ."

The Poles had a love-hate relationship with the taverns, just as they did with the Jews: the former were periodically condemned as a source of spiritual pollution and the latter were often blamed for the epidemic of peasant drunkenness that assailed the populace. Polish bureaucrats seemed perennially obsessed over the decades with finding ways to impose fees, restrictions, partial bans, outright prohibitions and expulsions.



Yankel's Tavern: Jews, Liquor, & Life in the Kingdom of Poland.
By Glenn Dynner
Oxford University Press, 2014

The Tavern Leczynski St Lublin, 1867.

Dynner uses some newly-discovered archival material to show that, despite these harsh measures, a vibrant and equally persistent "counter-narrative" kicked in to keep the taverns alive and in a condition of healthy fluidity. The nobles, who preferred Jewish operators for their reliability, often helped them circumvent the regulations. Referring to this close level of co-operation as the "lord-Jew alliance," Dynner shows that nobles frequently helped their Jewish tavern operators install Christians as fronts for their operations.

Several years ago, when Dynner delivered a presentation on this topic at the New York-based Center for Jewish History, he was astonished to see that a huge crowd had turned out for his lecture. "A tide of people waving genealogical documents of various kinds – birth records, newspaper clippings, and so on – began to make its way towards me," he writes in the preface to his book.

As he discovered, many of the attendees claimed to have a grandfather who ran a tavern back in the Old Country. He was struck by the contrast: numerous historians had declared the Polish-Jewish liquor trade dead by the mid-to-late 19th-century, yet here was a multitude of people claiming their grandparents had run taverns in eastern Europe within living memory.

This intriguing book examines the Jewish liquor trade in both urban and rural areas, shows that taverns were vital points of covert liaisons during the Polish uprisings of 1830 and 1863, and explores many other aspects of this wide-ranging but previously overlooked subject. Like the large seven-branched brass chandeliers that lit up many such premises, *Yankel's Tavern* serves to illuminate the world of our ancestors with a penetrating light that spills well beyond the tavern doors. ■

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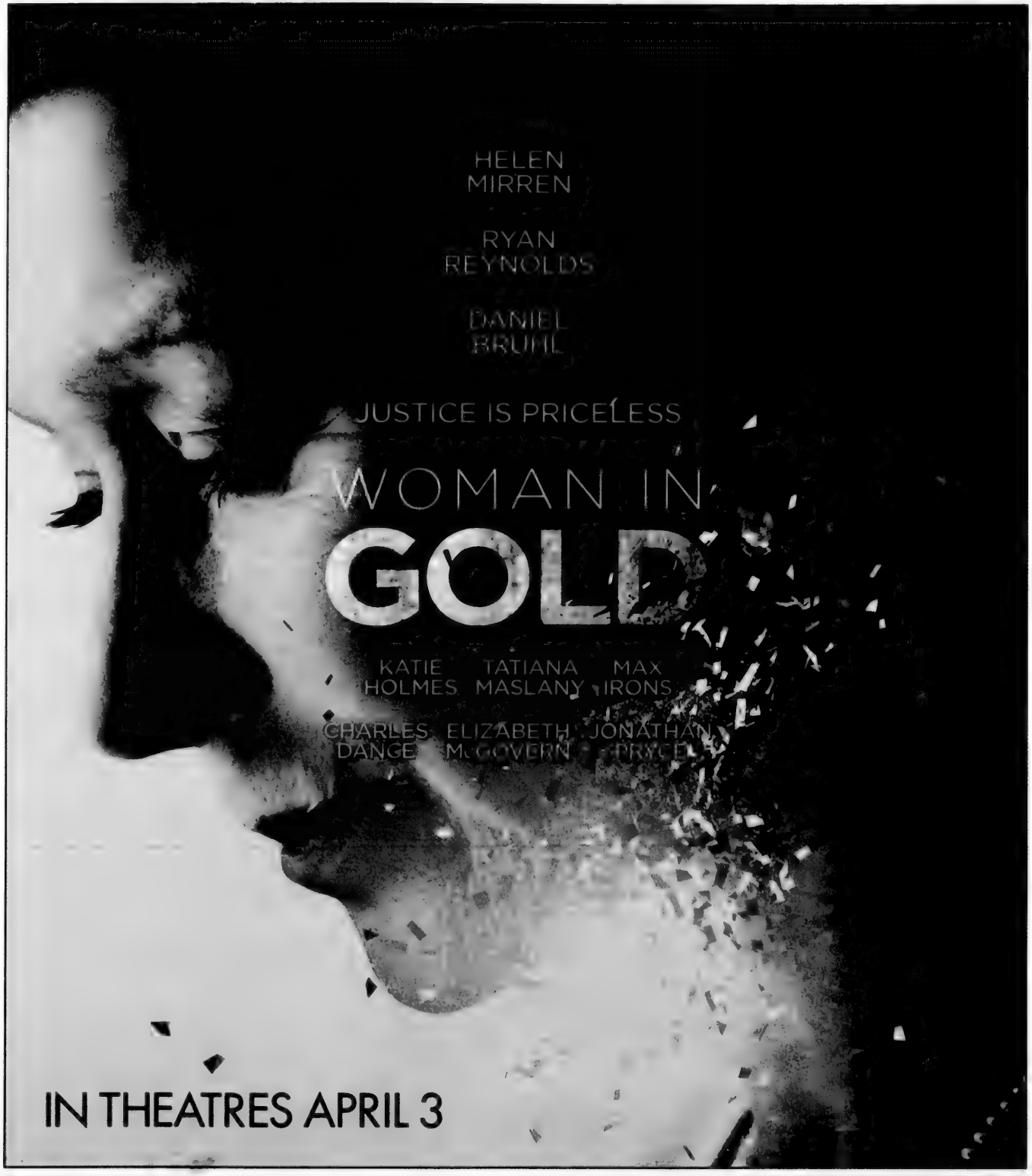
HELEN MIRREN
RYAN REYNOLDS
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JUSTICE IS PRICELESS
WOMAN IN GOLD
KATIE HOLMES
TATIANA MASLANY
MAX IRONS
CHARLES DANCE
ELIZABETH McGOVERN
JONATHAN PRYCE
IN THEATRES APRIL 3

Helen Mirren perfectly cast as Maria Altmann

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There is a compelling true story behind *Woman in Gold*, a new drama starring Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds. However, this underdog tale is only intermittently engaging and not quite as powerful as it thinks it is, despite the efforts of a good ensemble.

Mirren is always a terrific screen presence and she is perfectly cast as Maria Altmann, an aging Jewish woman hoping to reclaim several Gustav Klimt paintings that the Nazis stole from her family.

One of the artworks is a portrait of her aunt, Adele Bloch-Bauer, drenched in gold. Valued at more than $100 million, the painting is considered to be "the Mona Lisa of Austria" and hangs in the country's national gallery.

Now a native of Los Angeles, Maria wants to repossess the painting that belonged to her family, of a woman who meant so much to her. She tells young, inexperienced lawyer Randy Schoenberg (Reynolds) that she wants the artwork back for honour and justice, not money.

Soon after, the fussy old lady and her milquetoast attorney fly to Vienna to challenge the Austrian government over the painting.

Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds star in the drama Woman in Gold, based on an aging Jewish woman's quest to reclaim Guztav Klimt paintings stolen by the Nazis.

Inspired by the British documentary *Stealing Klimt*, *Woman in Gold*, which opens nationwide on April 3, swerves between riveting historical drama and a rather kitschy depiction of true events.

The best moments in director Simon Curtis's film are its flashback sequences, filled with an overwhelming white hue. These scenes, poignant and tense, show how Maria encountered anti-Semitism in Vienna as a young woman.

In the film's most riveting sequence, we watch Maria attempt to escape the city with her husband, even with Nazis teeming around the airport and major centres.

Canadian actor Tatiana Maslany (from *Orphan Black*) plays young Maria with a defiance and emotional vigour that much of the rest of the film lacks.

When *Woman in Gold* returns to Maria and Randy's more contemporary legal battles – not to forget the odd-couple idiosyncrasies played for light comedy – the film is not as affecting.

Maria is rather contradictory. At the film's start, she explains she would rather die than return to Austria. However, during a passionate speech given in Vienna about her family and the war, she never wilts into pained tears or anxiety.

Randy's character arc is more interesting. As Maria's case immerses him in Jewish history, he begins to get in touch with a religious heritage he hasn't thought too much about. However, a scene at a Vienna Holocaust memorial where Randy confronts this horror is rushed and thus feels emotionally cheap.

Woman in Gold comes from Alexi Kaye Campbell's first produced screenplay. Unfortunately, the story is jammed with stock characters. Daniel Brühl (from *Rush*) is wasted as an Austrian investigative journalist, a character that mainly exists to spout exposition. Katie Holmes is stuck in an embarrassingly tiny role as Randy's supportive, pregnant wife.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

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JCC event shows that all bodies can dance

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

After a car accident in her early 20s left her disabled, Simi Linton, an American activist, author and speaker now in her 60s, came to the realization that it was not so much the wheelchair she rode that was disabling, but the environment around her.

This awareness spurred Linton's decades-long fight for greater societal inclusion of people with disabilities, be it through municipal infrastructure, better design of public and private institutions or opening up spaces within the arts, such as dance. The effort is chronicled in the 2014 documentary *Invitation to Dance*, which Linton co-produced with Christian Von Tippelskirch.

The film also delves into Linton's rediscovery of dance as an expression of joy and sexuality after initially assuming her disabled body didn't belong on a dance floor.

It features performance shots of an American mixed-abilities dance troupe whose members have a variety of body types, including those who use, and dance, in wheelchairs.

The film and an ensuing panel discussion were part of a March 22 event at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre (MNJCC), hosted in partnership with the Ryerson School of Disabilities Studies and Tangled Art + Disability, a non-profit dedicated to enhancing opportunities for artists with disabilities.

The event, which concluded with a mixed abilities dance party, highlighted a new MNJCC push to be more accessible and inclusive. As part of this effort, Liviya Mendelsohn was hired last September as the MNJCC's accessibility and inclusion co-ordinator.

Mendelsohn said she hoped *Invitation to Dance* would serve as a catalyst for viewers to talk about accessibility generally and as it pertains to the arts world.

Several years ago, Mendelsohn explained, the MNJCC began to talk more seriously about inclusion and conducted a needs assessment to see "who was in the building, who felt included, who wanted to be here but wasn't, and what barriers they faced."

After finding there were people in the community who weren't being adequately supporting, the MNJCC applied for a Trillium grant that allowed it to hire Mendelsohn and undertake further inclusivity measures.

Participants at the MNJCC's Invitation to Dance event March 22 take part in a mixed abilities dance party. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

"We're doing everything from building capacity through staff training, outreach and listening to people with disabilities and their families about what their needs are," she said.

Outreach has extended to all areas of the JCC, Mendelsohn noted, and developments have included an accessible yoga class and partnerships both current and upcoming with groups such as the Ontario Basketball Association and the Down Syndrome Association of Toronto to make sports and swimming more inclusive.

The centre also recently partnered with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Itanu Toronto inclusion initiative to run an educational workshop on inclusiveness for 40 Jewish communal leaders, including rabbis, day school teachers and laypeople.

After the film, the 60 or so attendees – many of whom used wheelchairs – listened to panelists Nicole Meehan, a dancer and a student at the Ryerson School of Disability Studies, Catherine McKinnon, co-founder and festival director of the Toronto International Deaf Film and Arts Festival and Mark Brose, a wheelchair dancer.

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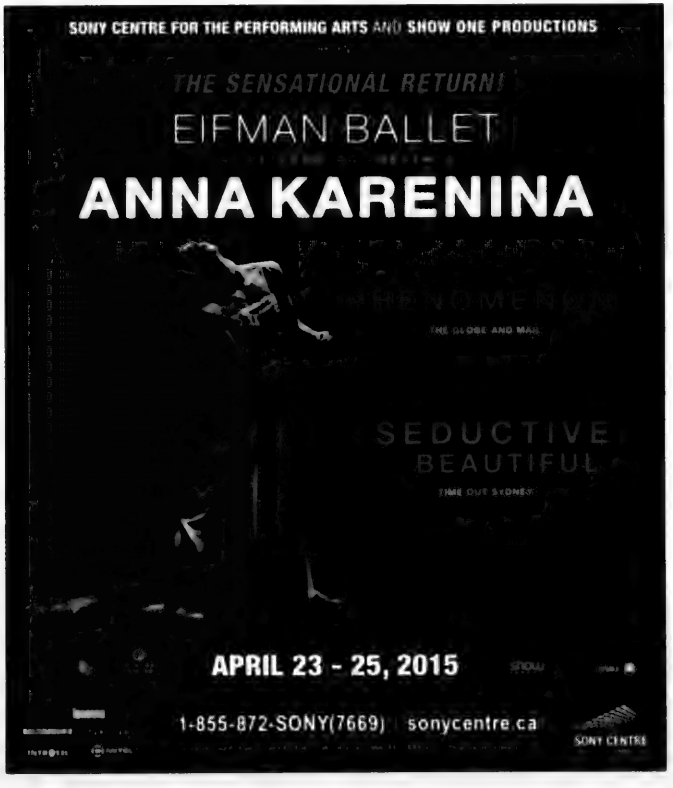

Courtroom scenes needed to be more engaging

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58

Furthermore, Randy's stern boss, played by *The Imitation Game*'s Charles Dance, is also a cliché. "Since when have we been paying you to have feelings?" he barks at Randy, after the lawyer notes his interest in spending more time with Maria's case.

To fit a complex legal case into a 109-minute film, Campbell's screenplay reduces a lot of this intriguing history into its barest, most superficial elements. The courtroom scenes, blandly shot and filled with clunky legal jargon, also need to be more engaging.

Meanwhile, the Austrian lawyers and officials are a stereotypically sneering bunch. Many of these characters are reduced to pompous caricatures that don't get much of a chance to defend their own interests in a national treasure.

The move by Austria's government to return stolen Nazi artwork to its citizens is dismissed as a PR stunt, even if its intentions were noble. As beautiful as Vienna looks in Curtis' film, one doubts the Austrian population will be too happy with how they are haughtily represented.

Woman in Gold is less two-dimensional with Maria and Randy. Despite Mirren and Reynolds' best efforts, though, Curtis' drama too often reduces a fascinating story into easily digestible plot points. It is, ultimately, a film about reclaiming an artwork that doesn't stake much of a claim on being artful or absorbing. ■

Dance is a subtle way of advocating for disability rights

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 59

The discussion, moderated by Eliza Chandler, a postdoctoral fellow at the Ryerson School of Disability Studies and artistic director at Tangled Art + Disability, looked at dance as a vehicle for disability activism, as well as representations of disabled people in places the screen and stage and government support for artists with disabilities.

"Dance is a subtle and non-aggressive way of advocating for disability rights," Meehan said.

Brose, who said he had to give up a career as a goldsmith after developing multiple sclerosis, said dancing on stage has been a wonderful way to recover his sense of self-expression.

He noted that the Ontario Arts Council recently announced that it will be offering funding options for deaf and disabled artists.

McKnnon touched on the importance of people with disabilities being better represented in the arts scene.

"We need to advocate more to be included... [For example], it's important as a deaf community to show films where people are signing."

Several audience members shared their experiences of working as freelance, disabled artists and struggling to obtain grants while on the Ontario Disability Support Program.

The event concluded with a lively, free-form dance party with DJ Layah Jane.

Though the event's content did not focus on the Jewish community, Mendelsohn said she would encourage anyone in the community who is planning or designing an event or program to "ask everyone what their needs are what you can contribute around that."

"Inclusion is a deeply Jewish value," she said.

Invitation to Dance participants express themselves through joyful dance. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

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Playwright takes latest work to infinity and beyond

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A play about time and theoretical physics may sound daunting, but acclaimed playwright Hannah Moscovitch worked with renowned physicist Lee Smolin – along with a full creative team – to produce one.

Moscovitch's *Infinity* has its world premier at Toronto's Tarragon Theatre on April 1. While the play explores Smolin's theory of time, outlined in his 2013 book *Time Reborn*, "the play itself is sort of two stories that are intertwined," Moscovitch says. "One is the love story between Carmen (Amy Rutherford), who's a composer, and Elliot (Paul Braunstein), who is a physicist, and that's intertwined with a sexual history of a young woman named Sarah Jean (Haley McGee)."

Ross Manson, the artistic director at Toronto's Volcano Theatre, commissioned the play in 2008. "When Ross Manson originally came to me and said he wanted to write about time, I thought he was a lunatic more or less," says Moscovitch, who's originally from Ottawa.

She worked collaboratively with director Manson, choreographer Kate Alton and composer Njo Kong Kie to develop the play over the years. Smolin, billed as the consulting physicist on the project, even wrote an eight-page biography for the character of Elliot, and parts of it have been incorporated into the show.

Actors including Haley McGee joined the project in spring 2013. "So rarely do you get to live with something and have it kind of percolate for that long," she says.

Hannah Moscovitch's Infinity opened on April 1.

McGee, who's also an award-winning playwright, thinks the long process lent itself well to *Infinity*. "It's a play about a family, and so there is a kind of familiarity that you're able to build over two years... that is much harder to achieve in a regular three-week rehearsal period."

Infinity doesn't focus only on the nitty-gritty theoretical elements of time; it also looks at how ideologies are passed down between generations – a theme all the more relevant now that Moscovitch is starting a family.

"It's in fact a play about how large systems of thought influence who we are and shape who we are and how we think," Moscovitch says.

For her, Judaism is one such system. "I think Judaism has informed all my writing just because it's inextricable from who I am."

Her work includes 2007's *East of Berlin*, a play that examines the legacy of the Holocaust. Last year, Moscovitch took home the Ontario Trillium Book Award for *This is War*, about Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan. This makes her the first playwright to collect the province's top literary prize since its inception in 1987. In 2013, Nobel laureate Alice Munro was the English language winner. "Anytime when you can win an award the year after Alice Munro, you feel good," Moscovitch says.

Moscovitch's career isn't limited to playwriting – it spans a variety of media. She currently writes for CBC's original television show *X Company*, a World War II spy drama that premiered on Feb. 18. Her venture into television is common among playwrights.

"Television is so alluring because the best storytelling is happening on television, I think," she says. "There's very good storytelling in every medium, but TV is just so good today."

In February 2014, she made her debut in the opera world after writing the libretto for *I Have No Stories To Tell You*. It's an original piece, with music by Lembit Beecher, commissioned by New York City's Gotham Chamber Opera and performed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In theatre, she's currently working on a three-part adaption of Ann-Marie MacDonald's novel *Fall on Your Knees* for the Shaw Festival.

Earlier this year, her play *What a Young Wife Ought to Know* opened in Halifax. And, she'll likely keep making revisions on *Infinity* even as the play goes into previews.

"Hannah needs to watch it with an audience and see what's landing, what's working what needs to be tweaked," McGee says. "I like that. It's very exciting to be part of that process." ■

Infinity runs from April 1-May 25 at Tarragon Theatre's Extraspace, 30 Bridgman Ave., Toronto, M5R 1X3. For tickets call 416-531-1827 or visit www.tarragontheatre.com

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PASSOVER FOOD

Israeli moms offer family-friendly Pesach food ideas

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Around our house, it wouldn't be Pesach without prowling children calling from the fridge, "There's nothing to eat!" But here in Israel, lots of hip, healthy moms make it look easy to dole out tasty treats all seven days – and beyond, since this year, the last day falls on a Friday, giving us an "eight-day Pesach."

What's their secret? Allyson doesn't seem to think it's a big deal. "We eat basically the same foods we eat the rest of the year," she says. "Lots of meat, eggs, quinoa and veggies."

Using simple, familiar foods is a common theme. Your family's favourite quiche, made with a matzah-meal crust (or crustless), makes a great weekday lunch or dinner. Add frozen broccoli for an easy nutritional boost. Another year-round comfort food? "Shepherd's pie is a real winner," raves Kat.

Simple foods can still have great flavour. Roasting can be less work than boiling or frying, and it brings out the sweetness in everything from cauliflower and squash to red peppers and mushrooms.

For meals on the go, bring along a healthier chunky tuna salad with olive oil and chopped peppers. Spread on matzah or just eat with a spoon.

When it comes to sweet treats, chocolate isn't the only option. My secret indulgence is the tinned mandarin orange segments I loved as a child. Mix in sliced bananas and a sprinkling of coconut (and, shh, don't tell) some mini-marshmallows for instant ambrosia.

Almost every mom admitted that her family loves chicken fingers, with a variety of sweet and savoury sauces. They don't have to be deep-fried – bake them in the oven instead, along with oven-baked french fries. Slice potatoes (unpeeled, if they're organic) thick or thin, toss in olive oil, sea salt, pepper and paprika, then bake until tender inside. Swap in sweet potatoes (peeled) for an easy boost of fibre.

From the "everything-old-is-new-again" department comes home pickling, a classic way to add oomph to veggies. Try cucumbers (pickles with dill and garlic), cauliflower, carrots, peppers, green tomatoes or beets. With some advance prep, you'll have quick, healthy snacks or side dishes at any Pesach meal.

What if you're gluten-free? Ronit, an Israeli mom of three, relies heavily on "quinoa and nut-based stuff." That includes desserts, where she prefers to use healthier coconut oil. "I make coconut sugar and quinoa-based cookies as a treat." (Coconut products can be tough to find with Passover supervision, so shop early or consult a rabbi.)

Traditional comfort foods still have their place, too. As one young mom said, "I spent a whole day preparing varied dishes, and two people walked into the kitchen, one after the other, saying, 'What, there's no kugel?'"

Novelty is great, but sometimes, "same-old same-old" is exactly what hits the spot.

No-Sugar-Added Turnip And Beet Pickles

From *Passover Made Easy*, by Victoria Dwek and Leah Schapira (Artscroll).

Don't be scared off by the word "turnip!" Prepared at least two days ahead, these absorb some of the flavour and lots of the colour of the beet. An easy intro even if you've never pickled anything in your life. Serve on fresh green lettuce topped with carrot curls for a dramatic, colourful presentation.

- ❑ 2 large turnips, peeled and thinly sliced into half moons
- ❑ 1 beet, peeled and thinly sliced into half moons
- ❑ 8 cloves garlic
- ❑ 1 jalapeño, sliced into rings (do not remove seeds)
- ❑ 1 cup water
- ❑ 1/2 tbsp. salt
- ❑ 1 tsp. vinegar

Combine turnips, beet, garlic and jalapeño in a jar. Pour water, salt and vinegar over vegetables. Cover and shake to combine.
Note: Best if made at least two days ahead. This salad will keep in the refrigerator for 10-14 days.

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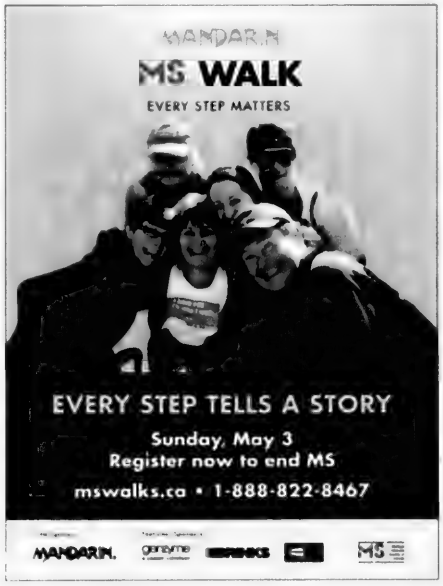

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Almond Crusted Chicken Tenders With Honey-Lemon Dipping Sauce

From *chabad.org*, recipe by Miriam Szokovski.

The author writes, "The almond meal gives it a lovely nutty flavour, and a drizzle of lemon-honey sauce really takes it up a notch. I find it easier to cut the chicken thinly when it's half-frozen."

- ❑ 1 lb. chicken breast, cut into narrow strips
- ❑ 2 eggs, lightly whisked
- ❑ juice of 3 lemons
- ❑ 2 cups ground almonds

For the sauce:

- ❑ 4 tbsp. mayonnaise
- ❑ 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ❑ 1 tbsp. honey

Juice the lemons, and set aside 2 tablespoons for the dipping sauce.

Marinate the chicken strips in the rest of the lemon juice for 2 hours. (They will turn whitish.)

Prepare eggs in one bowl, and ground almond in a second.

Dip chicken into egg, then into the ground almond, until fully coated.

Grease a baking tray and line with parchment paper. Line chicken pieces up (don't worry if they're touching). Drizzle generously with oil. Bake at 425 for 20-25 minutes. Serve warm, with dipping sauce on the side or drizzled on top.

For Dipping Sauce:

Mix mayonnaise with honey and lemon, gently stirring in one direction until combined. You may need to adjust the proportions, depending on which mayonnaise you use and according to your taste. Serves 4. ■

CORRECTION

In the article "Passover desserts – time to start baking" (*CJN*, March 26), the recipe for Pesach Chocolate Chip Cookies should have called for 1/2 cup of toasted walnuts or pecans. We apologize for the error.

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Happy Passover birthday

SUE EPSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

My father's birthday always fell on Passover and I remember some pretty awful cakes and once some pieces of matzah layered with jam and birthday candles on top.

Perhaps the reason was that my mother was a terrible cook (my father did all the cooking!) and there were no Passover bakeries near where we lived. Nevertheless, today it's possible to have beautiful, high-rising cakes on Passover – whether for a special birthday or not. Here are two cakes that will be a huge hit.

It is important that the pan for a sponge cake, and any whipped egg white cake, should be ungreased, because the cake clings to the sides as it rises, thereby allowing it to rise in spite of its weight. Some reasons a cake might be falling or failing to rise, would be overbeating the egg whites – they will fall if you beat them too long – or folding the batter in too roughly, again, causing the egg whites to lose their ability to hold the air.

Passover Birthday Cake

- ❑ 10 eggs, separated
- ❑ 2 cups granulated sugar
- ❑ 1 cup Passover cake meal
- ❑ 1 heaping cup finely ground pecans
- ❑ 1 tbsp. cinnamon
- ❑ 1/3 cup sweet red or white wine

Orange Icing:

- ❑ 3 tbsp. margarine, room temperature
- ❑ 1 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- ❑ 2 tbsp. fresh orange juice
- ❑ 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ❑ grated orange zest, optional
- ❑ 1-2 drops Passover yellow food colouring, optional

Preheat oven to 325. In a mixing bowl, beat yolks and sugar until they are pale yellow and fluffy. Stir in cake meal, pecans, cinnamon and wine. In a separate bowl with clean beaters, whip egg whites until stiff but not dry. Fold the egg whites into the batter in thirds, each time until just incorporated. Spoon the batter into a 9- or 10-in. ungreased springform pan. Make a collar out of aluminum foil around the pan, in case the cake rises above the sides. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes, until a tester inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool completely on a wire rack before removing the sides of the pan. When cool, frost the top (if desired) and sides of the cake with Orange Icing.

To make the icing: Cream together the margarine and confectioners' sugar. Stir in the orange juice and lemon juice. Add a pinch of orange zest and the food colouring, if desired. Makes 8-10 servings.

Chocolate Idiot Cake

Adapted from *Ready for Dessert* by David Lebovitz

This cake is extremely rich, and tastes like the most delicious, silkiest, most supremely-chocolate ganache you've ever had. It's equally good a few days after baking, and only an idiot could possibly mess it up. You don't need to use Scharffen Berger chocolate for this cake, as I do, but use a good one – you'll appreciate it when you taste your first melt-in-your-mouth bite. Make sure to wrap the pan very well in foil, perhaps several layers, to prevent any water seeping in during baking.

- ❑ 10 oz. bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
- ❑ 7 oz. butter, salted or unsalted, cut into pieces
- ❑ 5 large eggs, at room temperature
- ❑ 1 cup sugar

Preheat the oven to 350.

Butter a 9-in. springform pan and dust it with cocoa powder, tapping out any excess. If you suspect your springform pan isn't 100 per cent water-tight, wrap the outside with aluminum foil, making sure it goes all the way up to the outer rim.

Melt the chocolate and butter in a double boiler (or microwave), stirring occasionally, until smooth. Remove from heat.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs and sugar, then whisk in the melted chocolate mixture until smooth.

Pour the batter into the prepared springform pan and cover the top of the pan snugly with a sheet of foil. Put the springform pan into a larger baking pan, such as a roasting pan, and add enough hot water to the baking pan to come about halfway up to the outside of the cake pan. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

You'll know the cake is done when it feels just set, like quivering chocolate pudding. If you gently touch the centre, your finger should come away clean.

Lift the cake pan from the water bath and remove the foil. Let cake cool completely on a cooling rack.

Serve thin wedges of this very rich cake at room temperature, with ice cream or whipped cream.

Storage: This Chocolate Idiot Cake can be wrapped and chilled in the refrigerator for 3-5 days. Makes one 9-in. cake. ■

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What's New

APRIL 2 - APRIL 9

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, April 2

YIDDISH VINKL

Clifford Goldfarb and **Hartley Nathan** discuss "Sherlock Holmes: The Jewish Connection," noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20 (includes lunch.) RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

Friday, April 3

PASSOVER SEDERS

Chabad Markham hosts a seder April 3. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Association of Jewish Seniors holds a seder April 3 at Bernard Betel Centre. Purchase tickets from AJS or at Bernard Betel Centre, 416-225-2112.

Congregation Habonim hosts a seder April 4. Free, but donations welcome. RSVP 416-782-7125.

Ve'ahavta, Holy Blossom Temple, Habonim and the aboriginal community host a seder April 5. RSVP 416-964-7698, ext. 225.

Tuesday, April 7

JEWS IN SPORTS

Mike Katz, former head coach of the Varsity Blues, discusses "Jews and basketball," Beth Tzedec Congregation, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 8

OPEN MIC NIGHT

Enjoy open mic night with Klez Konnection, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. $10.

Thursday, April 9

HONOURING RABBI DOLGIN

Temple Sinai honours **Rabbi Michael Dolgin** with a service of theatre, prayer and meditation, 7:30 p.m. The celebration continues April 10 at services at 10 a.m.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to deliver meals to Holocaust survivors. Call **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext. 496.

Baycrest is looking for volunteers (over 13) to assist with palliative care, meals and special events. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

SOCCERATHON

Canadian Friends of Beit Issie Shapiro are holding a soccerathon, April 26, 2-6 p.m., Trio Sportsplex, 601 Cityview Blvd., Woodbridge. Contact gilad.epstein@lorexcorp.com or cfobis@rogers.com

ROOTS OF POVERTY

Learn how to be a Jewish social change-maker, in a 6-week course on "The Roots of Poverty," Mondays, April 13-May 18, 6-8 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC. Register by April 1. Email cara.gold@veahavta.org.

INCOME TAX CLINICS

Barbara Frum library offers free tax help to people with low incomes, April 13, 6-8:15 p.m. Register in advance.

YOM HAZIKARON

The Consulate of Israel hosts the official Yom Hazikaron memorial ceremony, April 21, Beth Tzedec Congregation. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., program starts at 7:30 p.m.

MARRIAGE COURSE

Chabad Markham offers a marriage class for brides and grooms with **Rabbi Avraham** and **Goldie Plotkin.** Starts April 14. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

RUACH SINGERS

The Ruach Singers will not be at Beth Sholom Synagogue, April 18 as earlier advertised. They will next be at the synagogue May 16.

YIDDISH CLASSES

Intermediate-level, 10-week Yiddish class starts April 19, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth David Synagogue, 55 Yeomans Rd. $150. Call 416-635-2883, ext. 5189.

MORASHA CLASS

Morasha presents "Stories that objects tell," with curator **Dorian Liebgott,** April 15, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth Emeth Synagogue. 416-789-7400 to register.

YEZIDIS SPEAK OUT

Yezidis now living in Canada discuss the genocide and enslavement of their community in Iraq, April 12, 7:30 p.m., B'nai Brith Centre, 15 Hove St. For more information, email CanadianJewsandFriendsofYezidis@gmail.com

HEBREW CLASSES

Conversational Hebrew, ulpan method with **Yael Lev.** Intermediate students, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.; Advanced, Thursdays 1:30 p.m.; Beginners class forming, Pride of Israel Synagogue. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

SPRING COURSES

Registration is open for Temple Emanu-El's spring lecture series, Mondays, 2-4 p.m. Starts April 13 with **Sergei Plekanov** on "The Ukrainian crisis." Other speakers include **Rick Phillips, Robert Steiner, Daniela Monaldi, Katherine Barber.** $45/series; $12/lecture. 416-449-3880.

Register now for Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn series. Starts April 14 with **Anna Shternshis** on "Soviet Jewish culture." 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

THIRD SEDER

United Jewish People's Order and Morris Winchevsky School hold a third seder, April 12, 4:30 p.m., Villa Colombo, 40 Playfair Ave. Purchase tickets by April 1. 416-789-5502.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Robert Hawke, a cancer survivor and a veteran of Second City Comedy Troupe gave a workshop last month on improv comedy and the healing power of laughter to L'Chaim Cancer Support Group for Jewish Women, a project of the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada - Toronto section. For more information about L'Chaim, call 416-630-0203.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of April 16 is April 6. All deadlines are at noon.
Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

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GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com

- Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children aged 2-10. Starts April 21, 1 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave. (downtown) or April 23, 7 p.m. at Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St. or April 30, 7 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 2-session group for couples who are going to be married next year. April 26, May 3, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.
- Bullying and learning disabilities: A 1-session workshop for parents and professionals. Topics include prevention and intervention strategies for children who are bullied as well as those who bully. April 28, 7 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St.
- Mind, body connection for women: An 8-session group for women to learn meditation and mindfulness. Starts April 29, 2-3:30 p.m., 35 Madison Ave. or April 30, 7-8:30 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.

Specialty fitness classes begin the first week of April. Enjoy osteofit, posture perfect, legs/core/balance, living well with diabetes and functional mobility workshops.

- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Passover celebration, April 2, 1:30-3 p.m. Israeli folk dancing workshop, April 23, 1-2:30 p.m. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, April 15; Spa day, facials, manicures, barber, hairdresser, April 2, 10 a.m.; Balance and co-ordination class April 14, 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; High tea with live music, April 29, 1:30 p.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. April 7, **Robert Shechter** discusses "Through my camera's eye," 10 a.m.; April 8, concert at 1:30 p.m.; April 9, Wellness lecture on green living, 1:30 p.m.
- **Baycrest Learning Academy. David Lipovitch** teaches a course on "Ancient Near Eastern Art," Wednesdays, 2-3:30 p.m., April 15-June 3. **Kevin Courrier** teaches a course on "The neglected art of film music," Thursdays, 2-3:30 p.m., April 16-June 4. Courses held at the Wagman Centre. 416-785-2500, ext. 2267. $40.
- **The PEP Group** presents entertainment and Passover refreshments April 9, Earl Bales Community Centre, 12:30 p.m. RSVP **Terri** 416-785-0335.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call Sheila, 416-665-3333 or Judi, 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen**, 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin**, Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. Call 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabad-markham.org
- **Beth Sholom**'s seniors group meets for lunch and exercise every Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com
- PJ Plus is an active Jewish learning program for children with a parent, Fridays April 17-June 19, 9:30 a.m. or Sundays April 12-June 28, 10 a.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "El Greco," Tuesdays, April 14-28, 1 p.m.
- Learn to play mah-jong or bridge this spring, day and evening classes.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Mix it up with media," starts April 16, 1-4 p.m.
- Family ceramics program for ages 4-12 with an adult, April 12- June 14, 2-4 p.m. Email jackie@prossermanjcc.com
- Dance and yoga for young adults with an intellectual disability, April 14-June 16, 6:15 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, April 12, 1 p.m. Ext. 521.
- A Disposable Life: in conversation with **Henry Giroux**, three panel discussions and a film screening start at 1 p.m., April 11, Al Green Theatre.
- The Gallery celebrates its 10th anniversary with a group show of past artists, on until April 12.
- Second Story Press presents four new books for children about World War II in Canada and Europe, with readings by authors **Kathy Clark**, **E. Graziani**, **Gisela Sherman**, April 13, 7 p.m.
- Register now for Hebrew classes. Starts the week of April 13. Placement info, ext. 388.
- Yom Hashoah memorial service, April 16, 2-3 p.m. with **Claire Baum**, author of *The Hidden Package*
- Shabbat family party for children and an adult, April 17-June 19, 10 a.m. or 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Register now for the Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singer's edition, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17-21.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk**, Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein**, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m., Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 4025.

- Learn to play bridge or mah-jong. Day and evening classes.
- **Dr. Joey Shulman** discusses "Balance hormones, boost energy and burn fat naturally," April 16, 7 p.m.
- **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m.
- Silk painting on scarves, April 24, May 1, 10 a.m. 1 p.m.
- Learn to make large floral works on canvas, paper or fabric. April 14-June 16, 1-4 p.m.
- Day and evening ceramics classes available. All levels welcome.
- PJ Plus is a program for children and a parent to engage in active Jewish learning. April 14-June 16, 9:30 a.m. or April 12-June 21, 10 a.m.

WRY BREAD

Avoiding damnation through Passover obedience

A. David Levine

From all your friends at the Kashrut Administration of Shaarei Hessed (KASH), we wish you and your family a happy Passover!

Celebrating Passover involves abstaining from bread and other leavened products (on pain of divine retribution). But that's just the beginning of the holiday – from kitchen koshering to quinoa quontroversy, we hear questions from concerned and confused community members. This year, we've put together a little guide to help you observe the holiday in a fun and relaxed way that carries no negative eternal consequences. We're proud to present *Diet or Karet: Avoiding Damnation Through Passover Obedience*.

Chametz: When Passover rolls around, chametz is the enemy – wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye are politely discouraged(on pain of divine retribution). But don't just stop eating them – avoid having any traces of chametz on your property over the eight-day holiday (on pain of divine retribution). This extends to your homes, offices, cars, school lockers, storage units or anything you may have forgotten.

Other grains: Though corn and rice aren't chametz in the strict, literal, intended, or actual senses of the word, Ashkenazi Jews are still prohibited from eating or owning them on the holiday, possibly due to their past/possible confusion with wheat. This means that all beans can potentially be ground into confusing, chametz-resembling flour. So if your ancestors were driven out of eastern Europe, avoid these legumes like the plague (which probably wouldn't be your punishment if you ate them). Ashkenazi Jews can also look forward to cleansing themselves of peas, peanuts, sprouts and lentils.

But the fun doesn't stop there! For 2015, the name of the game for Passover is selection – KASH is delighted to certify a wide assortment of kosher for Passover goods and treats for you and your family.

Because of the heightened standards (and penalties) of the holiday, regular kosher items are not necessarily kosher for Passover – so say goodbye to name brands, and say hello to a range of new KASH-certified kosher for Passover offerings: Raffles Potato-based Chip-Style Food Flakes ($11.99), Ori O's Sandwich Cookies ($23.50), Uncle Binyamin's Matza Knots ($17 per tub), Crazy Yitzy's Clumps O' Sugar ($16 per sack), Rabbi Chellmann's Emulsified Oil & Egg Condiment Paste ($46.97 with coupon) and more!

In November 2014, a northbound truck loaded with seedless green grapes collided with an eastbound semi containing 3,000 loaves of Dempster's whole wheat bread just outside Erie, Pa. According to officers on the scene, some of the undamaged fruit – fruit that had collided with bread – was loaded onto a new truck, which then continued toward its original distribution venue. As we have been unable to track down the final location of this tainted shipment, until further notice from KASH, seedless and seeded green and red grapes are prohibited for Passover – along with raisins, cranberry-raisins, cranberries, all other berries, wine, grape juice, sunscreen and insulin (on pain of divine retribution).

And finally, we're dismayed to tell you that KASH has uncovered a quiet conspiracy that directly affects your soul's eternal fate. According to government sources, antibiotic cocktails introduced to Canadian dairy cows in 2014 may have contained andextrocarbopolysucrenate, a standard neurotoxin, but also a wheat derivative. As a result, KASH has been forced to declare all dairy products made in Canada strictly prohibited for consumption on Passover, including milk, cream, eggs, cheeses, yogurts, etc. In unrelated news, KASH is pleased to present Melk, a brand new line of kosher for Passover dairy substitutes newly certified for 2015!

From all of us at KASH, we wish you and yours the happiest of holidays, and we remind you that the prohibition against eating bread extends to all associated activities: attending sporting events, engaging in exercise, using the bathroom, sitting at tables, standing at counters, watching television, surfing the Internet, and dental care.

Chag Kasher v'Samayach! ■

Family Moments

Elizabeth & Ivan Katz are pleased to announce the engagement of their son Jonathan, to Lisa, daughter of Dr. Jeremy & Sally Lipschitz of Winnipeg.

Mazel tov Sammy! Happy fourth, March 2. Love from Mom, Dad , Ephram and Winter-Fleishman gang!

To our friends and family! We are telling everybody: Luis & Berta are celebrating their 50th! WOW!

Arlene Rosen, Joel Rosen & Reesa Huberman, Susan Roskies (wife of the late Jon Roskies), Lewis Cytrynbaum, celebrate the engagement of their children Marissa & Michael!

Happy 95th birthday to a very special woman. Beverly & Lenny, Bonnie & Irving, Bluma & Brian, your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

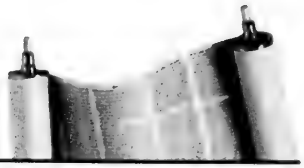
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב

Parshah

Pesach | Exodus 12:21 - 51



Rabbi Aaron Katchen says the seder helps us understand that freedom is always fragile
Rabbi Michal Shekel explains why the 10th plague is different from all the others
Rabbi Howard Morrison finds in the Haggadah a challenge for every generation

Aaron Katchen

"And you shall tell your child on that day, saying, 'Because of this, the Lord did [this] for me when I went out of Egypt' " (Exodus 13:8).

Pesach becomes a time of high anxiety, with the preparation of the house, the food, the shopping, and again, the food. What often gets left behind in the wake of preparing for Pesach is the preparation for the most important part of the holiday, the seder.

I don't mean the food, but the content.

For too long, our community has suffered under seders where either the Haggadah is recited word-for word, with little room for conversation and interpretation, or simply, "They tried to kill us. God saved us. Let's eat!" This is a shame. The seder is meant to be a family affair where we can tell our stories – both local and national. The centrepiece of this experience comes with Maggid.

Maggid is intended to help us appreciate that we will never understand what it means to be a Jew unless we internalize, annually, what it meant to be a slave and what it means to be free. Our freedom is by the will of God alone, and not because we led a slave rebellion. Freedom is always fragile.

We can improve our seders. Some people can do it through the set text of the Haggadah. Others might move off the page, with dramatic presentations. For some, through deep conversation around "When are you free/when are you a slave?" This takes work and preparation *before* the seder begins, but in the end, the payoff is worth it. The family is more connected to their story, the children will be more engaged and the adults will be reminded why so much effort goes into setting the stage.

Wishing each of us a better seder and a Chag Kasher v'Samayach. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Michal Shekel

Why is the 10th plague different from all other plagues? One of the reasons is because of the preparation undertaken by the Children of Israel. It begins with choosing and slaughtering the Pesach offering. This is followed by a ritual: "Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning" (Exodus 12:22).

Similar ritualistic elements appear in the book of Leviticus (Chapter 8). When the kohanim are ordained, a ram is slaughtered as an ordination offering, and the sacrificial blood is placed on the priests, their vestments and the altar. The kohanim confine themselves to the Tent of Meeting for seven days.

The shared elements for priestly ordination and the preparation for the 10th plague consist of slaughtering an animal, the ritual use of sacrificial blood, and staying indoors. In both cases, part of the offering was consumed with unleavened bread and the sacrificial meal could not be left until morning. It had to be burned. In addition, there is a dress code for each meal. For our ancestors in Egypt proper attire meant "your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand" (Exodus 12:11). For the kohanim, it meant dressing in their priestly vestments, followed by anointing.

The ordination ritual signified a change in status for Aaron and his sons. Is it also possible to view the actions before the final plague in a similar fashion? That final night in Egypt, our ancestors entered their dwellings as slaves. The next morning they emerged not only a free people, but a nation of priests. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis.

Howard Morrison

At the Pesach seder, we relive memories of our past. I fondly remember being one of four children and somehow always being identified as the Rasha, the wicked or rebellious son, in a joking manner. I remember the same relatives always attending our family seder, which was always held at my childhood home. I remember always wanting to recite every word of the Haggadah and discuss their contemporary relevance. (Some of the guests at the table would have preferred less discussion.)

Now in my mid-50s, with two grown children of my own, I try to infuse my childhood memories with new meaning and relevance. We use a traditional text with lots of ideas, interpretations, and insights so that everyone around the table can find meaning. We do not merely daven the text or take turns reading. Rather, we try to discuss as much as we can. For example: what are the four most meaningful questions for Jewish life in our time? How would we categorize the four types of children today? What are we trying to do to reach out to the fifth child, the one who no longer attends? Who are the modern-day Pharaohs? What are we doing to overcome their threats? How can we discuss assimilation with those around the table in a way that draws our fellow Jews nearer to their heritage and without disenfranchising them?

As we prepare for the seder, I encourage all of us to share the wonderful memories of the past, and to plant new memories for the future. The seder is one of the greatest opportunities we have to reflect, reminisce, share, and grow in a way that connects the generations. The name Haggadah stems from the two biblical words, *v'higadta l'vincha* – you shall tell your child. As one generation of parents taught its children; a generation later, those children own the obligation, privilege, and challenge of teaching a new generation. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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Eclectic lineup in store at Segal next season

JANICE ARNOLD
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The Segal Centre for Performing Arts in Montreal has again chosen a big, splashy musical to open its main-stage theatre season.

An all-new production of *Funny Girl*, with Gabi Epstein of Toronto in the role of the sassy Fanny Brice, debuts Oct. 11-Nov. 1 under the direction of Shaw Festival veteran Peter Hinton.

Heading the cast of 18 in this revival and playing at the Segal for the first time is a thrill, Epstein said in a videotaped message from Toronto where she is performing in the musical *Once* at the Ed Mirvish Theatre.

All seven of the plays in 2015-2016 are Montreal premieres, Segal executive and artistic director Lisa Rubin announced at the season's unveiling.

The witty *Tribes* (Nov. 29-Dec. 20) by the British Nina Raine, described by Rubin as "one of the most talked about new plays in North America" is about a young man who is the only deaf member of his intellectual family. Montreal actor Jack Volpe, who has been hearing impaired since birth, will make his professional stage debut as the lead character, who learns how to find his own way in the world.

Jack Volpe makes his professional stage debut as a young deaf man in the Segal Centre's production of *Tribes* this coming season. LESLIE SCHACHTER PHOTO

The press conference for the season launch was signed throughout, and during the play's run, related activities like the Sunday-@-the-Segal talk will be interpreted in American Sign Language and Langue des signes québécoises.

To begin 2016 is *The Secret Annex* (Jan. 31-Feb. 21) by Winnipeger Alix Sobler, which imagines an Anne Frank who survived the Holocaust and is now 25 and living in New York. Still idealistic, she is trying to get her diary published and also dealing with family and romantic entanglements. It's presented in partnership with the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

Another young Canadian actress, Sara Farb, plays the lead role. Farb is now rehearsing the role of the traditional Anne Frank in the Stratford Festival's *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The next two mainstage plays are produced with Copa de Oro Productions, with whom the Segal has collaborated successfully in such musicals as *Belles Soeurs* and *Forever Plaid*.

The solo *Boom: The Music, Culture and Events that Shaped a Generation*, written, directed and performed by Gemini-and Dora awards-winner Rick Miller is a paean to the music of the baby boomers (March 20-April 10, 2016), while the off-Broadway *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* is a musical comedy, a Tony Award winner for Joe DiPietro about the ups and downs of romantic relationships at any age (May 8-29, 2016). It will be directed by Wade Lynch, who is directing *Anne of Green Gables* at the Charlottetown Festival this summer. He recently moved to Montreal.

In between, on the Segal second stage, the Studio, is Joshua Harmon's *Bad Jews* (May 1-22, 2016) which will see Lisa Rubin make her directorial debut.

"This is about family, faith and legacy; it's thought-provoking, poignant and funny," she said, "and raises questions I have asked myself many times."

Three cousins gather to mourn the death of their beloved grandfather, and then fight over a precious family heirloom, revealing cracks in their family ties.

The Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre (DWYT) play (June 19-July 10, 2016) is a world premiere, based on another classic, an adaptation of the Mel Brooks musical *The Producers*.

For the first time, the DWYT is working in association with the talented amateur Côte St. Luc Dramatic Society and the show will be directed by its founding artistic director Anisa Cameron, who also heads Bialik High School's theatre program.

Former DWYT director Bryna Wasserman, now executive director of New York's Folksbiene Yiddish theatre, is artistic consultant.

Rubin said the Segal is trying to get Brooks to attend this production rendered in the language in which he grew up.

The Segal also views as an important part of its mission the nurturing of local small theatrical companies. Through 2015-2016, its Studio will be the scene of productions by Teesri Duniya, Tableau d'Hôte Theatre, Youtheatre, and the French-language Les Productions Pas de Panique.

The Segal also unveiled a six-concert jazz series opening in October with the six-time Grammy-nominated singer Tierney Sutton. This will be the eighth season of jazz at the centre. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 2, 2015

Noam Zion: the Haggadah is not the libretto of the seder, it's a leader's guide

LILA SARICK
STAFF REPORTER

Noam Zion is a senior research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and the author of *A Different Night The Family Participation Haggadah* and *A Night to Remember*, which he wrote with his son, Mishael Zion. He was at Toronto's Beth Tzedec Congregation March 26 to 28, speaking about Passover.

How has the seder changed over the years?

There have been three great generations of the model of the seder, and I'm hoping that my Haggadah promotes a fourth model.'

These three models I call them the zaide seder, the Maxwell House Haggadah seder and the *Jewish Catalogue* and its influence on the seder. And what I call my Haggadah is the Starbucks Haggadah.

The basic patterns of the zaides who came over is they knew Hebrew and they read it aloud very fast with a heavy accent. There was no attempt to have an intellectual discussion or to dramatize it or to talk about contemporary issues. The children had their standard role, which was *Ma Nishtana* and the afikoman, and women had no roles to play in the official part of the seder at all.

The next generation looked back at the seder as what they thought was authentic, but they wanted something in English.

So beginning in 1934, Maxwell House began producing the Haggadot translated into English but translated into English that was an imitation of the King James Bible. So it was not an English translation that made the text more accessible. It was an English translation that made the text sound sacred.

The notion of participation began, but participation only meant that everyone had a turn reading, so the women finally had a role.

What happened, of course, was the seder became much longer. But people didn't want their seders to be longer, so you began with every family finding its own solution, often during the evening itself, a battle between traditionalists and non-traditionalists as to what they were going to skip and how they were going to make it faster.

Or, the way I put it, it's the public recitation of a sacred text for as long as you can until hunger overtakes you.

The next stage was the *Jewish Catalogue*. It added something special, it was a "do it yourself" kind of thing. So people would add games and activities and drama, which were lovely for making it more fun and more participatory and, at the same time, because this was the '60s and '70s, you have the production of partisan Haggadot. There's the *Liberated Lamb* for vegetarians. There's the *Freedom Seder* for new, left Jews, there's the women's Haggadot. And in the 1970s and'80s, the Conservative and Reform movements rewrote their Haggadot. They were very Zionist, very Jewish People oriented.

However, with all the changes, the attitude toward the text stayed the same in the sense that people were still going around and reading something.

In all these cases, the Haggadah was the libretto of the seder. What my son and I tried to do is to give a different conception to the function of the Haggadah at the seder.

Until the end of the 19th century, people didn't have multiple Haggadot in their houses. So, the rabbis' notion of the seder was not the reading of a book. What I came to understand is the Haggadah is a leader's guide. It's supposed to help the leader do a series of oral activities, not reading out loud activities. And those oral activities are asking questions, not the Four Questions, but asking your own questions, telling the story… and they meant for people to have a rabbinic-style symposium taking the section, "My father was a wandering Aramean," and beginning to expound on it. And part of the oral activity was eating those symbols, explaining those edible symbols, not reading the explanation.

The new conception of the Haggadah that I have done is, when you buy a Haggadah, you have not bought a libretto that you're supposed to follow. You have taken up a menu where you have to pick and choose from the various categories in the menu.

Which is why we created for each Haggadah the seder planner that lists the elements in the seder and encourages you to pick and choose which ones you want to do according to your family, it doesn't matter whether you're Orthodox or not Orthodox, and then it has suggestions depending on the age group you're most interested in.

When you ask for a Maxwell House coffee, there are very few choices involved, but when you ask for Starbucks, there are multiple choices and you're not always going to order the same kind.

My notion is these books serve the function of home-made Judaism, helping people to make their own Judaism, and when you make your own, then you're making it meaningful for yourself.

It's been noted that Jews are more likely to attend a seder than do any other Jewish ritual. What is the attraction of the seder?

[First of all] it's a family covenant renewal ceremony. It's like how you re-up your membership in the family.

The second thing is the way the Haggadah has been interpreted in the modern world is to identify it with values that are not problematic in the modern world, like freedom or sensitivity to poverty or hope for a better world. You might have an objection to Yom Kippur if you don't believe in God and you think sin is overrated. And further, Pesach doesn't require a synagogue.

As Jews have higher levels of intermarriage, very often the intermarried person, whether they convert to Judaism or they continue to be loyal to Christianity, they tend to have a positive attitude toward religiosity, and they're interested in the seder.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 78

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
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Ehud Barak: Israel and the IDF are strong and the outlines of peace are clear

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Former Israeli prime minister speaks in Toronto earlier this month. GEORGE PIMENTEL PHOTO

Ehud Barak has served the State of Israel in numerous capacities. The most highly decorated soldier in the country's history, he was Israel's prime minister from 1999 to 2001. More recently he held the posts of minister of defence and deputy prime minister in the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He was in Toronto recently as the keynote speaker in a fundraiser for Ezer Mizion, an Israeli charity that has compiled a bone marrow donor registry.

You're in Toronto to support a charity whose focus is on bone marrow registry. I understand that the Israel Defence Forces is involved in a bone marrow registry. Can you tell us about that?

It's more than 10 years now there is an organized effort initiated by Ezer Mizion but backed by our Ministry of Defence, including the time I was minister of defence, that every young soldier on the first day of his coming to his induction bases is allowed voluntarily to join in the bone marrow bank, or registry. And there are many of them ready to do it. Nowadays the technology is very simple. It's a very easy procedure. They give a small sample of their blood, and that's it.

Until now there are probably 325,000 soldiers already registered. Israel is like a mosaic of multiplicities and backgrounds. It is an extremely rich contribution to the bone marrow bank. They are all young people, which is better from the medical point of view. There are already several hundreds of life-saving cases where not just a match was found, but an actual bone marrow transplant took place.

In many cases it's irreplaceable, because some people can't find a match in their families. That leads people to die or to get the bone marrow transplant from the bank. It happens that soldiers are now 40 per cent of the bank.

In the recent Israeli election, you endorsed Isaac Herzog of the Zionist Union. Polls showed he was ahead of Netanyahu, but in the end, Netanyahu won. Why do you think Mr. Herzog lost?

I'm not going to analyze the election. It's a decision of the people. You count the vote and then you know who was less successful this time. We have to respect the verdict of the voters. We are a democracy. You might like more or less this or that candidate. In Israel there is no shortage of candidates. It was Churchill, I believe, who said democracy is the worst governing system he can think of, except all the other known ones.

In terms of the peace negotiations with the Palestinians, what difference do you think a Herzog-led government would have made versus a Netanyahu-led government?

I will not get into speculation. We all respect the verdict of the voter. We expect the government to realize that it serves the people of Israel, not this or that party, and I think until now that was the record, difference in policies and beliefs and worldview, but that is the way democracy operates. Now we can wish and expect that the government will now do all whatever it takes first of all to ensure the security of the State of Israel, to improve its relationships with other nations and to take care of the opportunities for peace.

How much more can Israel offer the Palestinians beyond what you offered and what former prime minister Ehud Olmert offered? Is there much more room to manoeuvre?

No, there is not a lot. I've said more than once that whether it takes five, 15 or 50 years, when a peace agreement will be achieved, you will need a magnifying glass to see the differences between what was on the table in 1999, when I was prime minister, and what has been finally achieved. It will look basically the same. We all know the area, we know the issues and we should hope for a moment of grace where this could be done without risking the security of Israel. Even if it can't be done, I think we should consider unilateral steps to make sure we can get these security settlement blocs, which are needed for security, the presence over the Jordan River and so on.

> *I believe we can act out of self-confidence, from a position of strength, trying to shape our future in order to reduce friction and reduce friction of major clashes. So I'm not afraid of anything around us*

Basically, it takes two to tango. You cannot do it alone, and we need to wait until the Arab leaders on one hand, especially the Palestinians but the rest of the Arab moderate leaders, together with the world community, step forward with readiness to negotiate an acceptable agreement. My strong belief is that when this happens, you will find also readiness on the Israeli side.

There are some analysts who ask how can Israel make peace with the Palestinian Authority when the day after tomorrow Hamas could take over the government. You've made an agreement and now missiles are raining down on your heads?

We are not dismantling the IDF. Israel is the strongest country for 1,000 miles around Jerusalem and will remain the strongest country all over the region for the foreseeable future.

I believe we can act out of self-confidence, from a position of strength, trying to shape our future in order to reduce friction and reduce friction of major clashes. So I'm not afraid of anything around us. You do not control everything what happens around you. But we shouldn't be frightened. We're strong. The IDF remains, the secret service, Shabak, remains. We are not supposed to give up our security demands. No one should expect it from us. We will never do it even if someone will try to convince us.

Having said this, with all respect to the changes in the Middle East in recent years, where the Arab spring turned into the Islamic winter, Israel remains the strongest country, and I don't think the future of reconciliation is incompatible with the security of Israel. The opposite is true. If we succeed in bringing reconciliation, it will strengthen even more the security of Israel.

How would you characterize the relationship between Israel and the United States now?

At the popular level, it's great. I don't think, except for Canada, we have a place on earth where we enjoy such popular support. Not everyone in the country, but a solid majority all over this huge continent.

On the political side, I think we enjoy a lot of support on both sides of the political aisle. Of course there are differences. Some people criticize us. It is natural among friends. It sometimes happens. I don't expect all Americans or legislators to always agree with everything any Israeli government says. I think with the present government of Israel, it is quite clear there is slightly more support on the Republican side among legislators than the Democratic side. I don't think it's extremely significant.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Ehud Barak: relations with the U.S. are strong

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The relationship with the Pentagon and the American intelligence community and the overall relationship with regard to the security of Israel is great – in a certain sense, deeper than ever. And I cannot deny that there is a commander-in-chief sitting in the White House, and he's part of it. It won't happen if he would not back it, support it and encourage it.

I was defence minister until about two years ago, and I remember under [U.S. President Barack] Obama several cases that he intervened personally to make sure Israel gets the support it needs for its missile defence system, like Iron Dome, or Arrow or David's Sling, and he backed an extremely unprecedented and deep co-operation between our intelligence communities.

That doesn't mean we don't have disputes with the American administration. We had them in the past, and we probably will in the future. I think that the less disputes we have, it's better for Israel and probably for America, too.

Former PM downplays disputes with U.S. President Barack Obama. PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

Do you expect the United States and the western powers to sign a nuclear deal with Iran that is dangerous for Israel?

We don't know yet whether there will be or there won't be an agreement. I'm not sure. If there is an agreement, according to the contours that are discussed right now, it might be far from being a good one.

There are many weaknesses, but I don't know what will be agreed. You have to read it once it's agreed.

It's not just about Israel. It's about the security of the world, because a military nuclear Iran is a major risk for the whole world. It means the end of any conceivable non-proliferation regime, because Saudi Arabia will turn very shortly afterward into a nuclear power. Turkey will immediately start to turn nuclear. And even Egypt.

It will open the door for a nightmarish kind of vision described years ago by Prof. Graham Ellison of Harvard, who said that once it's broken, it's only a matter of time, 10 or 15 years, until certain crude nuclear devices will find themselves in the hands of terrorist groups. So it's a real risk for the world. We see it from a closer distance, so we are warning the world not to reach there and we still believe that all options should remain on the table and sanctions should be held until it becomes clear what direction the whole thing is taking.

There's a lot of instability in the region all around Israel. How prepared is the IDF to deal with all these challenges?

The IDF is very strong. It depends how far you look. Israel is far from being in the situation of 1938 in Europe or 1947 in Palestine, just before the emergence of Israel. We're much stronger physically. Part of it is the result of American support, of some $3 billion per year, and weapons and platforms.

We are much stronger than we have ever been. But the reality is that the neighbours are also stronger. They accumulate a lot of weapons and machines that can create a lot of damage.

The nature of warfare is changing, dramatically. I don't think that a major kind of attack by a neighbouring air force or heavy armoured division is extremely relevant these days, but there are other threats, like missiles, rockets and terror.

And we have to adapt and we are doing it quite well. I'm comfortable with the position of the IDF. ■

Noam Zion: fun should be integral to the seder

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 76

And of course, if there are children, and it's so child-friendly as a holiday the way we've restructured it, it's very important for the kids to have that experience. At the very least, you'll have parents who are doing it for the children.

Have we made seders too much fun?

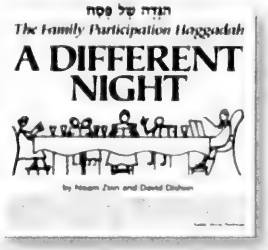
I think the rabbis clearly were interested in making it fun. You're supposed to play the game with the afikoman, which goes back to the Talmud. The songs… *Chad Gadya* and *Echad mi Yodea*, all of those are about fun, which serves a purpose.

The seder is extremely difficult to orchestrate precisely because it should be a three-ring circus. The three rings, however, are the rings of making it fun and using edible symbols, but from that fun, going back to what the things stand for, what their symbolic meanings are. Part of the ring is that you want to appeal to adults and older children having an intellectual discussion about freedom and slavery and part of it is you want to have a ritual order.

Doesn't the leader need a lot of Jewish education to lead a symposium?

The rabbis put very, very high expectations on the regular Jew. That's why I understand people retreating to the reading of the book, so at least they get it right, or they think it's right.

I don't think you need so much knowledge. You need a paradigm shift. You need somebody to say there's a do it yourself part of the seder where you're going to have to pick and choose what's most important. You need to delegate responsibility, not just who's going to read, but delegating three or four people who will prepare in advance and bring something to the seder, whether it's personal or it's traditional.



The larger purpose of the Haggadah is intergeneration storytelling.

You don't need lots of Jewish knowledge, because you're not giving a lecture and because the book is there. Delegate responsibilities not to the most knowledgeable person coming to the seder but to the most extroverted person going to the seder, the people who like to be showpeople.

You are giving a lecture on 101 ideas for a more participatory seder. Can you leave us with one?

The larger purpose of the Haggadah is intergenerational storytelling – the story of going out of Egypt – and telling it to our children. But it's also the principle of other forms of intergenerational storytelling, from what my grandfather and my grandmother did down to the grandchildren.

[One way] to achieve that personal storytelling between generations is to invite people to have a second seder plate made up of souvenirs from the people who are coming. It can be a passport, it can be a ladle from the chicken soup. Each souvenir represents an important stage in their Jewish journey.

Getting people to tell those personal stories is one way you get people to use the Haggadah as a springboard to go beyond the book into the conversation, the oral activities. ■

The last supper

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Deeply concerned about the fate of foreign Jews in detention camps in Turkey during World War II, the leaders of the Jewish community of Istanbul approached the governor of the city, Lutfi Kirdar, and sought his help in alleviating the difficult conditions of their co-religionists.

Kirdar explained that his hands were tied with those already in detention – the pressure and threats from Berlin were "relentless" according the governor. Nevertheless, he acceded to the request to grant Jewish refuges weekend passes on the community's cognizance. At the very least, these souls would celebrate Sabbath in Jewish households before facing a future fraught with uncertainties.

My polyglot maternal grandparents, Samuel and Lotte Gabay, who lived in Chaldean (Kadikoy) on a street called Uzun Hafiz were among the first to receive these refugees. They came from all over Europe and from all walks of life. They were destitute, broken and frightened: a violinist named Monsieur Marius from Hungary; Juran and Livrescu, brothers from Romania; the Starssbergs from Belgium; and an Italian chef who owned a restaurant in the Jewish Quarter of Rome.

The first order of the day would be burning their lice-infested clothing, followed by a visit to the Turkish bath located in the cellar of the large house. Next was a "fashion show" which generated a great deal of mirth as the visitors tried on brand new clothing donated by local manufacturers. Greek seamstress girls while adjusting sleeves and hems would sew into the clothing secret mini-pockets to conceal gold coins and scarce currencies.

Then it was time to welcome the Sabbath. A festive meal was followed by everyone congregating around the radio for the latest news. Later on, some would play chess and poker. Others would read in the library, or write letters. Many would talk till the early hours on the morning, baring their souls and sharing their grief over lives stolen and destroyed.

It would be more of the same on Saturday, culminating in the recitation of *Havdalah* at the synagogue of Hemdat Israel.

The next day, a leisurely walk by the sea to the port – *vaporettos* crisscrossing the Sea of Marmara between Asia and Europe – against the backdrop of a thousand minarets, would be the prelude to the main event of the day: the Sunday luncheon. The meal would be served, weather permitting, under the gigantic hazelnut tree in Lotte's enchanting floral garden. The last supper would be a mainly vegetarian Sephardi feast (meat and poultry were scarce). Eggplant au gratin (almodrote); fish in plum sauce; assorted vegetables cooked in olive oil and – for the finale – a rainbow compote. As ersatz Turkish coffee was served, Samuel would introduce his guests to the pleasures of the hookah. The cook Maneka would be invited to foretell the future by reading hidden omens in coffee cups always speaking words of joy and comfort. They would then gather in the library for a piano recital given by my aunt Sonia.

During the concert, the Kurdish girls who helped Lotte in household chores would prepare parcels of food containing dried fruits, Turkish delights and assorted pastries called *borecas*. Packs of cylindrical black cigarettes would be squeezed next to sardine cans for the long journey ahead.

The peaceful interlude in the midst of the incandescence of war would come to an end in the late afternoon on Sundays as the brass clock, mounted on the shoulders of a bronze Atlas, would strike the hour of return. Hugs, tears, prayers, blessings and promises to meet again after the war would mingle in an unforgettable tableau of valediction in the front yard of the house.

Muslim neighbours too would come out to say goodbye to complete strangers. Some would give them miniature Qur'ans, others would attach blue stones with safety pins, for good luck, on the reverse side of the lapels of the departing guest. As the horse-drawn phaeton would move on the cobblestones of Uzun Hafiz street, a friend would throw a bowl of water after the carriage: a Turkish custom for wishing voyagers Godspeed.

No one who passed through the house of Lotte and Samuel Gabay during the war returned or called afterwards. ■

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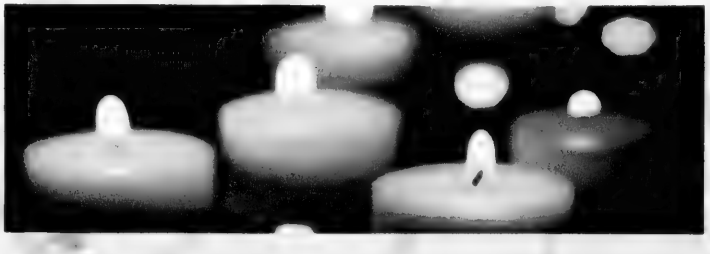

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LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

PASSOVER GREETINGS 2015

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Cover concept and illustration by veteran Israeli artist Avi Katz.
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A Passover Story

Avi Katz
Illustration - cover of CJN's Literary supplement 2008

RACHEL SHTIBEL

I was born in 1935 in Poland and lived in the village of Turka near the city Kolomyja. I lived with my parents, Sara Malka and Israel Dov Milbauer, my paternal grandparents, Frida and Eliyahu Milbauer, and my two uncles, Uncle Velvel and Uncle Yehoshua who were the younger brothers of my father. My Zaidie Eliyahu was a kohen and so were his three sons. My family was Orthodox and observed all the religious customs. It was a happy and loving home.

My heart is vividly engraved with wonderful Passover memories. My family prepared for the holiday by painting the house white, everything was cleaned, dishes were changed and the aroma of cooking and baking was pleasantly overwhelming.

I see in front of my eyes a beautiful table set with a white tablecloth, candles in the silver candelabra, the matzah covered with an embroidered special white cloth, all the beautiful dishes and silver cutlery. We prepared ourselves for the holiday by bathing and dressing in beautiful and new holiday clothes. I myself wore a white embroidered blouse with a navy blue pleated little skirt. My Zaidie Eliyahu, who led the seder, prepared and set aside the afikoman. I, being the youngest at the table, and the only child present, proudly asked the four questions, with help from my father and uncles.

My mind was only on the afikoman and I wanted to be the one to find it and hide it from everyone. I left the seder table and took the afikoman from its hiding place where my Zaidie Eliyahu hid it and placed it under the pillow in my own bed.

Little did I know that my Uncle Velvel had his eye on me and without my knowing took the afikoman from my bed and hid it in the third spot for that night. My Uncle Velvel was unaware that his own younger brother Yehoshua was following this afikoman and hid it for the last time from all of us. When the time came in the seder to reclaim the afikoman, I came up empty, Uncle Velvel came up empty, and Zaidie Eliyahu could not find it either. Finally Uncle Yehoshua produced the missing afikoman. What fun and excitement we all had that Passover seder.

May I say that the lost afikoman was given to me to claim. How excited I was to hear from my Zaidie that for the next eight days of Passover he would crack open the walnuts that were grown on our property, and I would help by scooping out the nuts with my little fingers, and putting them all in a silver bowl given to me by my Bubbie Frida. These walnuts were shared and enjoyed by my family after dinner. Uncle Velvel would play his violin and we would all sing Yiddish songs and songs from the Haggadah.

This was my happiest and most memorable Passover. I was four years old, the year was 1939, and none of us knew that it would be the last time that our whole family would be together to celebrate Passover. ■

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The Memory of Smell

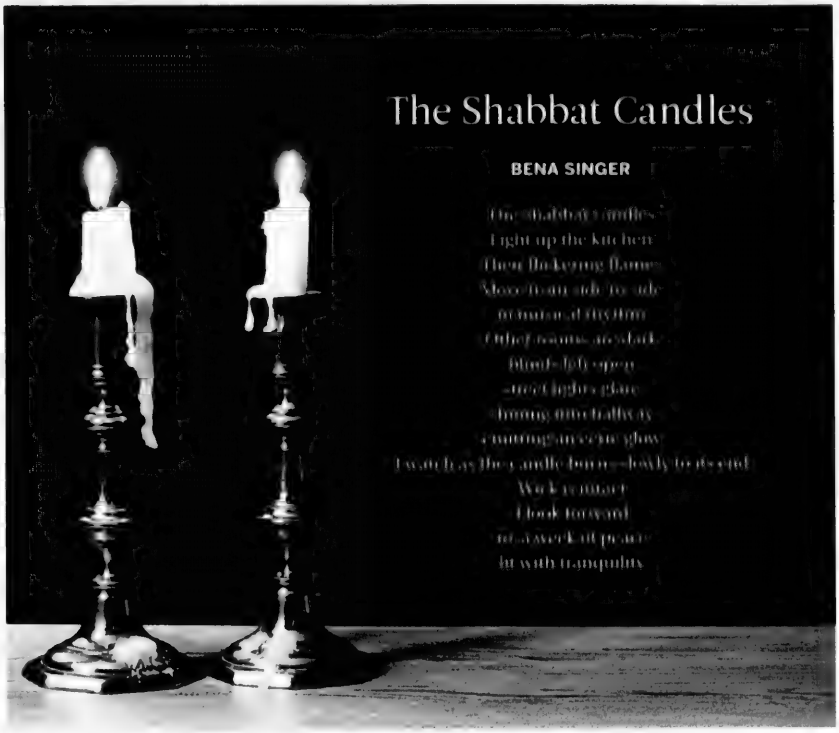
RITA WILDER CRAIG

My mother couldn't stand it
said she didn't know how
they could live there but
I loved that smell and
would wait for it to waft
across to my aunt and uncle's flat
a pleasure second only to
Perchik's where you could
scoop the real thing from a
barrel in the street

The attraction wasn't just the
smell – there were my two older
cousins Celia and Stella – women
really to my child – shy girls living
seemingly uneventful lives
until suddenly
they left for Israel
never to be seen again
at least by me

And who could blame them
you can't live all your life across
from a pickle factory

I suppose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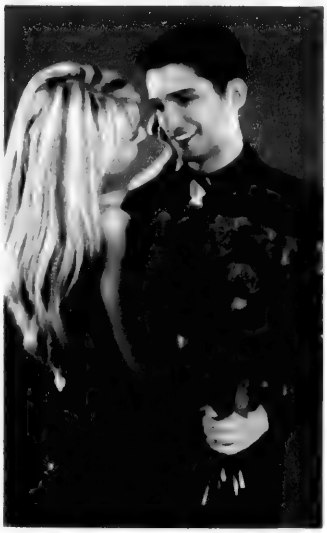
First Date Prep: Not Too Jewish



JULIE SCHWARTZ

It is 1970. I am 19 years old, and my mother and father are worried that I am spending time with the wrong people – long-haired, aimless hippie types, dedicated to turning on, tuning out and protesting everything. Boys, my father says, will be lucky to get jobs painting the yellow lines on highways. Boys, my mother says, are only interested in one thing.

"Norman, can't you arrange for one of your medical students to take her out for dinner?" my mother petitions.

My father eventually responds with a promising med student in the third year class he teaches. The victim's name is Toby Mandelman: a "wonderful Penn graduate" who grew up on Philadelphia's Main Line in a well-respected family of lawyers. Toby is Jewish, but not too Jewish. According to my mother's standards, this means that nothing about him suggests Judaism other than his last name. "He loves music, offers up my father – classical music.

"He has tickets to the Philadelphia Orchestra's all Chopin program, and wants to take you to dinner at Le Bec Fin."

Le Bec Fin is Philadelphia's finest French restaurant. I live for rock music and would prefer tickets to see the Doors at the Electric Factory, and then feed the munchies with piles of fries along with friends at South Street's Blue Dog Café.

I announce that I will only co-operate if I can wear jeans to the orchestra.

"We will get you something more appropriate," my mother insists.

"No way I wear a dress," I insist back.

A nice blouse and decent pants (defined as all one colour, worn at the waist and hemmed and unfrayed at the bottoms) evolve as the default outfit and the shopping safari for my date clothing is on. My mother drives us to Loehmann's, New York's mecca of low-priced high fashion that has finally opened in Philadelphia.

"Last Wednesday, I saw Rhoda Himowitz here with Becky and they found a stunning Cacheral skirt and an Oscar de la Renta blouse."

"Becky is a goody goody suck in Girls Service League. She has millions of skirt and sweater sets that she looks fat in, and who cares what she wears anyway?"

In the store with me in tow, my mother bypasses the main section and beelines for the Back Room – Loehmann's inner sanctum of designer duds reserved for the couture cognoscenti.

She scans the racks with a practiced eye, and in under five minutes, recruits three pairs of "exquisite pants and perfect blouses" that I am to try on.

This involves jostling our way into the communal dressing room where any notions of privacy are dashed in the light of the twinkling chandelier that illuminates excess pounds of flesh spilling out over bra cups and too-tight pantyhose waists.

Luckily, the third pair of pants I try on is the charm. Several flesh-spillers agree with my mother that these pants are truly stunning, and "will take me anywhere." As long as they take me out of Loehmann's, I will be happy. They do, along with a robin's egg blue Candice Bergen tailored button-down blouse.

When Toby came to pick me up for our date, he turned out to be smart, pleasant and clean-cut. He was polite and actually took me seriously. As the proverbial parental dream date he was, by definition, nowhere near right for 19-year-old, Jim Morrison-crazed me.

The Chopin concert was actually bearable, but dinner was way too fancy. The pommes frites were up to the standards of my impeccable outfit, but nowhere near as satisfying as Blue Dog fries with stoned friends.

Toby actually followed my father's footsteps into internal medicine at Temple University Hospital. Thankfully, I eventually met Larry Schwartz and followed him to Canada in 1977. ■

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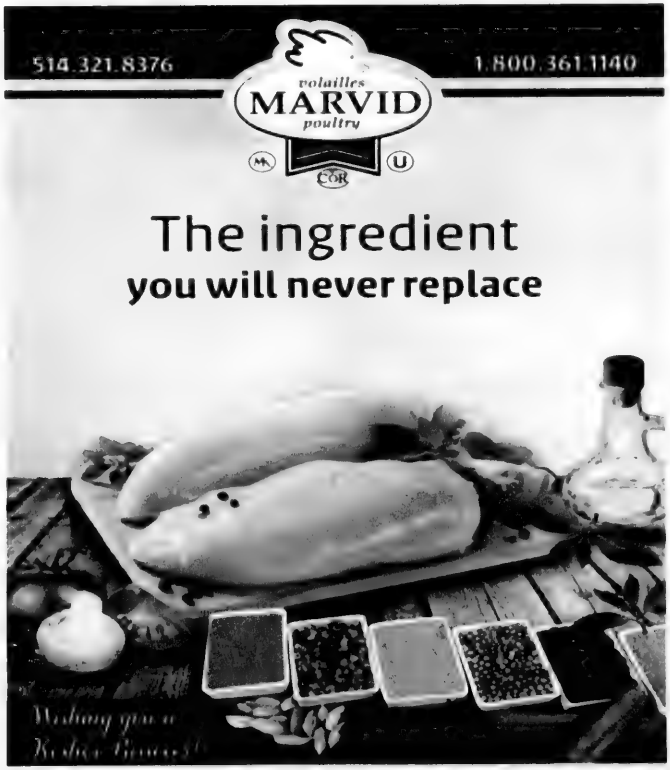


The Village and the Maggid

EKATERINA LIN / SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

BARRY ROSEN

Long ago, in another land, there was a Jewish village where hard times had found a good home. It became the type of place where, if they manufactured umbrellas it would never rain, and if they made coffins then nobody would ever die. In addition to their economic problems, the people in the village were very negative. If the sun shone, they would say "sure it may be sunny now but soon everything will dry up and we'll die of thirst!" If there was a gentle rain, they would say, "this will only get worse and we will all drown in a flood!" The few visitors that came to the village found their luck changed – from good to bad. Things became so miserable that the place became known as the Village of Sorrow. Needless to say, this name did not do anything to improve their situation.

In a distant village, there lived a maggid – a travelling Jewish storyteller. The maggid was known by a single name, Chazanov. Most people were surprised when they discovered that Chazanov was a woman named Chana. A female maggid was unheard of since the popular belief at the time was that a maggid could only be a man. But when Chana Chazanov began to speak, there was virtual silence – the adults would stop talking, the children would stop playing, the crows would stop crowing and the cows would stop mooing. Chana was known not only for her amazing storytelling skills, but also for her chicken soup, which was exquisitely delicious.

Chana's husband Nachum was her manager. He helped her make the arrangements for her various storytelling concerts throughout the land and he drove their wagon. They were a team, but in truth Chana did most of the work. She knew this, but she didn't mind as her love for Nachum was as deep as the ocean.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Since they were getting on in years, Chana and Nachum had become tired of travelling. They were on their way to do a final storytelling concert, travelling in their bright red wagon, pulled by their horse Ferdele. They had not yet reached their destination but the sun was about to set and they needed a place to stay. They realized that their options were either to spend the night under the stars and risk being attacked by robbers, or to travel to the closest village. Unfortunately, the closest village was the Village of Sorrow. They knew about its reputation, but it seemed a better idea than being attacked by robbers so they made their way there, with more than a little reluctance.

They found the local inn, and the innkeeper was ecstatic to discover that his overnight guest was none other than the famous Chazanov the Maggid. Chana and Nachum had little money so they offered to pay for their stay at the inn with what they had in abundance – stories and chicken soup. The innkeeper graciously accepted their offer.

The news spread throughout the village like wildfire. "Chazanov the Maggid has arrived in our village! Chazanov the Maggid has arrived in our village!" That evening, most of the villagers showed up at the inn. The place was jammed to the rafters. People were sitting on the porch and even on the street outside the inn. Long into the night, magical stories were told and Chana's delicious chicken soup was consumed. The inn hadn't been this busy for years.

The villagers were so enthralled with the stories, the soup, and the personalities of Chana and Nachum that they wanted them to reside permanently among them. The innkeeper proposed that they make the inn their home, with only a few conditions. He and his wife would continue to live at the inn, and Chana would continue to provide stories and soup. Chana and Nachum happily agreed with this plan.

It was a new beginning for the village. The economy improved and life started to blossom – all because of the stories and the soup. Before long, the Village of Sorrow became known as the Village of Joy.

Years later, Nachum died in his sleep. Chana was completely overcome with grief.

She blamed herself because the night before his death, Nachum had eaten a bowl of her chicken soup. She was sure that she had inadvertently killed him. The village elders told her that this was impossible, since everyone knew that her chicken soup had such healing properties and no one had ever died from consuming it. But her guilt was just too overwhelming. She could no longer bring herself to tell stories and cook soup, despite pleas from the villagers that she resume these highly valued activities.

Eventually, things in the village started to decline and the Village of Joy became known once again as the Village of Sorrow. Shortly afterwards, Chana died and all that remained of the village's better times were the memories.

Legend has it that if you visit the graves of Chana and Nachum late at night and pay close attention you will hear a wonderful story told by the wind and you will also experience the delicious aroma of Chana's chicken soup wafting through the air. And it is said that if you are feeling sad, are physically unwell, or have fallen on hard times, the story and the fragrance of the soup will instantly lift your spirits. ■

A Passover Wish

JUDY WEINRYB

On a snowy winter's morning, Sara Snyder stood in line at Starbucks, waiting patiently for her morning coffee. Her mind began to wander to a place far away from the chilly Toronto climate, as she imagined herself walking hand in hand on a tropical beach with her husband Steve.

She could hear the hypnotic sound of waves rolling in from the deep blue waters of the ocean and feel the texture of the soft, grainy sand under her feet. Sara was enjoying her fantasy when she was abruptly brought back to reality by a barista ready to take her order . Reflecting on her vision later in the day, she realized that it had actually been years since she and Steve had gone on a beach holiday, or any type of holiday in fact, without their children. At that moment, Sara decided that it was time they did

Unfortunately, it was Steve's busiest season at his law firm. "Maybe in the spring," he said, after she raised the idea, over dinner that evening. "Our annual conference is scheduled for mid-March. Sometime after that could definitely work." Sara began to count the days. She would try to be patient. What was another month or two, if she had waited this long?

Then something foreboding happened. The flyers for supermarket specials for Passover began to arrive in her mailbox. A case of concord grape juice for only $29.99, matzah at $12 for five boxes, and assorted brands of gefilte fish for only $4.99 a loaf. It was simply too much for her to bear, like a slap in the face, a dark reminder that it was time to start scrubbing and polishing. Sara would now have to be Wonder Woman - days in the office, afternoons driving car pools and shuffling the children to various activities, evenings in the kitchen and the supermarket. It was tiring just to think about it

"Steve", Sara declared emphatically after dinner a few days later, " We either make plans to get away for Passover or I'm going to have a complete meltdown." After mulling over her ultimatum, Steve agreed to take off the time. "I really do know how much this means to you, and I think it's a great idea" he told Sara.

"Our conference was a big success but I could use a break now too. Let's do it!" By the following week, arrangements had been made for an all-inclusive Kosher for Passover holiday for two at an upscale hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico Admiring the photographs of the pools, the nightclub and the smooth, sandy beach, Sara was elated. The menu looked particularly appealing, since she would be wined and dined in style, with someone else doing the cooking for a change.

Jonathan and Mindy, Sara and Steve's teenage children, did not make a fuss about being left behind. Rather, they were excited about the prospect of spending Passover with their aunt and uncle in Montreal, something they had never done before. After dropping them off at school a few days later, Sara decided to pop into Yorkdale for a little pre-vacation clothes shopping and strolled around the mall looking at beachwear and sun hats. She realized that she was not far from the assisted living building where her grandmother lived, and decided to pay her a visit. She found her door unlocked and walked into her suite.

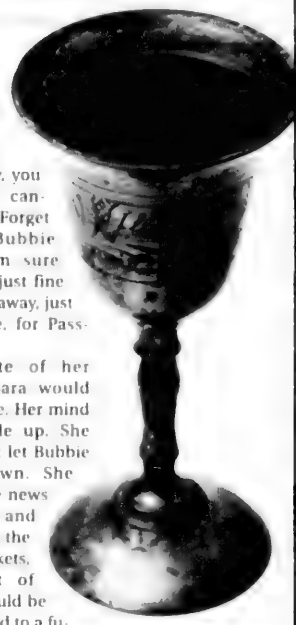
Fresh out of the bathtub, Bubbie Ruth was wearing her favourite flowered housecoat. She had kicked off her slippers and plunked her haggard feet onto an old brown ottoman. Her uncombed white hair fell loosely on her shoulders. "Sara honey, it's so nice of you to drop by," She looked lovingly at her only granddaughter, grateful for the unexpected visit.

"Sweetheart, you know how last year I was in the hospital and couldn't come to your seder? Well, this year not only will I be there but I'll make the best brisket you ever tasted." Her dark brown eyes, so sad since Zaidy Max passed away, seemed, if only for just one brief moment, to sparkle as she spoke

Sara sat back in stunned silence. She held back tears and tried to smile. "Sounds wonderful Bubbie. Steve and I will see you at Mom's for dinner on Friday. We can discuss the Passover menu after dessert."

The next morning, over breakfast in her kitchen, Sara poured out her heart to her best friend Karen. "You know, it wouldn't be so bad if my sister hadn't moved to L.A. I don't know how I could have been so selfish."

Karen had recently split up with her second husband, who had thrown himself entirely into his career, leaving their relationship on the back burner. She understood that a second honeymoon, or even a third or fourth could be very beneficial to a marriage.



"Honey, you just can't cancel now. Forget about Bubbie Ruth. I'm sure she'll be just fine if you go away, just this once, for Passover."

In spite of her words, Sara would not budge. Her mind was made up. She could not let Bubbie Ruth down. She broke the news to Steve and cancelled the airline tickets, the cost of which could be transferred to a future flight. Fortunately, it was not too late to cancel the hotel arrangements either.

On Friday night, Bubbie Ruth arrived at her daughter's home looking remarkably well. Coming directly from her weekly hair appointment, she was wearing her blue linen suit, which she usually saved for special occasions. Sara's mother, Fay, liked having the family around for Sabbath dinner. It made her feel less lonely since she and Sara's father had gotten a divorce, two years earlier.

Fred Ginsberg, a man Fay had met at an art class she was taking, was joining them tonight.

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They had been dating for a few months and Fay wanted him to meet her family. In addition, Carl, Sara's cousin who had recently returned from a year's sabbatical teaching philosophy at Berkeley, had dropped in. After the main course, the entire entourage, including Sara, Steve and the kids, retreated to the living room for dessert.

Bubbie Ruth was feeling nostalgic tonight. "Fred darling" she said to Fay's new boyfriend, "We used to live just around the block from here. Did you know that? Who would have thought that Brunswick Avenue would become so chic?" She laughed, as she picked up her coffee mug to wash down the rich chocolate mousse she'd just consumed with great gusto.

"When my Fay was growing up, we had a small cleaners on College Street." She continued, "It was a thriving business and gave us enough income to bring our baby up in the style to which she's become accustomed."

"Don't listen to her, Fred." Fay pleaded. "Mom, can we keep our opinions to ourselves tonight, please?" Maybe inviting him tonight had not been such a good idea.

"You know" Bubbie Ruth continued, "in those days we made everything from scratch – soup, fish, cakes, everything! My mother, may she rest in peace, brought recipes from Poland that were handed down over many generations. By the way, Carl," she added, directing her words towards her grandnephew, "did you know that she left her family home in Krakow all by herself to marry my father, who was waiting for her in Montreal? The first time she ever laid eyes on him was when she got off the train from Halifax. Boy, did people ever take chances in those days, eh?"

Carl, who was fascinated by this generous outpouring of family history, nodded his head enthusiastically.

Sara had heard Bubbie's stories time and time again. She loved to recount how she met Zaidy Max at Wallerstein's Ice Cream Parlour on Spadina Avenue, and how he saved every penny until he was able to bring over his brothers from Poland just in time to rescue them from certain death. Those ungrateful bastards, they didn't even count him in when they opened a clothing store that made them a fortune.

"You can never tell about people," Zaidy used to say. "My own family. Who would have thought?" It was one of Bubbie Ruth's favourite stories, Sara recalled, waiting for her to get to it.

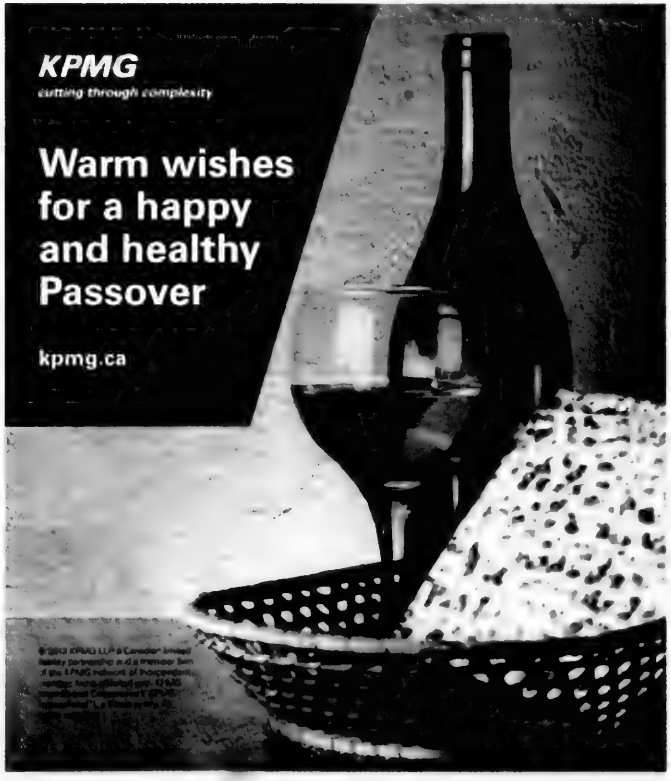
What was Bubbie Ruth looking for, Sara wondered? Did she feel that by constantly talking about the past, she could go back and relive it? Was the upcoming seder even going to be real for her, or would she just imagine that she was back on Brunswick Avenue in the 1950s, sitting at the seder table with Zaidy Max, and her children?

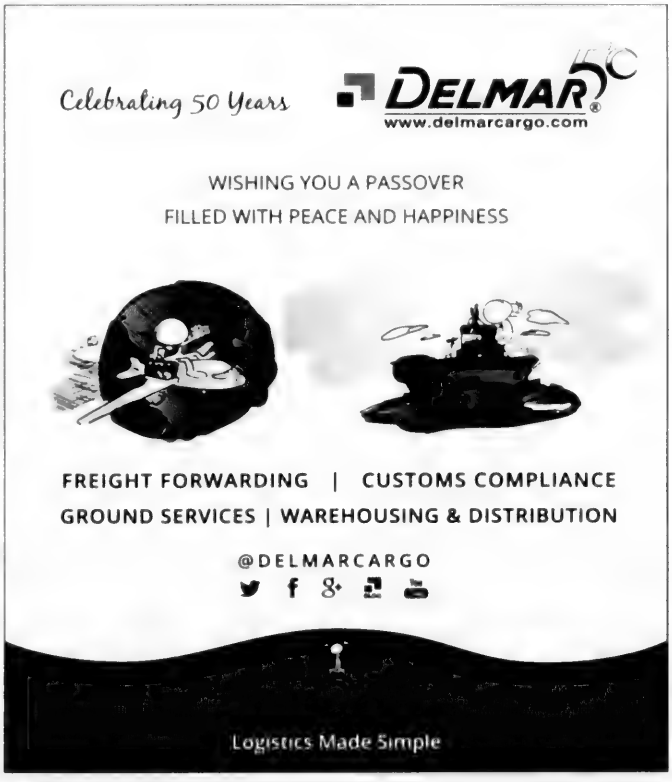
Sara realized that her grandmother would not feel lonely if she and Steve were in Puerto Rico during the upcoming family seder. Her memories would be more than enough to keep her company. At that moment, Steve, who was sitting next to her on the sofa, squeezed her hand. She turned her head to catch him looking at her as though he could read her thoughts

"You know," he said quietly so as not to disrupt Bubbie Ruth's continuing monologue. "I got a call today from the travel agent that our airline tickets cannot be exchanged or refunded after all, so I think we're going to have to go on the holiday we planned. I checked with the hotel and they can still have us for Passover. Do you mind?"

Did she mind? She could hardly believe his words. She most certainly did not. Without the slightest hesitation, she jumped out of her seat to announce their plans to everyone in the room.

Before she could utter a word, Bubbie Ruth turned to her and said "Honey, those days were great but they're just memories now. I hope you don't mind, but I just got this terrific offer from Saul Weinstein, my next door neighbour in the building, to join him and his kids on a luxury cruise from Miami to Curacao for Passover. I'm sure Zaidy Max would understand. Even an old lady like me gets a little lonely sometimes. What do you think darling, should I take the package with the drinks included?" ■





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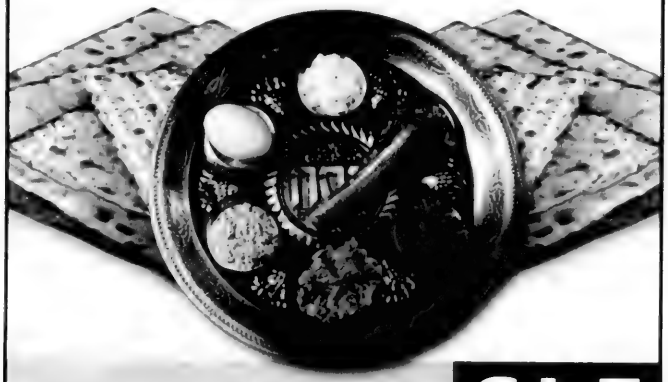
חג פסח שמח Happy Passover!



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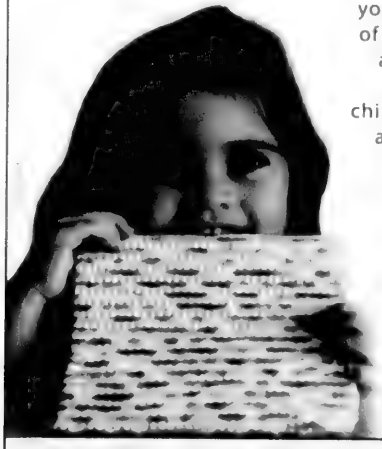

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Web: www.chw.ca/toronto Email: info@toronto.chw.ca Tel: 416.630.8373

Signs

DOROTHY GLICK

Erase if you can
the black letters scrawled, dripping
on the walls – levied at you (screaming at you);
etched into the orbs of your eyes, and memory
(Jews out! Death to Jews!)

Erase if you can
those photos, the amorphous apparitions
oozing from the movie screen
chasing you home – crawling into bed with you
to hound you for hours and then days,
and still more – years!

Erase if you can
the cataloguing,
the notating, the filing…
the numbers; those millions
engraved into nonentities
that hold our consciences
in terror and ignominy

Consider if you can
that night…(Were there stars? I will ask)
they came out of the shadows of trenches,
though they were frightened
they lifted themselves into the light
hands held out across the night…
they came across the lines
towards each other singing
their voices stronger
than those voices
that commandeered them
the next day
to murder

If – then and now

HOWARD KURLANDSKI

(with apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

If you can go to shul when all about you
Fill the air with talk, but have nothing substantive to say.
If you can trust in God, when all men doubt you
And still have enough inner sense to pray.
If you can keep your mind on heaven
While still managing to keep your feet on the ground
And tell the difference between matzah and leaven
By learning enough to keep your reasoning sound.
If you can engage yourself by learning Torah.
Yet not disengage yourself from your fellow man.
If you can separate yourself from lashon hara
And stop running to be an also-ran.
If you can begin, and not be afraid by starting
Or lose your way, and not be hampered by loss
If you can stand up straight at a tearful parting
And smile either way at a fateful toss.
If you can assist, when assistance is needed
And not mention a word of what you did.
If you can speak, and know that you'll be heeded
Not revealing hurts that should remain forever hid.
If you can motivate those around you
And know that when all is done
That doing right will remain a virtue,
And – what is more – you'll be a mensch, my son.

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My Pet Goosey

LYNN SAND

It was going to be our first Passover in America in April 1925. Spring was unusually warm that year. The towering chestnut trees on McCaul Street were in full bloom. The squirrels and robins played hide-and-seek around the huge cone-shaped blossoms. I can almost smell the pungent aroma that filled the air and wafted skyward.

We had been separated from Papa for three l-o-n-g years and now he was going to conduct our first seder in our own rented house. I was jubilant. I was seven years old.

Papa, a pious soft-spoken man became a peddler because he would not desecrate the Sabbath. Papa's love of God and Torah made him oblivious to the materialistic world around him.

Mama, on the other hand, was very much aware of our poverty. But she never complained. She accepted her lot with grace and dignity. She was also able with unmatched skill to stretch 10 cents into a dollar. She could create and serve a Sabbath meal for the seven of us from one large capon. She would make fricassee, chopped liver and soup, and then bake the boiled chicken from the soup to whet the appetite of the most discriminating palate. Maybe it was because she was raised by a stepmother who was a rival to Cinderella.

For this, our first Passover together, Mama asked Papa for a goose. She wanted it at least two months before the holiday so that she could fatten him up. She claimed that goose fat when rendered down was far tastier than chicken schmaltz. It would also produce enough jars of fat to last her for months – possibly to the High Holy Days. The crisp *greeven* ground into the chopped liver would enhance the flavour beyond imagining. Then there were the goose feathers and down that would make an extra cushion or a small comforter for the expected baby. Another mouth to feed.

What surprised my innocence was how a petite woman like Mama could produce such large healthy beautiful babies and be able to nurse them for nine months or more.

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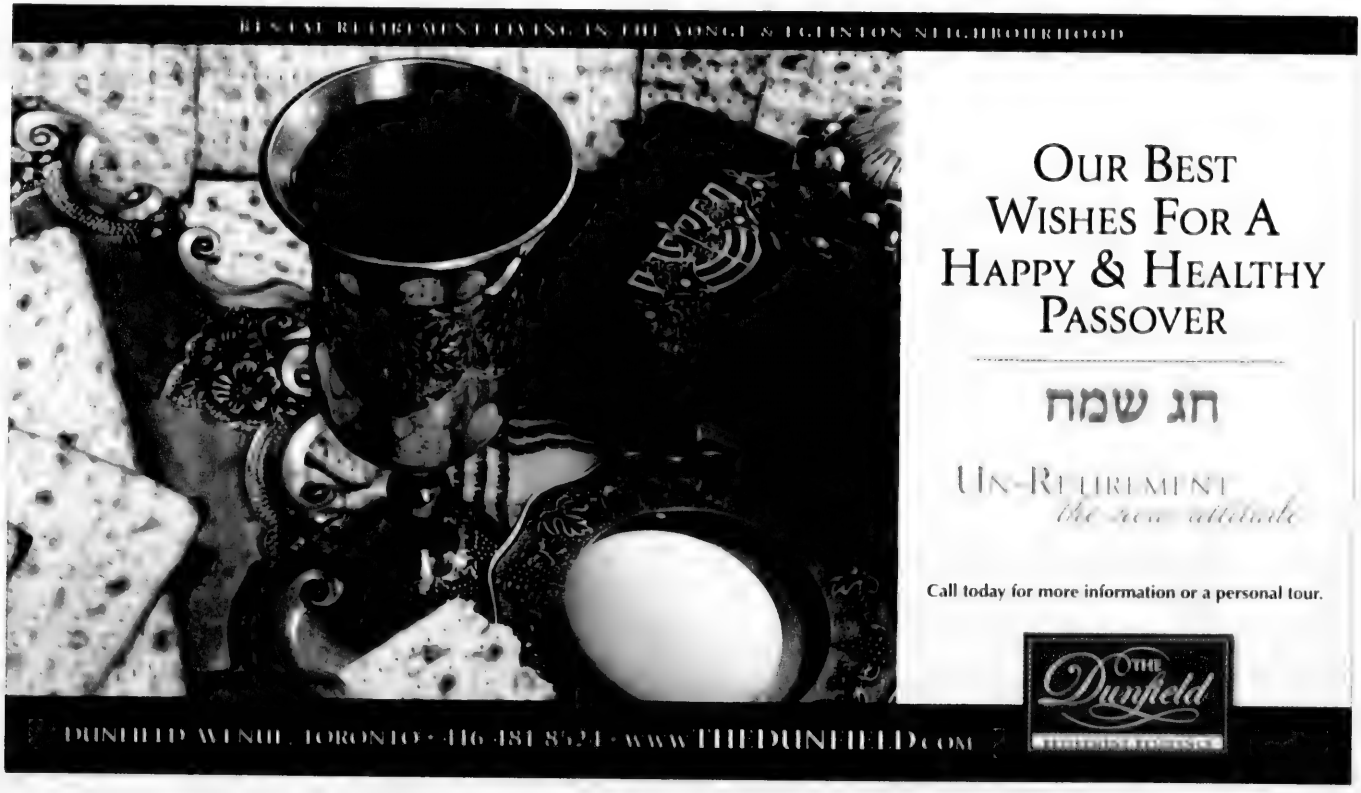
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I remember with her seventh and last baby, she had so much milk that when she had to wean her, she was able to nurse a stranger's infant because the mother was too ill.

Papa would give Mama the sun and the moon if he could. I'll never forget the day he brought her the goose. Mama's face lit up with pleasure. Papa's violet eyes sparkled like stars when Mama smiled.

The Goose that Laid the Magic Egg.

The goose was huge. I thought he was beautiful. Soft snow-white feathers, a long neck with an orange beak – even his feet were orange. I wanted to hold and caress him, but he made such a loud honking noise that it frightened me. He was too big for me to hold him anyway.

The next morning before I left for school, I went out to the back yard with a bowl of water for the goose. As soon as he saw me coming toward him he spread his great wings and began to flap them furiously as if he was about to take flight. He rushed around the yard. His loud strained honking sounded as if he was very frightened.

"Come on Goosey, don't be afraid of me" I spoke softly. "See I brought you some water. I'll just leave it here and you can drink it when you get thirsty." Poor Goosey, I thought, he must be very lonely, taken away from the farm and all his feathered friends.

I rushed home from school at lunchtime straight to the yard to see if Goosey drank his water. That's when I saw Mama stuffing grain down his wide open beak. He was twisting, squirming and honking trying to break away from her clutches.

"Mama! Mama, you're choking him Why are you forcing him to eat?" I cried, before I realized I was questioning her authority. "Papa never does that to Jake. He just puts down a pail with some grain and a bunch of hay in his stall and leaves him alone."

"Go inside and eat your lunch," she commanded, "And see that your sisters eat theirs. I made scrambled eggs you can all have with bread and butter, and there's bananas and milk."

I couldn't eat a thing. When Mama came in she looked flushed. I rushed out to see Goosey. I had to chase after him. He put up a terrible fight when I caught him. His strong wings scratched my face trying to get away from me. "Poor, poor Goosey, don't be afraid," I whispered in his ear. "I'll take care of you." I stroked his soft feathers and kissed him on the head. "We're gonna be friends. I'll bring you water every day and we'll walk around the yard."

I didn't watch Mama feed him after that But I would rush out after she fed him and tried to calm him down and place a fresh bowl of water for him

Soon he grew to trust me. It was wonderful to see him rush toward me – his outstretched wings flapping and honking just two times. Now he didn't sound angry. We became friends. He was my pet, my beautiful swan

After school I had more time to walk around the yard and talk to him. Once in a while he would stretch his long neck and honk, as if he understood what I said

All the time I was plagued with the knowledge that Mama was trying to fatten him up for the Passover meals. This gave me many nightmares. One night I woke the whole household with my cries

In my nightmare I saw the shoichet's sharp knife... "No, no!" I screamed... Papa and Mama came running in from their bedroom. Papa held me. I was in a cold sweat and trembling.

"Sha-sha *mine kint*," he whispered trying to calm me. Since we slept four in a bed, Mama thought maybe I got kicked and hurt. But I couldn't tell them about my dream.

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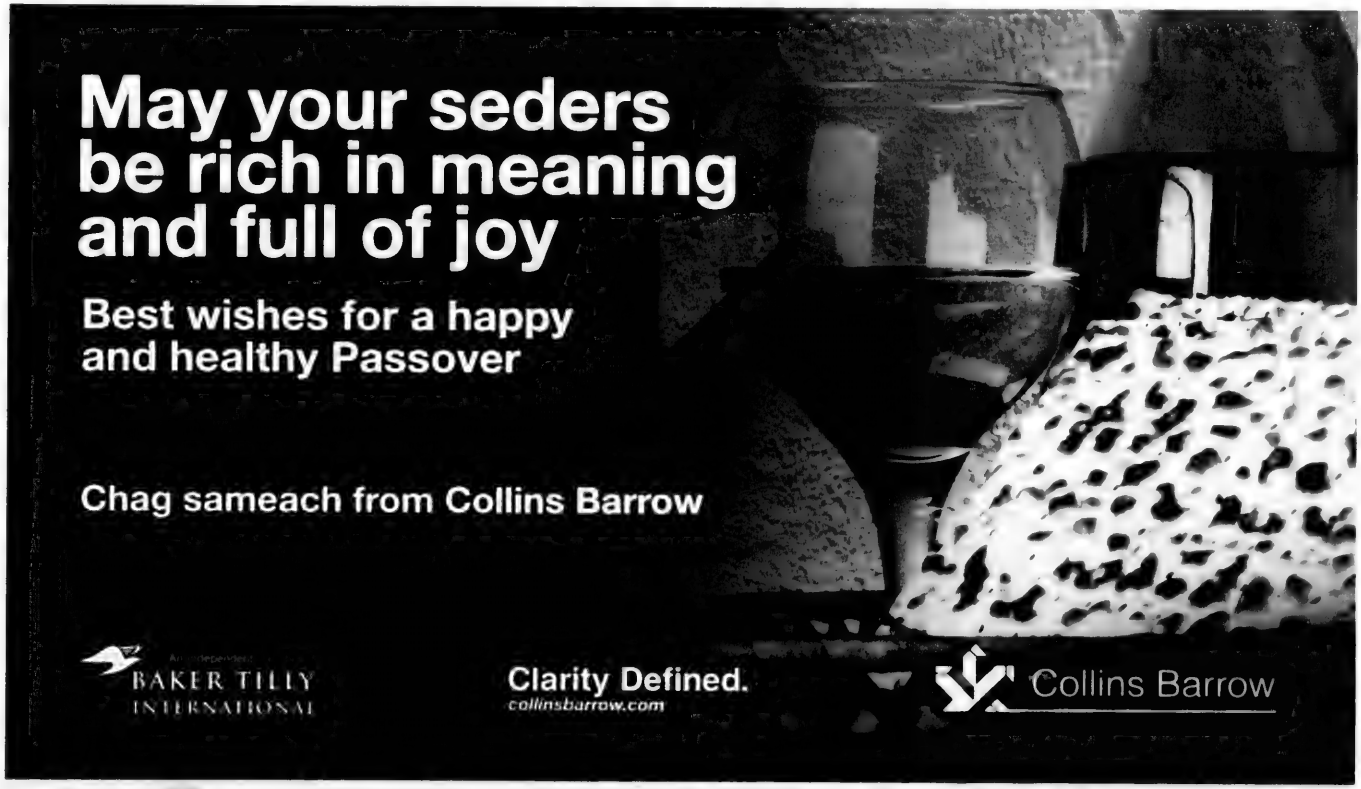
May your seders be rich in meaning and full of joy
Best wishes for a happy and healthy Passover
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Friday

LILY KOVAN

I was still in bed, half sleeping. The familiar noises from the kitchen woke me up. As always, my mother had an early start on Friday, so she could finish all the chores before Shabbat. I woke up feeling good. I loved the anticipation of having my whole family together around the table, having interesting discussions, maybe some jokes, and of course, a good meal, maybe even chicken.

I don't know how my mother managed to cook all the various dishes for Shabbat on kerosene. The cooking process on kerosene was very slow and she only had one burner. Well, somehow, we always had soup, a meat or chicken dish, rice or fried potatoes and cake. She always did it but she did have to have an early start.

I moved slowly and sat on the bed when I heard my mom say, "Are you up Lily, get up already. I need some help."

"I am up mom," I said.

I stood up and looked out the window. It was a typical March day, snow, drizzle and wind. The naked tree branches were shaking as if they were shivering from the cold wind.

"Are you ready Lily," yelled my mom again. "Get up already! What would the neighbours say if they walked in? Still in bed at this late hour!"

"Yes mom, I just have to brush my teeth and get dressed."

"I washed your dress last night. Check the hanger, it must be dry now."

The apartment where we lived had one large room, one smaller room and a kitchen. In one corner of the larger room were two single beds with a night table in between, where my brother Tamazi and I slept. The other end of the room had a desk which was shared by the two of us. Tamazi hardly did his homework. I could say that the desk was mine.

If the desk was occupied, one of us would use the round dining table, standing in the middle of the room with four chairs around it. Against the wall, there was a sofa, occasionally used for overnight visitors and the other side of the wall had a small closet that was shared by all of our family. We didn't have many clothes. We each had a few outfits for every day and one set of dressy clothing for going out to special occasions. So, it was common that we had to wash a set of clothes the night before to wear the next day. We frequently, dried the clothes by ironing them.

Throughout the winter, we hung the clothes on a rope that was going from one end of the room to the other. During the summer it was easier (except, when it rained.) We could hang things outside in the yard. I hated when the room was full of clothes hanging. It looked really ugly.

I reached out for my dress to see if it was dry. The dress was still slightly wet. I plugged in the iron to finish up drying my dress so that I could get ready and help my mom with the chores. I was lucky. I had time off from school due to spring break.

"Are you ready, Lily?" called my mom from the kitchen again. "I want you to buy three loaves of bread and some cheese, perhaps a few bottles of Borjomi (natural mineral water from the town of Borjomi in Georgia).

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Luckily, your dad had a pay day two days ago. I had enough money to buy chicken for Shabbat yesterday," said my mom joyfully.

I finished ironing, got dressed and walked into the kitchen to see what my mom was up to. You could not have been too quiet, walking on our floor. Every step taken made the floor sound as if it was squirting from some horrible pain.

"Hi mom," I said and looked around the kitchen. It was a tiny little space, just enough to have a kerosene and one small cabinet, but the smell of the cooking filled the whole apartment with an enticing aroma.

"Hurry up," mom said. "We still have to clean the apartment, finish shopping and set up the table. I invited the professor from across the street tonight. Poor man, he is so lonely, no wife, no children..."

I took some money to go shopping and walked out of the door, when I saw our regular Friday visitor standing in front of the door to receive his weekly Friday charity. I grabbed the loose change that mom always had on the table for the poor.

My mother never felt poor. She was always taking joy from having a loving husband, friends and family and of course me and my brother.

She knew there was someone else poorer than her. ■

Chag Sameach!

From our family to yours, we wish you joy and many blessings at Passover and all throughout the year.

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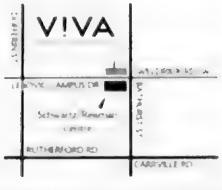

Chag Sameach

Monty and Blema Mazin celebrating Passover at the Apotex Centre, Jewish Home for the Aged

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Waiting for the Minyan

LARRY FINKELMAN

The faithful gather on the Sabbath day,
some to gossip some to pray.
Old men stand and mill around,
waiting for the minyan.

There is nothing heard in the quiet air,
congregants pause, some to stare
as the rabbi begins to chant,
waiting for the minyan.

He takes a moment to put down the book.
Around the shul he casts a look.
Mostly ghosts now sit on benches,
waiting for the minyan.

Past the memorial lights and into the pall,
the closing door echoes in the hall:
one more arrives and that makes six,
waiting for the minyan.

They're out playing golf on this sunny day,
gone to market or making hay.
I don't begrudge them that, but still, we are
waiting for the minyan.

A few nod off then come awake.
The sound of feet begin to snake
up the stairs; that makes eight,
waiting for the minyan.

So what's for kiddush? Did someone say?
Lox and bagels to make the day?
And cheesecake too? Ever hopeful,
waiting for the minyan.

The rabbi's service draws to an end.
Didn't make it once again.
It's been five weeks and still we are,
waiting for the minyan.

The Chanukah Flame

ANNE DUCHOWNY

The dancing flames of the Chanukah
candles flickering bright
Their reflection in the window illuminating the night
I sit and ponder as I watch each candle glow
About the miracle wrought a millennium ago
Oh Chanukah, Oh Chanukah, what a delight
To watch your candles brighten up the night

Spirituality Everywhere

BENA SINGER

It was on a Friday afternoon two hours before Shabbat. The weather mild for this time in January. I got off the bus. The sidewalks were extremely icy. I slowly shuffled along, my boots scraping the pavement to prevent me from falling. A well-built woman was walking beside me.

"It's very slippery," I said. She nodded and asked me where I was going. "Come" she said, "take my arm and we will cross together." "Do you have to go in that direction?" I inquired. "No", she replied. "But that's all right."

I took her arm and with an air of confidence, I walked briskly alongside her. When we reached the other side I said, "I am sure you have earned more than one mitzvah today."

She smiled and commented, "Hashem has been very good to me and I want to honour His commandments." I let go of her arm, looked into her eyes and said, "how fortunate you are to have this understanding."

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iPray

SUZANNE REISLER LITWIN

Everyday
For something, everything
One thing.

Peace, solitude, happiness, health
Not for me
But for you, and you, and you

I do, iPray

Success, a point, a goal achieved
A dream, a miracle
For her and him and them

iPray for the world

At night when I'm alone
I hear my inside voice
Quietly I summon our God

iPray for mankind

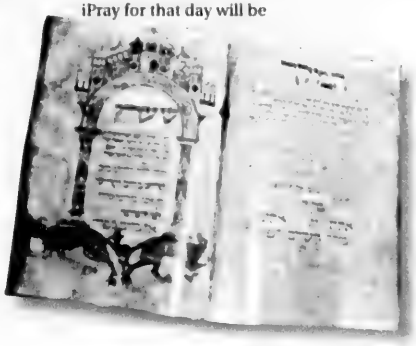
This is my effort
To find the cure
In this time

To solve the crimes
Spread the joy
Be our best

Follow the ancient words
Make a difference
Love all those who need love

iPray for all and everything
and everyone, everywhere

iPray for that day will be



Jerusalem Snow

PEARL ADLER SABAN

I think I like that name for a book.
Or a song. Or a poem.
Or a clothing label –
"What are you wearing?"
"Oh, I'm wearing Jerusalem snow."
Those fluffy flakes that fall and cover the city and surrounding landscape,
patched together like a white, pristine down comforter
filled with goose feathers
that God has shaken and spread out
across his Jerusalem bed

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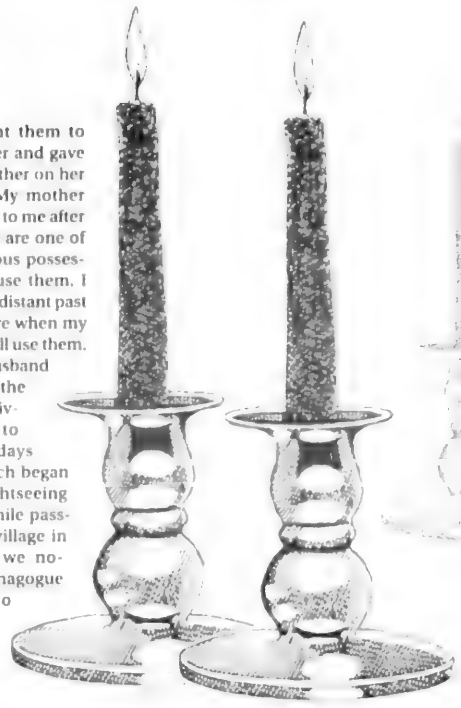
Candlesticks

RHODA WISE

One of my earliest memories was watching my mother light candles on Shabbat. I remember the Sabbath table set with a snow-white tablecloth, the good china and gleaming silverware. I especially loved the silver candlesticks with the candles glowing in them. I knew they were very special because my mother polished them every week and used them on Friday nights and Jewish holidays.

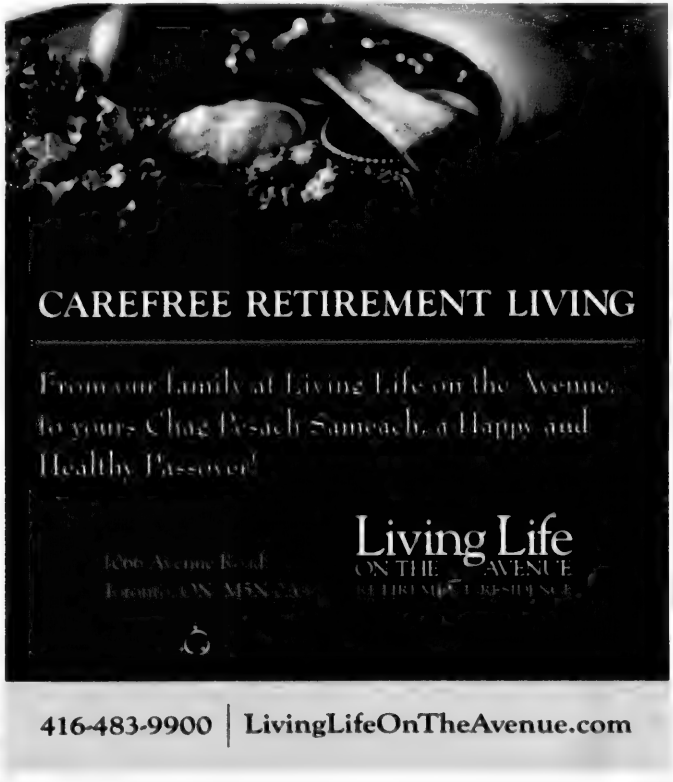
They were about 12 inches high and covered with worn down engraved flowers. There was a sort of umbrella shaped structure over the base and just under the tulip-shaped top. The stem between the two umbrella shapes ballooned out into one large and one small shaped urn. The design was unusual. I had never seen it anywhere else.

When I was older, my mother explained to me that they had originally belonged to my grandmother's mother, my great-grandmother, who had lived in Lithuania. She gave them to my grandmother when she married. My grandmother brought them to Canada with her and gave them to my mother on her wedding day. My mother passed them on to me after I married. They are one of my most precious possessions. When I use them, I feel a link to my distant past and to the future when my own children will use them.



In 2001, my husband and I went on the March of the Living. We went to Poland a few days before the march began to do some sightseeing on our own. While passing through a village in the northeast we noticed an old synagogue and stopped to look at it. Inside was a small museum. On display were various artifacts showing what Jewish life had been like in this area before the Nazis had destroyed it. We entered and I immediately spotted the candlesticks. They were identical to the ones in my home. I realized we were near the Lithuanian border and probably near the village where my grandmother had grown up. The unique design of the candlesticks must have been indigenous to this area

I started to cry and could not stop. I felt an incredibly strong connection to my family who had lived there and could actually feel their presence. I thought about how far our candlesticks had travelled, how often they had been used, and how they had survived time and space. I felt privileged to have somehow arrived here to be able to experience my roots. It was as if I had been destined to come. ■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Rosh Hashanah

ROSALIE CHAD

Bessie lay in bed watching the new day erase the shadows. She glanced over to Abraham's bed on the other side of the night table. He was snoring still. His mouth was open, his cheeks were sunken. Perhaps if she were lucky she would manage to wash and dress before he opened his eyes.

Gingerly she manoeuvred herself into a sitting position wincing as she stretched her legs. Her feet found their soft slippers in a mixture of pain and relief as she triumphantly reached the floor. She realized she didn't have much time to arrange her dinner for the family.

Above the morning news she heard Abraham walking. Thud, shuffle, thud, shuffle. She heard the bathroom door close. Her potato kugel, carrot tsimmis and chicken soup filled the room with the fragrance of parsley and dill. The escaping steam frosted the windows.

She set the table for breakfast. Glancing at the clutter she was overcome by fatigue. Abraham would complain. He liked a neat kitchen. He liked to have his orange juice, his three minute egg, his hot half milk, half coffee ready when he reached the table. "Fifty years this May," she thought. As she poured the orange juice his voice jarred her, "Good morning, dear."

He was cheerful. "I see you were busy."

"Just my Rosh Hashanah preparations." She put the egg in the boiling water and checked the time.

"A good Yom Tov," he said. He kissed her on the forehead.

"The same to you."

"After you clean the kitchen, I'll help you set the table," he said. "Josh and Debbie coming?"

She nodded. She loved it when her son and daughter-in-law came to dinner. Everything became so festive. And this year their granddaughter, Barbie and her family were coming as well. She could hardly wait. She found it amazing that Barbie, beautiful Barbie, was a mother. Bessie sighed.

Abraham picked up his paper. No more conversation. They sat down for breakfast. She watched him drink his orange juice. She wished he could wipe his mouth. Couldn't he feel that yellow foam hovering over his lip? She suddenly hurried from the table to put Abraham's egg on to boil. To her amazement there it was bubbling gently. She removed it from the water hoping it was soft. She watched him tap the shell lightly. She glanced with satisfaction at the round shiny challah and the honey cake she had baked last night. She used the same recipes from her Hadassah cookbook each year.

"Bessie, aren't you listening?" Abraham was pointing to the radio. "He's talking about the weather."

"...As usual the Jewish New Year will be celebrated with unseasonable temperatures, sunny with a high in the low 80s."

Abraham smiled complacently.

"Would you like more toast Abraham?"

"I've had it," he said. "I'll go downstairs for the mail."

"Good, we should have lots of cards," Bessie smiled. She watched Abraham limp toward the front door. Years before his accident he might have sprinted out the door. They used to win dance contests when they were young. She was ashamed of her impatience toward him this morning. "Good Yom Tov" she called as he left the apartment.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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He waved.

At 6 p.m. the table looked perfect. "A picture," said Abraham. The silver candlesticks and the delicate wine glasses gleamed under the crystal chandelier. The round twisted challah rested on a silver tray covered with a doily. The burgundy Manishewitz wine in its cut glass decanter cast a rosy haze on the table.

Abraham had put on his best suit. He no longer went to the synagogue. He davened at home. It was too far away to walk so many blocks. He was hungry. The cooking smells had tempted him all day. "Shouldn't they be here by now?" asked Abraham.

"They'll be here soon," said Bessie. "Maybe they had to wait for Barbie."

"Barbie?"

"She's visiting Josh and Debbie for the week with Bill and the baby. We wanted to surprise you." She lowered her voice, giggling, "we'll see our great-grandson."

Abraham flushed, "Oh, boy! So that's why all the fuss!"

"No more than any other year," said Bessie, huffily.

"So now I'll put on two more place settings."

Abraham started to sing softly, *My Yiddishe Mamma*.

Bessie started rearranging the table. Abraham continued, "How I long to see her now."

"My gefilte fish came out especially tasty this year," said Bessie.

"Her jewels were in her baby's smile," sang Abraham.

Bessie felt light-headed with anticipation. "My dessert! Wait 'til they taste my torte. I really outdid myself."

The phone rang. "Answer it Abraham. I'll change my dress." Bessie hurried into the bedroom. She wished she could lie down for a few minutes. No time.

Abraham's voice was hoarse and loud. "What do you mean you aren't coming?"

Bessie caught her breath. She must have heard wrong. She picked up the extension.

"The baby is sick. The doctor says he has swollen glands and an earache." The voice was Joshua's.

"Oh," Bessie gasped.

"Hi, mom."

"You can't bundle him up and bring him?"

"It's warm out. You're driving in the car."

"Barbie is afraid."

"So you and Debbie can come?"

"How can we?" Joshua asked. "Barbie and Bill are visiting with us."

"So how will you celebrate Rosh Hashanah?" Bessie tried to keep the plaintive tone out of her voice.

"Debbie said we can order dinner from a caterer."

"Isn't too late?" Rosh Hashanah is tonight."

"No, Debbie said she knows who to call," Joshua's voice had an edge to it.

It was almost as if she were disappointing him. She tried to sound casual, "I made dinner for you." Then adamantly, "Barbie and Bill should understand!"

"They do. But how can we leave them after they've travelled all day yesterday to get here?" Joshua asked.

"Oh," Bessie could barely hear her own voice.

Joshua continued, "Barbie will call you later, mom. She sends her love to you both. We'll all try to visit before they leave for home."

"Maybe we should go there?" Abraham broke in.

"No, no, we'll wait for the visit," Bessie said.

"If we can…"

"OK," Bessie interrupted Joshua.

"Look mom, dad…I have to go." There was a brief silence. We'll call you tonight," he added.

"Yes," said Bessie lamely. "At least let us know how the baby is." But Joshua had hung up.

Abraham and Bessie stood looking at the table. The resonance of the liturgical music filled the room.

"Tonight is Rosh Hashanah, Bessie" Abraham said. He leaned over and whispered, "Happy New Year, dear." He kissed her warmly and hugged her holding her close.

"Happy New Year, dearest," said Bessie in a surge of feeling.

"Let's have a little toast," said Abraham lifting the wine decanter. His hand shook slightly as he poured the wine. Bessie held her breath. The decanter fell from Abraham's hand. It shattered the wine glass. The wine spread over the white damask cloth. The broken decanter rolled onto the floor. The wine formed a crimson pattern on the soft beige carpet. Bessie and Abraham clung together silent and motionless. ■

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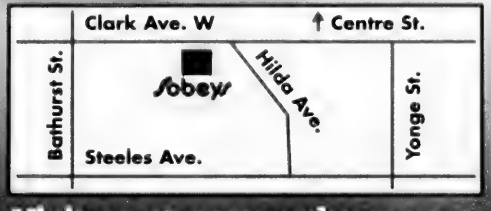

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All Alone for Passover

MARVIN ZYLBER

Is this what my Passover seders have become?
I sit alone at my seder table,
My place setting is only for one.

My family and friends are long gone
Or moved on,
Or far too busy,
Or think the seders are just a drag on

The Jewish community is small and Passover is upheld by a few,
Many said this day would come and others said it was nothing new

Still I called out to my neighbours,
My colleagues,
Even to strangers that were Jews,
"Come" I said "to my seders" but nobody came, not even to schmooze.

When I think back to my youth
When seders were not uncouth,
My family came from far and wide and fed their sweet tooth.

Times have changed and some still complain,
That Passover food is very costly, far too out of their range,
But I said my seder meals are absolutely free,
Just enjoy it, nothing to do, nor arrange

Still I am all alone again for the Passover seders
It is lonely, sad and hard
The only ones now at my seder tables
Are just Eliyahu, me and God.

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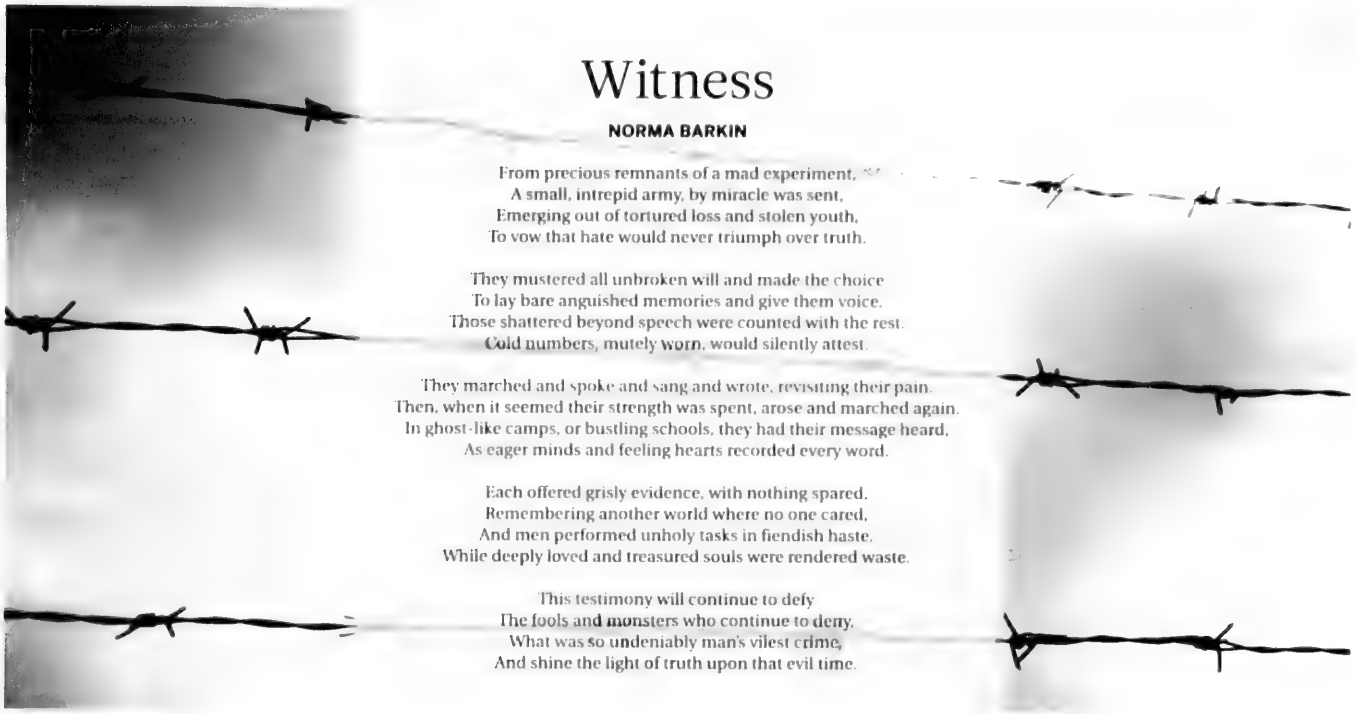

Witness

NORMA BARKIN

From precious remnants of a mad experiment,
A small, intrepid army, by miracle was sent,
Emerging out of tortured loss and stolen youth,
To vow that hate would never triumph over truth.

They mustered all unbroken will and made the choice
To lay bare anguished memories and give them voice.
Those shattered beyond speech were counted with the rest.
Cold numbers, mutely worn, would silently attest.

They marched and spoke and sang and wrote, revisiting their pain.
Then, when it seemed their strength was spent, arose and marched again.
In ghost-like camps, or bustling schools, they had their message heard,
As eager minds and feeling hearts recorded every word.

Each offered grisly evidence, with nothing spared,
Remembering another world where no one cared,
And men performed unholy tasks in fiendish haste,
While deeply loved and treasured souls were rendered waste.

This testimony will continue to defy
The fools and monsters who continue to deny,
What was so undeniably man's vilest crime,
And shine the light of truth upon that evil time.

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Over the Rainbow

JULIE BERGMAN

It was a gloomy, rainy, yucky day. Ethan pressed his nose to the window. He watched as the thick, grey clouds crept across the sky, sprinkling the ground with tiny drops of water. "When will it stop raining?" he asked. "When can I go out and play?"

Joey sat cross-legged on the floor, fitting the pieces of a giant puzzle. He looked out the window and shrugged. "I dunno."

Ethan lifted his finger and traced a raindrop as it zigzagged down the windowpane. "Why is the sky so dark, Joey?" he asked.

"I dunno," Joey answered.

"Joey? Where does the sun go when it rains?" Ethan asked.

Joey shook his head. "I dunno!" he snapped. "Stop asking so many questions! I don't know the answers!"

The afternoon dragged on. Ethan remained by the window. He patiently waited for the sky to clear. Finally, the sun peeked out from behind the clouds and a beautiful rainbow stretched out across the sky.

"Look, Joey!" Ethan shouted. "Look at the rainbow! How does the sky make such wonderful colours?"

Joey lay on the floor, flipping through the pages of a comic book. He looked out the window and shrugged. "I dunno."

"Where does a rainbow come from, Joey?" Ethan asked.

"I dunno," Joey answered.

"Joey? Where do you think the rainbow ends?" Ethan asked.

Joey shook his head. "I dunno!" he snapped. "Stop asking so many questions! Only God know the answers to all of your questions!"

"But where is God? Ethan asked. "Can you help me find him?"

Joey sighed and joined his little brother by the window. "I'm not sure, but I think God lives over the rainbow," Joey said. "I guess that if you reach the end of the rainbow, then God will be there."

Ethan's eyes widened. His face beamed with delight. "Oh boy!" he exclaimed. "And do you think he can answer all of my questions?"

"I think so," Joey replied. "God knows everything. He should be able to answer all your millions of questions."

Ethan raced to the closet. He slipped on his raincoat and rain boots. "How do I get over the rainbow, Joey?" he asked. "Do I walk there?"

"Oh no," Joey said. "You can't walk. That would take too long. By the time you get there, the rainbow will be gone."

Ethan kicked off his rain boots and laced up his sneakers. "Then I'll run," he said. "I'm a really fast runner, aren't I?"

"You can't run," Joey said. "The rainbow is too far away. You'll be running for days."

Ethan thought for a minute. Then he took off his raincoat and strapped on a

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bicycle helmet. "If I can't walk and I can't run, then I'll take my bike. I can pedal quickly to see God, can't I?"

"You can't ride your bike," Joey said. "You still have your training wheels. You're much too wobbly on your bike and Mom would never let you go."

Ethan threw off the bicycle helmet. "If I can't walk and I can't run and I can't ride my bike, then I'll call Zaidie. Zaidie's car drives really fast. He can drive me, can't he, Joey?"

"I guess so," Joey said. "And Zaidie will be here soon. He's coming for dinner."

Ethan sat outside and anxiously waited on the front step for Zaidie.

He bubbled with excitement. Ethan could not wait to meet God. So many questions filled his head and soon he would have all of his answers. God knew all of the answers.

The warm sunshine smiled down on Ethan. He lifted his face and breathed in the fresh smell that the rain left behind. Searching the length of the sky, Ethan cried out, "What happened to the rainbow?" He jumped up and circled all around. He looked in every direction.

"Where is God's rainbow?" he shouted as tears streaked down his face.

Just then, Zaidie's car pulled up. He rushed to Ethan's side. "What's wrong, my boy?" he begged.

"The rainbow is gone," Ethan answered. "It just disappeared. I should have walked or ran or taken my bicycle. I may be a little wobbly on my training wheels, but I know I could have made it over. How will I ever see God now, Zaidie?"

Zaydie raised an eyebrow. "See God?" he asked.

"Yes," Ethan replied. "I have a million questions and only God knows the answers."

Zaidie placed his arm around Ethan's shoulder. "Oh, Ethan," he replied. "God doesn't live over the rainbow."

"He doesn't?" Ethan asked, brushing away his tears.

"No," answered Zaidie. "God doesn't live in any one place. God is everywhere. He is all around us. You may not see him, but if you try hard enough, you can feel him."

"Like in my heart or when I look at a rainbow?" Ethan asked.

"Exactly," Zaidie answered.

"But if I can't see God, how can he answer all of my questions?" Ethan asked.

"Well," Zaidie began, "God helps us all to grow. As we grow, we learn. And when we learn, we start finding the answers to our questions."

Ethan thought about that and nodded. "Zaidie?" he asked. "Do you know how the sky makes a rainbow with such wonderful colours or where a rainbow ends?"

Zaidie studied the sky and shrugged. "I dunno," he answered.

"I don't know either," Ethan said. "I guess we are both still growing and learning. But, don't worry, Zaidie. One day, God will help us find the answers to all our millions of questions."

"See, my boy?" Zaidie laughed. "You are already growing and learning. Now, let's see you ride your bicycle. Keep practising and you'll have those training wheels off in no time."

"And I'll be ready to catch the next rainbow!" Ethan cried as he ran inside to grab his helmet. ■

CBB of Ottawa adds Drew Rothman to its team of directors

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CAMP B'NAI BRITH

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF SMILES AND BLACH

On Wednesday March 4th, Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa announced the addition of Drew Rothman as an Assistant Director.

"I'm thrilled about Drew joining us at CBB of Ottawa this summer. I believe that he will complement an already strong leadership team as the camp continues to move in a forward direction," said camp Director, Jonathan Pivnick.

Drew is well known to the Camp B'nai Brith of Ottawa community. He spent 15 summers, beginning as a nine year old camper in the A-Boy unit. After finishing his camper career, he rose through the camp ranks as a cabin counselor, specialty head, and eventually assumed Head of Waterfront duties to cap off his working career at CBB of Ottawa. Drew and his wife Sarah Rosenhek, whom he met at CBB of Ottawa, have a five-year old son, Nate, and a two-year old daughter, Rose. They will all be up at camp with him this summer to share the experience.

"I grew up with the Rothman family. I am thrilled to be getting the opportunity to partner with Drew in creating the same life changing camp experiences, building of friendships and memories, we had as campers!" commented Assistant Director Cindy Presser Benedek.

With an education background, he initially obtained his B.A. (Philosophy) from Concordia University, before pursuing a Master's degree in education from SUNY Posdam. Drew strongly represents CBB of Ottawa's three main communities: An Ottawa native, he has been teaching English, Mathematics, and Science for the past 10 years at Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School and the Heschel Day School, both in Toronto, and at Akiva School in Montreal.

Drew understands that some of the most valuable learning experiences happen outside of the classroom. He recognizes that participating in camp life offers children tremendous opportunities for personal growth, making new friendships, acquiring leadership-development skills, and having the chance to discover their identity as individuals.

"I see there being great relationship between my work as teacher, and as Assistant Director –it's a way to bridge learning that happens for children both in and outside the classroom. Children mature so much during the course of an academic year, but the power that a few weeks of camp can have on a child also cannot be understated!" says Rothman.

Drew is currently in his fourth year of teaching at the Akiva School in Montreal, where he constantly encourages his students to express themselves as individuals. At CBB of Ottawa, Drew plans to communicate this very same message to campers of all age groups. He is looking forward to encouraging campers to try new experiences that will expand their horizons.

The Camp's Board of Directors is thrilled with this new addition. "Jewish summer camping is both an extension, and for some, an alternative to more traditional modes of Jewish education. To add a senior staff member from the Jewish day school community will only enhance our continuing commitment to produce the Jewish community leaders of tomorrow" said Board of Directors Chair Michael Polowin.

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You're Doing the Work of God

MARVIN HERSHORN

I met her in a Jerusalem hotel. She was stunningly beautiful. Her angelic smile disarmed me. I was fixated by her beauty. She was a nun, wearing a traditional habit – tunic, a white coif, a scapular and a cowl. A symbol of giving herself to God.

"You're from Quebec," I said in my best French. "Yes, our order is located in Quebec City."

I was born in Saguenay, in the Lac St. Jean region of Quebec.

She replied, "The most beautiful part of the province."

"Are you here for the first time?" I inquired.

"Yes, the sisters are here for the first time. We are all new. We will visit the holy sights. We believe that life is very fragile. Each jewelled sunlit moment must be cherished. Jerusalem is the place where we find solace and peace. If darkness comes, I see God's light in the holy city."

Homespun epistles redolent with rural Quebec eloquence. Her irrepressible optimism burned brightly. "What is your occupation, may I ask?"

"I am a teacher," I said, "visiting Israel with students from Dawson College in Montreal.

"We're part of an Israel travel learning program. We spend two weeks on kibbutz, then travel the country. Travel education is experiential, on the ground learning. We climb Gamla in the Golan Heights where we study Josephus' *The Jewish Wars*. Josephus' narration of the Battle of Gamla comes alive. As we watch the eagles soar overhead, sitting on the battle site we're back to 67 CE experiencing the fall of Gamla, vicarious spectators.

"So much violence, so many innocent deaths…you could feel the carnage. It's exhilarating learning – passionate, empathetic, painful and introspective. You feel the battle through a kind of geographical osmosis. Subliminal cellular memory for the students and teachers, who by chance all happen to be Jewish.

"It is a throwback to our ancestry, the pain of cyclical oppression. History comes to life when we are on site."

"I can see that you are a passionate teacher," she said.

She touched my shoulder. "Bless you. You are doing the work of God."■

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חג שמח!

When a Daughter Leaves the Shtetl

KUCO / SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

FIONA GOLD KROLL

In 1908 Sheva embarks on the most important journey of her life.

She crosses the cobblestone street and cuts through the village square on her way to Rivka's house. It's spring. Green leaves unfold from sticky brown buds on trees and yellow daffodils mingle with blades of grass, bowing to one another in the gentle breeze. It looks peaceful enough until a black cloud appears in the sky like the pogroms that send Jews fleeing in fear when thugs shatter windows and ransack homes. Just after Yankel's birth Moshe decides they must leave the shtetl, and he makes his way to England. Now, after three long years of separation, Sheva counts the days until they are together again.

Sheva and Rivka grew up together. They laughed and cried together and today while sipping hot tea, reminisce about childhood adventures. The clock on the mantel ticks in the background. Sheva glances at the time, stands up, brushes off her long skirt and drapes her shawl around her shoulders.

"Rivka, I could spend hours talking, but I must go, I have to pack. Promise me you'll write?"

"I will — I promise."

They hug each other so tight Sheva can barely breathe. She kisses Rivka's tear stained cheeks.

"Look after Lazer and the children," Sheva says.

She holds out her hand to Yankel.

"Come Tatala, let's go home."

Together, they walk past the little wood frame shul where Sheva davens upstairs on Shabbat with the other women.

She pokes her head in the shop next door and says good-bye to Motel the butcher. Not that his meat was ever good. Once Sheva marched into his store and slapped a piece of cooked brisket on the counter.

"You call this a piece of meat, Motel? It's tough like leather!"

Tiny, fearless Sheva is no pushover.

She walks around the corner, down the gravel road, past the well. Yankel kicks pebbles into the ditch, just as Sheva did as a child. In the distance she sees her father, sitting outside the house on his old wooden chair. Face drawn and pale, he strokes his red beard and pushes his black kippah back and forth on his head. Yankel runs, and climbs on his lap.

"Tatti, are you alright?" says Sheva.

Her father wraps his arms around Yankel and kisses his cheeks.

"I wish you would leave him here with Mameh and me. You're going to live in an unknown world. Will he study Torah, will he attend yeshiva?"

"Tatti, Yankel is my son. I could never leave without him. I don't know what the future holds, but you have my word, Moshe and I will raise our children as honest Jews."

Just then, her mother steps outside.

"So, did you ask her?" she says.

"Mameh — how could you even imagine I would leave Yankel behind?"

"Shush, let's not argue. The soup is hot, the bread warm. Come inside and eat before the food gets cold," says her mother.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Sheva sits down and looks around the table at her brothers and sisters and wonders if she will see them again. Maybe they'll come to England. Life is full of maybe's, she thinks.

That night, after she tucks Yankel into bed, Sheva folds the few clothes she is taking with her and puts them on top of the dresser. Tired from the emotion of the day, she lies on the bed beside her son and pulls the feather comforter over the two of them. Her eyes close and she tries to imagine her Moshe. She reaches out to touch his face. Soon we'll be together again. Yankel sighs when Sheva pulls him into her. She strokes his hair, and kisses his forehead before her head sinks into the pillow.

Sheva wakes with a start. Paper burns, kindling crackles as her father stokes the wood stove. She gets up and pulls the lace curtain back from the window. It is still dark outside. She splashes water on her face. Hurry, we have a train to catch. Yankel stirs and rubs his eyes. She washes his hands and face and helps him dress. Half asleep, neither one of them can eat, it's too early.

"At least have a hot drink," her mother says, throwing her hands in the air in frustration.

Sheva lays their clothes in a clean linen sheet with two loaves of bread for the journey and ties the ends together in a bundle. She buttons up Yankel's coat and wraps herself in a shawl.

"Have you got all your tickets?"

"Yes, Tatti I do," she smiles.

She closes the old door to the house and rubs her fingers over dents and cracks in the wood. Several are from age, others from the hoodlums who beat down the door, just to scare them from time to time. Tatti turns the key. The lock clicks. Sheva knows she will never return.

In the early morning darkness, the four of them walk to the train station in silence. They sit down on the bench beside the tracks. Yankel yawns and snuggles with his grandfather. Slowly dawn breaks, birds chirp and the rising sun brightens the sky with pink and mauve shadows chasing night clouds over the horizon.

Suddenly the quiet is broken by a harsh whistle. A black engine rumbles down the tracks, spewing white smoke from its funnel like an angry bull. Yankel buries his head in Sheva's lap and covers his ears. The train clatters into the station, and stops with a hiss of steam and screeching brakes.

Sheva hugs her mother.

"Good-bye Mameh. Take care of yourself and make sure everyone helps you next Pesach."

She turns to her father and looks into his blue eyes, moist with sadness. Her beloved Tatti the most wonderful father, she could hope for – pious, patient, kind and caring.

"Look after you and Mameh," she says, tears rolling down her face.

He hugs her tight and kisses her forehead.

"Go. Be well – all of you."

She takes Yankel's hand and climbs on the train. They sit by a window and when the train begins its slow chug out of the station, Yankel stands on his seat and waves good-bye to his Bubbie and Zaidie.

They travel all day, stopping in Vienna at night. Sheva knows the two loaves of bread will not be enough to feed them for the entire journey, so they spend the night at the Jewish shelter where they eat and rest. In the morning, they board a train to Bremen, and finally embark on the ship. It takes two nights to cross the wild North Sea without food other than the bread Sheva carries with her. She sings songs, tells Yankel stories in Yiddish and cradles him in her arms until they both fall asleep exhausted.

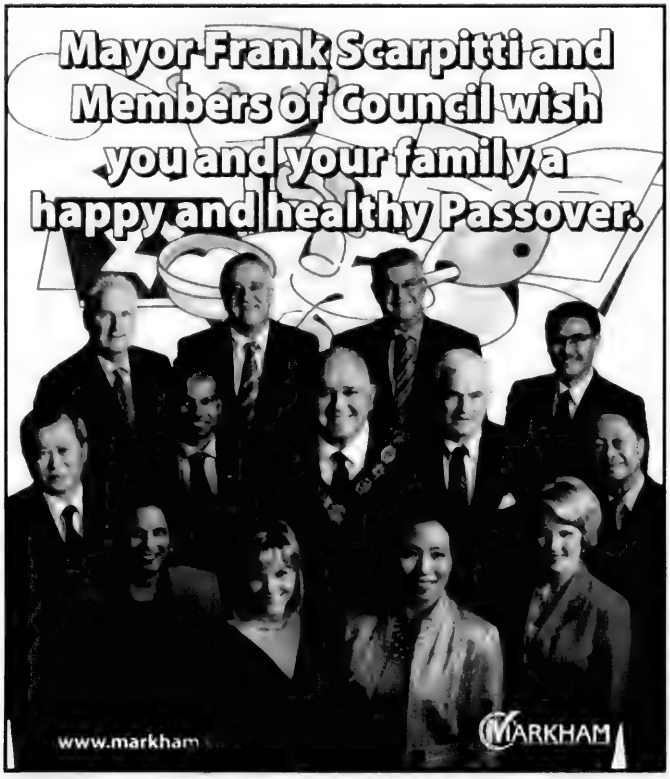
Moshe paces on the wharf waiting for Sheva and Yankel to disembark at the London docks. His anxious eyes search faces on the crowded deck. Then he sees them walking down the gangway and when they reach the bottom, he scoops up Yankel in his arms and hugs and kisses Sheva. She removes her head scarf and runs her hand through the soft waves in her hair.

"Where's your sheitel?" he asks.

"I don't remember."

Sheva tilts her face to the clear blue sky and soaks up the warmth from the sun. She looks at Moshe, smiles and together my grandparents and uncle walk hand in hand with hope for a better life in England. ■

> *"In the early morning darkness, the four of them walk to the train station in silence."*



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Cooking for the Holidays

RHODA WISE

With Passover approaching, I have been reminiscing about how we celebrated the Jewish holidays when I was growing up. The first thing I thought of was food and cooking.

I remembered my mother and her mother spending an entire day preparing gefilte fish for the seders. A few days before cooking this dish, my grandfather would go to the fishmonger and carefully select the various kinds of fish needed. My mother and her mother, my bubbie, would spend the day grinding, shaping, seasoning, boiling and then baking the fish.

The house smelled fishy for days afterwards.

Years later, when my grandparents were quite old, my husband, Ralph, would drive my grandfather to the fishmongers. Then my bubbie, my mother and I would make the fish in my home.

Bubbie, now seated in a chair, carefully seasoned the fish and directed my mother and me on the preparations. I would do all the cleaning up. When we brought the platter of fish to the holiday table, there was always a great deal of discussion on whether it was too sweet or salty. Inevitably, it was proclaimed delicious. My grandfather would then stand up and proudly say, "I bought the fish."

I still serve gefilte fish on holidays, but now that my mother and grandmother are no longer here I buy it ready-made, but I always feel guilty for not making it.

On Yom Kippur, my mother always invited our family and friends to break the fast. One of the traditional dishes she served was yeast buns from a recipe my grandmother had brought from Lithuania. This took two days to make, one day to prepare the yeast dough and let it rise, and the second to shape, fill and bake the buns. When my mother was too old to continue hosting breaking the fast, my daughter Heidi took it on. A week or two before the event, she and my mother would make the buns and put them in the freezer.

My mother now sat in a chair and directed Heidi on the preparations. They only made yeast buns for this occasion and everyone took a package of them home. My mother died eight years ago but Heidi has continued this tradition and hosts breaking the fast complete with yeast buns every year.

"I feel like she is with me and supervising the preparations," Heidi often tells me "I feel very close to her at these times."

At Purim, when my four grandsons were young, I would bring them and my mother, who they called Go-go Evie, to my house and we would make hamentashen together. Go-Go Evie, seated in a chair directed everybody. The four little boys, all with aprons tied around them stood on chairs around the kitchen counter taking turns cracking the eggs, cutting the butter, mixing the dough, putting in the fillings and shaping the tri-corned hats. I let them fill half of the pastries with chocolate chips and Smarties because the children really did not like prunes. After baking them, we would deliver the hamentashen to relatives and friends.

I realize that our family has received a wonderful legacy. Cooking for the holidays has become full of traditions, stories and rituals that are woven into the threads of our lives today. The traditional foods we cooked together over the years were recipes to connect us to our family and to past generations as well as to a Jewish community that is worldwide and goes back thousands of years. ■

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

My older sister blurted out, "You know what's wrong with her? She's upset because you're pushing grain down the goose's throat. She thinks you're choking him trying to make him fat for Pesach, and that we're going to eat him."

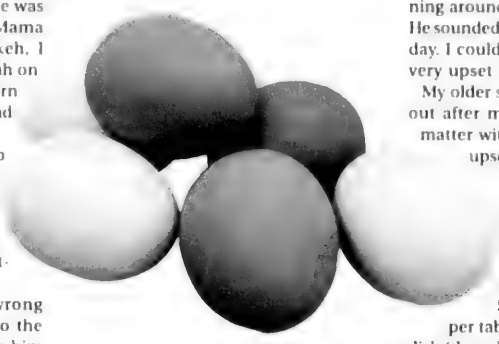
Goldie was mean that way. A real snitch-cat. Mama said, "Go back to sleep all of you."

Later when all was quiet, everyone was back in their bed, I could hear Mama through the thin wall say, "Leibkeh, I think you should check the mezuzah on the children's door. Maybe it's worn out. Rifkaleh shouldn't have such bad dreams."

The next morning when I went to see Goosey he wasn't there to greet me. I rushed into the shed and found him sitting on a patch of straw. He honked, flapped his wings when he saw me but remained sitting. I rushed back to the house.'

"Mama, Mama! Something's wrong with Goosey." We both ran back to the shed. She put her hand underneath him and to our great surprise found an egg. I knew chickens laid eggs but I didn't know a goose could too. My eyes almost bulged out of their sockets when I saw how big it was. Mama was very pleased.

> *I knew chickens laid eggs, but I didn't know a goose could too.*



Back in the house she said, "Kinderlech, we're all gonna have lunch from this one egg." She could do that. She was happy.

"Mama," I asked, "Is this like a miracle? Like when God gave manna from heaven to the people in the desert when they were very hungry? That's what our teacher in Sunday School told us. So then, Mama, if Goosey can lay an egg every day you won't have to buy eggs anymore. You wouldn't want to kill him for Pesach would you Mama? Would you?" She looked at me surprised. But she didn't say a word.

With tears streaming down my face I rushed out to hug Goosey who was running around the yard honking like crazy. He sounded wild. Even worse than the first day. I couldn't catch him. I think he was very upset because Mama took his egg.

My older sister, the prima donna, came out after me and shouted, "What's the matter with you? You big cry baby. You upset Ma."

"You mind your own business. You're so mean. All you care about is yourself. You're just mad because maybe now you won't have Goosey for Pesach."

Several days later, at our supper table, Papa said to Mama in Yiddish (they always spoke in Yiddish to each other), "You know Hitzaleh," his voice always just above a whisper, "When I told George Henry that the goose laid eggs, he said had he realized the goose was not a gander, he wouldn't have sold it to me. But he told me that he'd be happy to pay me three times the price I paid him, because you took such good care of it." Papa was looking at me all the time he was talking to Mama.

My head kept turning from Papa to Mama. I could hardly believe my ears, when Mama said, "You know Leibkeh, I was getting very tired feeding that goose. It was putting up such a fight. It was wearing me out taking up too much of my time. Anyway, the extra money you are getting will be a godsend. The children all need new shoes for Pesach."

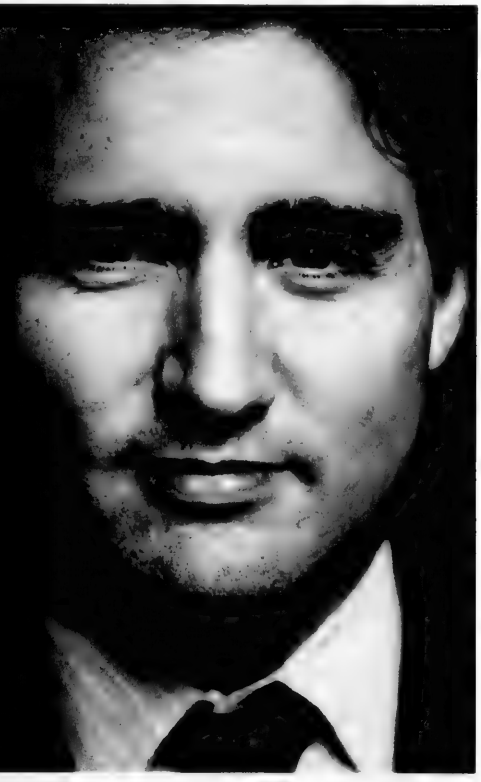
I rushed over to hug and kiss Papa. I whispered in his ear, "Papa, now I'll be able to see Goosey when I go to the farm with you in the summertime won't I? And you know what? I'm gonna tie an orange ribbon around his neck so I'll know it's my Goosey. Be sure to tell the farmer never to take it off."

"Yes, *mine kint*," he said, and patted my head affectionately. Then I went to Mama. I know she didn't believe in showing physical tenderness, but I hugged and kissed her too and said, "Thank you Mamishie." I knew she loved me, even though she brushed me aside and said, "Leibkeh, make sure you bring me two large rock hens for Pesach. They make the best chicken soup."■

As families gather around the seder table to share the story of the Exodus – from generation to generation – let us reflect on the journey from slavery to freedom and celebrate the peace we enjoy and cherish as Canadians.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada and our Parliamentary caucus, my family and I extend our very best wishes on this Passover.

Chag Pesach Sameach!
Joyeuses Pâques
חג פסח שמח



Justin Trudeau
Leader, Liberal Party of Canada

The Last Prayer

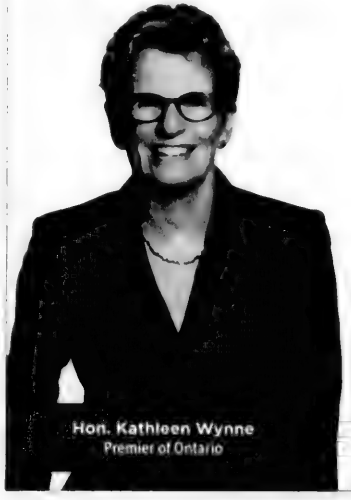
MARVIN HERSHORN

"But you, whenever you pray, go into your own room
And shut the door, and then pray to your father…" (Mathew 6:6)

My father put on his tallit, his prayer shawl, in solitude
At home alone, strained and heartfelt
A powerful journey of reverence, fear, love, and devotion
A shawl with a ritually knotted fringe
Knotted at each corner, worn by Jews
With pious conviction, furtive language and coded signals
In prayer, a shawl handed down from my grandfather,
a shawl that was warm and embracing
A symbol of inclusive unconditional love
Universal, bringing the sense of sacred in daily life
The shawl wrapped him, enfolded him
Embraced him and gave him comfort
He was affirmed and uplifted with solace and peace
Given wings to soar above his troubles
His age was the impediment, a demographic architecture
Laced with illuminating self-awareness
Understanding that self-knowledge is not redemptive
Shaped with compassionate empathy
He displayed a brooding transparent intelligence
Ensorcelled by quiet sophistication of transformative prayers
He remained a sole avatar of his people's traditions
Of a righteousness signature persona
The winter of his life seems to have taken a firm grip on him
Tight and suffocating, with resignation and anxiety
He can no longer drive his car or go to synagogue
He can no longer be with his "Minyan- Aires"
His beloved cronies who prayed together morning and evening
Year after year, an uncluttered slice of time
The quorum of 10 men, the band of prayer brothers
Who prayed, free of existential distractions…immersed
The shul family, their blessings ripple
From person to person, a holy osmosis
Of prayer in unison, feeling the unconditional embrace
Of a loving God, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent,
"After he dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside
By himself to pray." (Mathew 14:23)

ON BEHALF OF THE ONTARIO LIBERAL CAUCUS

Chag Pesach sameach to the entire community



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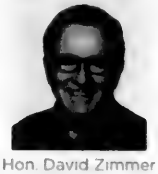

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RITA WILDER CRAIG

Do you know how to get
into heaven?

The brochure he offers has
Messiah written large with a
Star of David underneath
Jews for Jesus I guess
I have a religion thank you
I don't need another one, I say

He is still there when
I leave the coffee shop

Do you think you have to be
good to get into heaven?

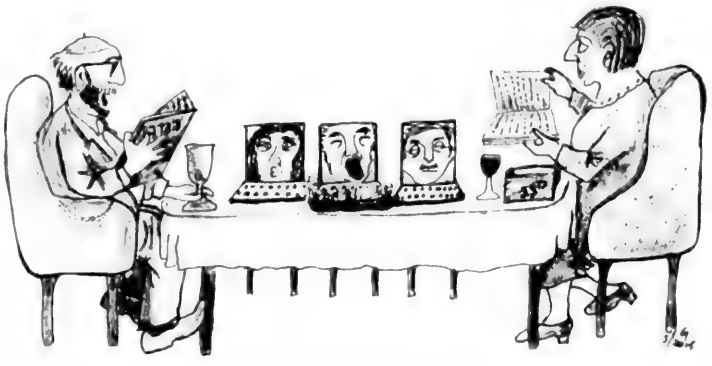
I hesitate recalling my dad
who, to my mother's chagrin
had heated arguments with
Jehovah's Witnesses
who came to the door

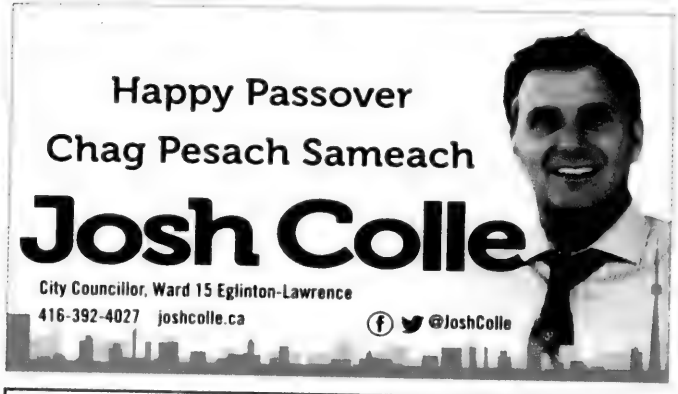
I say nothing but take a
brochure and head home
I suppose he thinks
that's a victory

Cyber Seder

Everyone was there just like old times
Avrami sang the Ma Nishtana and the
dishes were no problem ..

COMIC SUBMITTED BY ESTHER ISAAC





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Here Is The CBC News...

SAM HOFFER

Listening to the radio was for us no casual matter. My parents and older brothers were survivors of the Holocaust, newly arrived in the early 1950's in a Jewish farming colony in southern Saskatchewan. Despite the challenges of a strange, new language, the radio and more particularly the CBC, provided them with a window to our new homeland and an occasional link to the world they had left behind. For me, a young boy of about 10, it was the gateway to a kaleidoscope of life and events I could hardly imagine. Here are three childhood memories of newscasts, of that time, that shaped the world.

The Rosenbergs (1953)

Every hour, life comes to a halt. We listen to the news, our eyes fixed on the radio.

"What are they saying?" my mother asks. My father, anguished, waits for an answer.

"Nothing. It's all up to the president," Joe replies, the strain evident in his voice.

More bulletins. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are being prepared for execution. Husband and wife. Found guilty of giving the Russians secrets to the bomb.

"Is it possible? Why kill them even if they did these things," I wonder but don't dare to ask.

"They have to blame somebody, so they're blaming the Jews. Nothing has changed," my father declares.

My brother's last hope is written on his face. "It can't happen in America," he says.

It's erev Shabbos.

The radio crackles. There will be no pardon. Not even a delay.

Hours later, the announcer reports that they are dead.

Death enters our house. Disbelief. Fear. Silence.

Outside, I catch the sun nearing the horizon.

Miles above, a vapour trail led by a silver speck, traces across the sky. Another military plane protecting us from the Russians.

They say that we are safer now.

The Rosenbergs are dead.

Sinai War (1956)

The threat of war is heavy in the air. Shooting across the border. Israeli soldiers, the victims of snipers.

I recognize his voice on the radio. Nasser, the president of Egypt, threatening Israel's destruction.

Fear is in my parents' voices. Another war. Lives in danger once again. Our family is there.

I sense my brothers' frustration. Too far to join the coming fight.

What will happen? To Israel? To us?

In the morning we hear the news. War. Millions aligned against us. Reports of death. Tanks and planes. Speeches. A tidal wave of hate.

"Bring us your atlas," they ask. The one I just got. Thick black arrows carved across the Sinai. I stare at the scars. My atlas. A casualty of war.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Sputnik (1957)

"Here is the six o'clock news. History was made today when the Soviet Union launched the first satellite ever to orbit the earth. The satellite entered an orbit at ..."

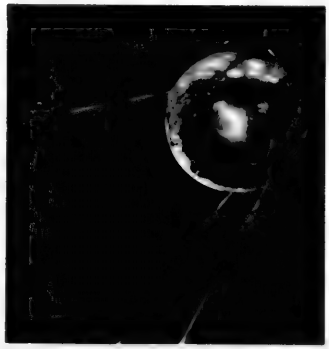
Joe and I are in the living room. He looks serious, staring at the radio, but says nothing.

My mother asks him to shut it off. It's almost Shabbos.

She blesses the candles and asks us to come to the table. My father rises to recite the Kiddush. He drinks from the cup of wine and blesses the challah. We savour my mother's Shabbos meal.

"I heard them talking a whole day on the radio about the satellite," my mother says, knowing that the subject is still on Joe's mind. "but I don't really understand. What exactly did they do?"

Joe explains. "The Russians shot a rocket far up into the sky and instead of falling back down, it's going to stay up, go around the earth and send radio signals back."



> *Listening to the radio was for us no casual matter.*

"And what about the Americans?" she asks.

"That's the point. They haven't done it yet. The Russians are first and who knows if the Americans will ever catch up? No one knows where this will lead. They might even get to the moon."

"It's all made up," my father says, breaking his silence. "They aren't going around the earth. They're not going anywhere. Not to the moon. Nowhere."

"Dad," Joe replies, "they will go to the moon. It's only a matter of time."

"Nowhere! They tried it with the Tower of Babel and we know how that ended. If God had wanted us to be on the moon he would have put us there. It's all propaganda – the Russians and the Americans are trying to outdo each other and all the fools are believing it."

I look from one to the other and at the clock. Time for the news, an update on what's happening. "Could it all be fake?" I wonder, "are the Russians just scaring us?"

I glance at the radio. It's off. It's Shabbos. ■

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Miracle

MUGUETTE MYERS

Maman was in Paris working for a friend, who like her had escaped the roundup of July 16, 1942. She was there one day in her friend's apartment on the third floor, sewing and minding their little four-year-old boy, as her friend had to go out on some errands.

It was early afternoon when the dreaded knock came to the door. Everyone was well acquainted with the sound of a fist striking wood. And everyone knew what that sound meant.

Before whoever it was broke the door down, Maman opened it. Standing there were two burly French policemen, who had come to arrest the family whose home it was. Going from room to room finding no one, and probably not wanting to get back empty-handed to their headquarters, they arrested Maman after having examined her identity card.

The little four year old started crying: "Pourquoi vous emmenez ma Bella? Elle ne vous a rien fait!" (Why are you taking my Bella? She didn't do anything to you!) Maman tried to argue with them: "Vous n'avez pas honte de faire un métier pareil?" (Aren't you ashamed of what you are doing?) "Will it make a difference if one more Jew will be taken? I have a family. How will you be able to sleep at night?" One policeman looked embarrassed while the other's face registered no emotion. While the second one had his back turned, the first one whispered to Maman: "If only I was alone!"

They started down the stairs. At that time, there was no light in the corridors and there were sandbags on every landing put there in case of bombings, to extinguish fires. Maman was sandwiched between the two policemen, the good one in front and the other one in the back of her. The first one kept saying: "Il fait noir ici, on pourrait se perdre!" (My, it's dark in here! One could get lost!) As he was walking first, he lost his balance on a sandbag. Maman (always the lady, even in the worse of circumstances) helped him up and started brushing him. He repeated once more: "My, it's dark in here!" and as he said so he gave Maman such a mighty shove that she almost fell. Then she understood!. She sat herself on the banister – as we used to do when we were kids – and she let herself slide all the way down to the main floor. From there she heard the policemen stumbling down the stairs. She ran out of the building and straight home. Although her address was listed on her papers the police never came to the apartment.

A miracle ■

What If

HELGA STUMMER

Ahasverus' harem had not been replenished,
After Queen Vashti he had banished.

IF Esther's beauty had not pleased the king,
And with another he would have had his fling.

IF his word had not held sway,
And Haman would have had his way.

IF Haman's plot had not boomeranged,
and Mordechai would have been hanged.

Then Purim would be full of sadness,
Instead of nachas, joy and gladness.
There'd be no megillah, no gragger,
and no hamantach,
Nothing to read or rattle and nothing to nosh.

Anna K.

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PEARL ADLER SABAN

That polished pebble that I hold so tightly in my hand
has its place in nature.
It becomes a marker to show my generation
that I visited, that I honoured someone.
who lies here in the vast field of final resting places,
amidst other markers
that people have left
to show their generation
that they visited, that they honoured someone.
I lovingly place the pebble atop the nightshadow-grey granite
then slowly back away to read the inscription – a brief summary
that tells who you were, what kind of person you were –
chiseled into the cold stone face to stand the test of time. . .
like that pebble that is a marker
to show my generation that I visited, that I honoured and that I loved someone.

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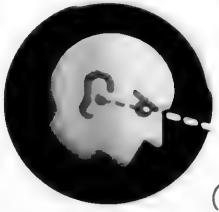

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Bar Mitzvah in Israel

GAIL BERMAN

The excitement commenced one
beautiful spring day,
when the family boarded an El Al flight
to Israel last May.

There were the grandparents, parents,
two boys and a girl.
One of the boy's was the bar mitzvah
boy,
with much wisdom just like a pearl.

While the airplane was swiftly
traversing the sky,
Daniel, the bar mitzvah boy, was
reviewing his parshah,
to ensure that he knew it dry.

When the family arrived in Jerusalem,
they were met by their cousins, all
joyous.
Everyone went to the cousins' home,
and along the way, passed by the
famous Dome.

Following some days of touring,
the family completed preparations.
Because on that coming Shabbat,
the special event would occur.

Indeed, Saturday arrived, sunny and
warm,
and the Silverman family prepared to
go to shul.
They met with their rabbi and cantor,
and did the necessary, according to
rule.

The Shabbat morning service began,
and the prayers ran their course.
Then came the anticipated moment,
when Daniel approached the bimah
with his parents.

He chanted his parshah and Haftarah
very well.
The congregation sat still, as though
under a spell.

The bar mitzvah boy, all the while,
was thinking, how fortunate he was,
to be celebrating his occasion in Israel.

This was worth the lengthy flight,
that covered many a mile!

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LYNN SAND

The signs were there
But we didn't see
We didn't listen
We didn't believe
It didn't seem possible
Were we deaf, dumb, and blind?
Where was God through all this?
How could He let this happen?
Did He disappear?
Our hearts were heavy and full of trepidation
Was this a nightmare that wouldn't end? There was no day – there was no night
Everything seemed dismal, grey, and unwelcoming
I needed to remember the beauty of spring. The flowers, the butterflies, the birds that would sing
I needed to digress to survive and dream...We were packed like sardines without ventilation
We travelled for days without water, without food, without toilets
We couldn't breathe – many perished before we arrived
The train stopped
People were talking
We didn't know where we were
Vicious dogs and brutal masters
faced us – ready to attack
With whips and harsh spotlights blinding us
Screaming,
"Men on one side, women and children on the other."
The elderly and sick were sent to gas chambers
All remnants of human dignity were stripped forever
We were unrecognizable
Living skeletons wandered around—insane with hunger
What would become of us?
We prayed to be saved
Some prayed to die
Who would save us?
Why couldn't anyone stop Hitler?
How could anyone get away with such atrocities?
No one could save us but ourselves
Many tried to – but their lives were on the line, too
We had to be tough to endure
We had to keep breathing
Doing things we never thought we could do
But thank God, many of us survived
And lived to tell the story Please God, "Never Again!"

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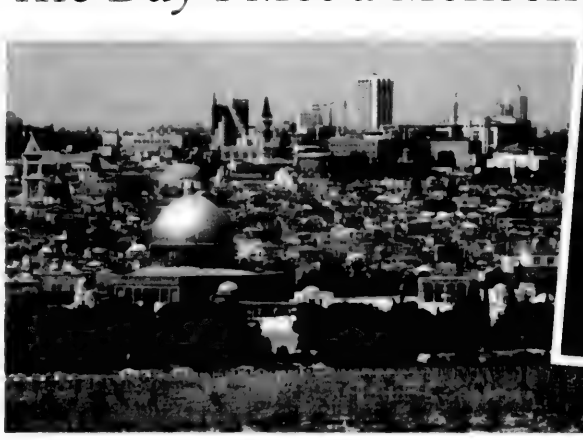
The Day I Met a Mensch



SALLY-ANN KERMAN

I began visiting Israel in 1980 when my daughter planned to move to there to be with her fiancée. I was a little apprehensive because I do not speak Hebrew but I was assured that a great many people speak English and besides I would probably always be with family members who could rescue me when it came to the language issue. I was anxious to see the country and became very excited every time I embarked on a visit there.

Then, one year I became very brave and ventured forth on travels by myself. My daughter assured me that when I left the train station in Jerusalem, it would be easy to find a taxi to take me to the hotel she had suggested I stay in. The hotel was not that far from the train station and it was on the main street, in the midst of all the great shopping stores.

It was a lovely sunny day when my daughter waved to me after she had put me on the train in Binyamina on my way to Jerusalem. The ride was spectacular, especially as one approaches the hills surrounding Jerusalem. It was spring and the wild flowers were abundant.

They seemed to decorate the entire view and I was thrilled watching them, especially since I knew there were only cold, snow and ice storms back home in Canada. Finally, I arrived at the train station in Jerusalem and asked about the hotel I was going to.

The kind gentleman I asked spoke no English but he scurried about and found someone who did. The young man assured me that although it was very hot, I would have no trouble walking the short distance to the hotel.

I started on my way. It was 35 degrees out. My luggage, which I thought was very light suddenly, became very heavy as I trudged along. I kept watching for the hotel but did not see it. Finally, when I was at the end of my strength and was thirsty, tired, grubby and generally thinking it was not such a good idea to go to Jerusalem, I suddenly I spotted a Jerusalem Tourism Office and I literally flopped in on one of the seats there. A kind old man came over, brought me a cold drink and asked me if I was lost. I told him I think I am lost and I am exhausted and sorry I ventured out to this terrible city.

Well, that was a personal affront for him. It is a beautiful city and you have come at an important time, he informed me. We are celebrating the return of Jerusalem to our people for 20 years. Yes, it was 1987 and the city was busy with the planned visit of many tourists.

I was not very impressed but the love and pride in the face and voice of this old man began to penetrate. Suddenly, after I had rested a while, this kind old man took me by the hand and escorted me to the hotel. He left me his card and asked me to enjoy my visit to Jerusalem. I shoved his card in my pocket, thanked him for his kindness and entered the hotel where I went up to my room, refreshed myself and lay down on the bed.

I didn't wake up until dark and I went downstairs to the front desk where I was told the best place to get something to eat. I did have an exciting and fruitful time for the next few days and returned to my daughter's house with nothing but wonderful stories and all my shopping "buys." She asked me who the nice old man was who helped me that first day and I fished around in my pockets until I found his card. My daughter collects business cards from people that impress her.

Neither my daughter or son-in-law could believe my ignorance when I showed them the business card of that wonderful man who was so kind to me and taught me the history of the city that meant the world to him. They were still laughing and chiding me for not knowing who he was. They finally told me it was no other than Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem.

I wasn't as impressed with his title as much as of the man himself and the love and pride that oozed from his very pores when he spoke of Jerusalem. My title for him was simply Mensch. There are probably many attempts at translating the word "mensch" and you can try, if you like. Let me know what you come up with. You will likely have many people describe someone that fits that description, but I have never met anyone as true to the meaning and feeling of the word "Mensch" as Teddy Kollek. (Well, maybe my Zaidie, but that's another story). ■

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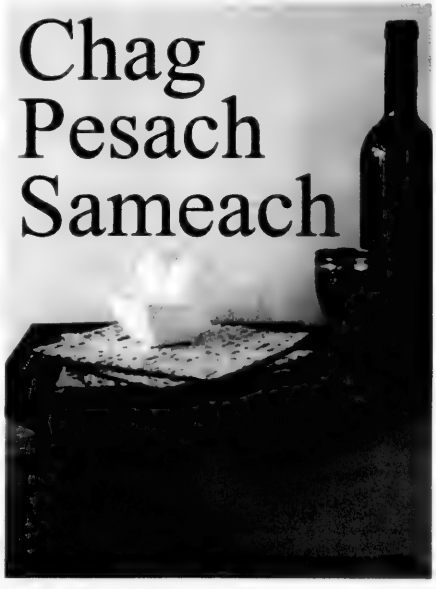
Chag Pesach Sameach



Rebirth : After the Holocaust

JUDY WEINRYB

I see the world
through filtered lenses
in grainy textures
and subdued tones
An endless prism
of light and darkness

Haunting memories
of my parents' suffering
like blotches of paint,
formed sinister clouds
on the innocent canvas
of my very young life

As an infant, my cries
were gently calmed
by my mother's
lilting lullabies,
her sorrows hidden,
far beyond my grasp.

I held on tightly
to my parents'
outreached hands,
warm and nurturing
to the touch.
I could not see
their broken hearts

The uninvited presence
of hurtful recollections
was not enough to quell
their boundless love

Healing slowly over time,
the love we shared
was a soothing balm

My parents learned
to live again
but never forgot
their painful past.

I See Her Again

BRIAN OSTROVSKY

Yes! I see her again
As the winter's day turns into early night
Whilst her Shabbos candles glow
With their sacred light

When the sun steadily sinks into the deep
Through the drapes she peeps
Alone in her corner,
Abandoned.

Overcome by a burning thirst
To feel her first
Thrill of exaltation,
She stands open-eyed
Peering outside,

Praying for that passerby
Who would care
To join her, to share
In blessing the challah and the wine
And together they would entreat the Divine:
"Hakadosh Borechu, please, do usher in Your splendour
To allow its blessed blissfulness to percolate
Into our neshamahs and radiate our dwelling
This Shabbos evening."

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Two Days in the Jewish Heart of Athens, Greece

RUTH R. FRANKEL-GRANER

Greece was calling. I had no idea why. It's true that in the Canadian school system where I was educated, the study of Greek myths occupied many hours of classroom time. Who hasn't heard of Zeus or Midas, Pandora or Jason? And in university I majored in classical Greek art and architecture. But apart from occasionally (very occasionally,) distinguishing a Doric column from an Ionian, I don't think that I had given Greece a second thought for almost 40 years. Why was it calling now, especially now when as an adult student of Judaism I have been left wondering why there had ever been any emphasis on exposing young minds to the malevolent nature of the ancient Greek gods and goddesses – omnipotent beings who tampered with the lives of humans, inflicting punishments in perpetuity.

So why would I even contemplate a journey to Greece? Well, there are the incomparable Greek bequests to western culture and civilization, philosophy, medicine, art, architecture and the thousands of words in the English language from alpha to zenith. Was that why Greece was calling?

But how could I go there? Time spent in most European countries leaves me sleepless and haunted. While I have strolled Paris in April, scrambled to the top of a still-smoking Mount Vesuvius, fulfilled a childhood dream of munching red-waxed Edam in Holland, prowled through an endless castle in Madrid (400 rooms and still counting), even sailed past the Globe Theatre on the Thames River, I have also photographed the solitary statue of Maimonides in Cordoba, Spain, a country where following the Expulsion centuries ago, few Jews live, and most if not all synagogues are no more than tourist sites. I have also trudged up the hill at York, England to Clifford's Tower, the scene in 1190 of the mass- suicide of doomed and desperate Jewish men, women and children. I have gazed in anguish out the same window as Anne Frank in Amsterdam, shuddered at the synagogue in Paris with its inconspicuous plaque and reference to "the Nazi barbarians." Each European visit was darkened by the questions: Is this where it happened? On this corner? This field? This stadium? Was she responsible? Or he? But Greece was calling. And finally, I answered.

I bought a plane ticket, booked a bus tour. Even my fortune cookie said "Pack your bags. You're bound for an exciting destination!" I began my research. I contacted Chabad and I emailed the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens. Could they help me find a guide for the Jewish aspects of that city?

Both provided the same name. The website greecetravel.com/ Jewish history/, condensed to about 25 pages the story of the Greek Jews, a tale probably beginning before the destruction of the Second Temple.

Painting by Ruth R. Frankel-Graner

Life in Greece was never without peril. As in the rest of Europe there were unprovoked tragedies: pogroms, murders, robberies, threats, humiliations, persecutions. And then in the 20th century came the horrifying events when an estimated 90 per cent of Greek Jews perished under the Nazi onslaught.

Now, of perhaps 10,000 Jews surviving after the war, about 5,000 are left today, most in Athens. And so I arrive in that city with a little knowledge and arrangements for my guide to meet me in the lobby of my hotel. I did not expect these few days to colour everything I would experience in Greece in the weeks to follow, but that is what happened. I am writing what I recall, hoping that inaccuracies will be few, realizing that when I look back, much that I record will be through the filter of translation, time and emotion.

As we drive to the two synagogues still in use in the city, my guide narrates the story of the Greek Jews. We will, at my request, visit the cemetery in Athens –something I feel I must do – but, he suggests, at the end of our journey. The Jewish school and youth centre are closed today and tomorrow. He points out the districts where Jewish life once thrived.

In one area, only the name "Jerusalem Market" remains. I'm sure I see anti-Semitic graffiti on a door. When I return home, I learn that less than a week later, a Greek singer had been threatened in a nightclub for answering a request from visiting Israeli businessmen. Later she was criticized in the media.

In Athens, two synagogues on Melidoni face each other. On the road, a locked iron gate blocks cars. Behind it, in a glass-windowed booth, an armed police guard watches. A large black dog stands outside.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Jewish museum in Greece FILE PHOTOS

The earlier synagogue, Etz Hayim (1904-1906) is Romaniot in style,in the tradition of the earliest Greek Jews. The later building, Beth Shalom,(1930s) is Greek Revival and Sephardi. The older has been quietly refurbished with muted Persian carpets and a contemporary stained glass mural in angular shapes casting a bright rainbow of colours on one wall of the sanctuary. The synagogue is empty, but the presence of the hundreds of people who have passed here before is palpable – the sounds of singing and wailing, joy and even terror pulsate in the air around us. Nothing else from its earliest beginnings remains. A full minyan, my guide tells me, at either shul, even on Shabbat, does not always happen. Weddings, bar mitzvahs, special occasions-yes.

The wooden front door of Beth Shalom must be 40 feet high. Behind its marble façade are gleaming marble floors in a diamond pattern that flow to a courtyard, serene and silent.

In the courtyard of one of these synagogues, a lavabo, with the carved head of a lion in the centre of its farthest wall, looks out past us. The red-tiled roof is outlined by the black grillwork of wrought iron hooks.

It was to this courtyard that the Nazis summoned Jewish Athenian men on the pretext that their imprisoned friends and relatives would be released if they appeared. Some of the men, realizing what was going to happen, leaped over the wall. My guide's grandfather was trapped, and although he was able to send a few notes from a concentration camp in Chaidari, he was never seen again, but he had prepared his wife and collected some money. He had warned her that if he was not back very soon, she was to leave with the four children.

A Christian family hid them, and the Chief of Police of Athens, Angelos Evert, now honoured in Yad Vashem, helped alter their passports by substituting Greek first names for their own. My guide's father survived because of the courage and conscience of a few people. Today, his son is my escort.

Our next stop is the Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens, pleated among other buildings into a corner of frantic Nikis Street, turbulent with motorcycles, narrow cars and hordes of people. The black scrolled, wooden door is 1 1/2 stories high. When it closes on the clamour of the city, the only sound heard is my intake of breath. Burnished wooden floors stream beside sparkling pale marble ones. Honey-hued columns spiral around golden light from a skylight above a central octagonal atrium radiating to nine levels of wonder. But the museum also has uniformed security. Here, my guide's wife will lead me through meticulous displays of Jewish history, ceremonial objects, and yes, the sublime aquamarine and gold Torah case.

Some displays show the intermingling of Greek and Jewish customs. An entire floor is devoted to the tragic story of the Greek Jews during the Holocaust. But rooms are set aside for inter-faith meetings of children, teaching Jewish Greek heritage, as well as Holocaust education here, and in Greek schools. The museum looks to the past and the future.

Later in the week, when I visit the National Museum of Archaology in Athens with its sumptuous statuary and golden relics, I feel the absence of significant social commentary. What are the ideas represented in the immense presence of the statue of Zeus-arms extended almost to the walls-except raw power?

In the days that follow, the lofty temples of the ancient Greeks are diminished. I know at what human cost they were created. When we pass the canal at Corinth our guide does not inform us that Jewish prisoners hacked into the earth, that in fact most of the Grecian splendours were at the cost of slave labour.

The acropolis is suspended like a permanent white cloud above the city of Athens, an omniscient presence, high above the squat earthquake-resistant apartment buildings. Below it glows a little treasure - the Jewish Museum.

I think when Greece was calling,this is what it meant to say:

Somewhere in an ancient land, an ancient people do what they have always done, picked up the splendid pieces of their inheritance and forged ahead.

Surely what I heard when Greece called was the sound of the human spirit. ■

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The World has Gone Mad

SUZANNE REISLER LITWIN

Has it?
Perhaps some of it
Thank God, not all of it

When incomprehensible hate
Happens someplace, somewhere
Each day

Someone has gone mad.

When it's so easy to be
Free, kind and peaceful
Live by 10 ancient laws

What's gone wrong?

Is there a void of love?
Lack of contact, commitment, contentment
Missing relevant involvement?

Seriously, what's gone wrong?

In these twisted minds
Madness has set in, then out
Have mothers stopped loving their children?

This world is my home
Your home
The only truth home we share

Rebirth oneself into his arms
Allow the good to penetrate your soul
Believe, truly believe...in

Only then can we
Heal the world
One word at a time

Just One Photograph at the Holocaust Museum

JOYCE WIHL

Yesterday we were boys, and this was my friend. Today he is accused of a bad word I hardly ever heard of. Today he is "Jew". My shame hurts us both.

Yesterday these streets were ours. Today these streets, these people are foreign. Did our silly imaginations invent their guns and uniforms? Can our wishing make them go away?

A mysterious horror is throbbing inside me. I am already tired of questions and fear. And I am afraid.

Yesterday we were boys, and this was my friend. Yesterday is further away than death.

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The Sukkah

LARRY FINKELMAN

Under the crisp blue October sky,
wedged between two brick buildings
built in the middle of the last century
and meant to last well into the next,
stood the Sukkah made of wood.
The lattice walls allowed the wind,
small gaps in the roof slats admitted the rain,
and uneven gravelly ground permitted the cold.
It wanted to be temporary.
It welcomed its guests with a knowing smile,
taking them onto its lap
and holding them safe.
Like some old scholar bent over books,
it wanted to teach us something
about fragility and faith
and living under God's protection.

Twilight

ANNE DUCHOWNY

As I approach the twilight of my dwindling years
I conjure up like a magician
memories laying dormant in the labyrinth of my mind,
I pull them out reluctantly, some better left behind.
Happy thoughts, sad thoughts, memories of many fears.
Some still evoke a smile, some reduce me to tears.
A name recalled, a face appears
virtually forgotten through the journey of my years.
Dreamlike visions of people and places ricocheting by
dredged up from the recesses of the deepest caverns
some sharp, some nebulous in my mind's eye.
Regrets, of course for deeds and words,
some done or not,
some said or left unsaid because I did not dare,
but with each passing year the burden of omission
and commission becomes much easier to bear.
For each diminished faculty I mourn
amputated, abandoned, never to be reborn.
But oh! the beauty and the wonder of it all,
And so until I get that final call
whatever has been scripted and prescribed
I will play out until the end as was devised.

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RACHELLE LERNER

Proust is right: we reach back to the past through our senses

I am just recovering from one of those splendid gifts that Canadian winter presents us all with – a cold and chest infection – and I finally realized why I, a vegetarian of more than two decades, always crave chicken soup whenever I am laid low. Never mind the cliché that it is Jewish penicillin. It comforts me because my bubbie, who was tender and brusque, always smelled of chicken soup. Whenever we visited, the first thing that she did was to lean over and kiss me, and I remember the softness of her crumpled skin and its perfume – the chicken soup that was invariably simmering away on the stove. Oh, and that large purse that she always carried, a beige, platinum leather, rectangular purse with a metal clasp that she snapped opened to give us the treasures housed within: chocolate bars, Turkish delight, and a mauve gum long since no longer manufactured.

The recent death of my uncle that leaves only my one aunt and my dad, the two youngest in the family, has stirred up memories, not least because at the shivah house, we looked at black-and-white wedding photos of my aunt and uncle. My dad had no recollection of having worn a top hat – yet, there was the proof. Later, my dad and I watched the films that he had shot of a succession of seders during my childhood.

I still feel the heat of those light bulbs used with that Super 8 camera. One of the funniest moments was seeing my short, but sturdy bubbie reach across the dining room table to seize the wine glasses from the clutches of two of my cousins who liked to get as drunk as they could on the kosher wine.

Just to show how enduring memories can be, I do remember my dad turning the camera on my mom and her telling him to stop, which, tease that he is, only encouraged him to persist, as I do of one of my uncle's long goodbye (for he had gotten loaded).

There is also a trace of a memory of playing circle games with my bubbie and my cousins. And the mere thought of my bubbie's searing horseradish, as, too, my mom's, makes my eyes well up and my nose flare from the fumes. My dad recounted that when he was a child, my bubbie took in boarders to supplement the meager earnings that my zaidie made as a chicken salesman, and one boarder learned the hard way just how lethal my bubbie's horseradish was. When she encouraged him to try some, he eagerly helped himself to a heaping soup spoon's worth that made him start a dance frantically all through the kitchen that became even more frenzied after he tried to douse the heat with water.

Watching the films and seeing how young and vibrant my mom was reminded me of why Passover is such a bittersweet holiday for me. A week before Passover in 1995 and right before her birthday, my mom died at the age of sixty-three. Numb and in shock, I got up from sitting shivah, and had to go to the grocery store to buy all the food that we needed for that holiday. No matter how drained that I felt, I still had to go on with the cleaning and the cooking, in part for my then young sons and my husband, and in part to honour my mom and my bubbie, who both expressed their love through food.

Since then, each time that I take out the white linen and cotton tablecloth and serviettes that my mom bought for me, light the candles in the silver Shabbat candleholders that my bubbie brought over from Poland, and place the matzah in her embroidered silk tasseled holder, I think of them.

The symbolic foods for each holiday endow the festivities with a vivid continuity through their tastes, shapes, and smells. So do the memories of the foods that my bubbie and my mom prepared. On one visit to my bubbie – who spoke only Yiddish – told me to take a little taste.

I asked her what I had just eaten and she said: "cowfleish."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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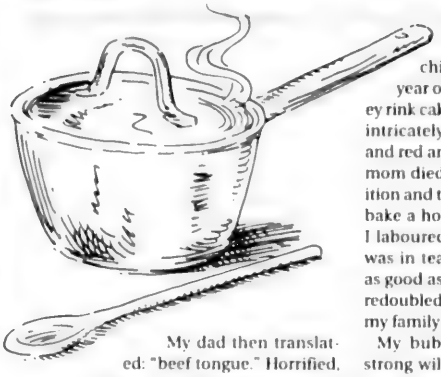

My dad then translated: "beef tongue." Horrified, all that I could visualize was this gigantic tongue masticating. Perhaps, though, it was the very early memory of my bubbie cleaning a chicken that started me on the road to becoming a vegetarian. Nonetheless, I did eagerly ingest her tomato flavoured fricassee, including the chicken feet that then you could buy, even though I felt slightly squeamish.

My mom was an expert baker, who excelled in creating all kinds of elaborate floral decorated cakes. She always baked the birthday cakes for our sons. The first one was a large teddy bear cake and three little alphabet block cakes. The second production was a yellow big bird cake, with blue Cookie Monster cookies to hand out as party favours (which turned the children's mouths blue.) In her last year of baking, she made a huge hockey rink cake, complete with hockey players intricately shaped out of blue and white, and red and white royal icing. So, after my mom died, I wanted to carry on the tradition and told my younger son that I would bake a hockey rink cake for his birthday. I laboured for hours. By his bedtime, he was in tears because it just did not look as good as Bubbie's cakes had been. But, I redoubled my efforts and, by the next day, my family pronounced it outstanding.

My bubbie and my mom were both strong willed individuals. While my bubbie was Orthodox, my mom maintained that you can worship anywhere and that it is your daily actions that manifest your spirituality. Still, with her characteristic enthusiasm for any new project, my mom threw herself into making an Orthodox home after she had converted, endeavours that my dad, rebel as he was, asked her to tone down. We did observe all of the Jewish holidays, and regularly attended Friday night dinners at my Bubbie and Zaidie. But, my parents also encouraged my siblings and me to learn about other religions, too.

Nevertheless, they did draw a line when we moved into the suburbs and I started attending elementary school. In those days, each school day began with singing *God save the Queen*, reciting the *Lord's Prayer*, followed by an hour of religious instruction. Soon after I started school, I came home to ask who this "Jesus Christ" was. Alarmed, my parents met with the school principal the very next day, as did the parents of the only two other Jewish students at the school. The upshot was that we three were excused from reciting the prayer and the religious class. However, instead of allowing us to go to the library, we were told to sit outside in the hallway – as if we were the great unwashed. Needless to say, we began to be ostracized. It was an early lesson in the need for religious tolerance.

My parents also wanted me to get a Jewish education. When I was eight years old, they enrolled me in a part-time Hebrew school that I attended Monday through Thursday after my regular school day and Sunday mornings. It was a classroom filled with some 80 boisterous students, who loved to toss food and books around. I was meek and well behaved, hence the report cards that I received were filled with A+s.

Unfortunately, all that I actually managed to learn over the next three years was the Hebrew alphabet and to parrot some Hebrew songs. Rather, I learned from my parents' teachings and from reading the English translation of the Torah. (I was shocked to learn when I took a mythology and religious studies course at university that the Old Testament has more than five books and are in a different order.) The only other memory I have is of the miserable car ride to and from the classes. The car windows were always shut tight, which made the air noxious, because the driver smoked cigarettes incessantly and one of the other children always brought two oranges to peel and eat. To this day, the smell of either makes me ill.

There is one more lingering smell from my childhood that is also a phantom one everywhere, except in my memory. Whenever I look at two photos of my dad and me, taken when I was a toddler, I recollect standing in the dispensary of the pharmacy where my dad had worked – way back in what was called New Toronto. In the second photo, I am perched on a tall white stool. I flashback to watching my dad prepare a medication using a mortar and a pestle and my nose wriggles at that peculiar drugstore smell long since vanished. None of the chain drugstores have that distinctive blend of chemical and sweetish odours. Since then, only once have I encountered that smell in – of all places – a cluttered pharmacy in Niagara Falls.

It is not quite Proust's madeleine, but it is perhaps closest to what Gertrude Stein meant with her echo of Shakespeare: "A rose is a rose is a rose." It smells just as sweet as the memories of childhood. ■

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Iran nuclear deal: what does it mean for Israel?

Obama and Netanyahu differ on whether region will be more or less secure.
PAGES 27, 28, 29, 30

Ottawa shul heads uptown

End of an era as downtown synagogue marches its Torahs to the suburbs. **PAGE 23**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	7:34 p.m.	8:40 p.m.
Montreal	7:15 p.m.	8:21 p.m.
Ottawa	7:24 p.m.	8:30 p.m.
Toronto	7:36 p.m.	8:41 p.m.
Winnipeg	7:56 p.m.	9:07 p.m.
Calgary	8:05 p.m.	9:18 p.m.
Vancouver	7:39 p.m.	8:49 p.m.

Jews in Jail

Canadian prisons are home to some 200 Jews. From kosher food to prayer services and religious counselling, a small, but dedicated group of rabbis are ensuring their needs aren't forgotten. **PAGE 8**

Campaign aims to cancel rally

B'nai Brith starts online petition against annual Al-Quds Day demo at Queen's Park. **PAGE 16**

No charges for the 'Dawgfather'

Police say hot dog vendor's tweets weren't hate crimes. **PAGE 20**

Filmmaker stays out of the picture

Igal Hecht is fascinated by Israel and Judaism, but he keeps his views to himself. **PAGE 31**

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Nenshi buys bread, and Noah learns a lesson about Twitter

Chametz fit for a mayor

In what's believed to be a first for a Canadian mayor, Calgary's Naheed Nenshi bought the chametz from members of a shul in his city. Rabbi Shaul Osadchey of Beth Tzedec Congregation approached the country's first big-city Muslim mayor with the idea at a recent interfaith event, the *Calgary Herald* reported. About 40 families in the 600-member Conservative synagogue had sold their chametz by March 30. The rabbi said the aim was to get more of them to take part than the 20 who normally do so annually. The chubby-cheeked Nenshi joked he was disappointed he wouldn't get to take possession of the food. "I was hoping to fill the entire office with bread and pasta."

Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi

Comic's tweets haunt him

Two Jewish groups expressed concerns over tweets about Jews and Israel by Trevor Noah, 31, the South African comic chosen to succeed Jon Stewart as host of *The Daily Show*. The Anti-Defamation League and B'nai Brith both urged Noah to avoid making distasteful jokes with Jewish stereotypes on the show. After being named host March 30 by Comedy Central, Noah came under fire for past tweets about women, Jews, and Israel, including one from 2010 that read "South Africans know how to recycle like Israel knows how to be peaceful." Comedy Central said it was unfair to judge Noah based on a few jokes, and Noah himself tweeted: "To reduce my views to a handful of jokes that didn't land is not a true reflection of my character, nor my evolution as a comedian."

Anne Frank died earlier than thought

Anne Frank died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen earlier than previously believed, say researchers who looked into the last months of the teenage diarist and her sister and concluded they died some time in February 1945, not March 1945. The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam made the claim March 31, the 70th anniversary of the official date of the sisters' deaths set by Dutch authorities after the war. The researchers used archives of the Red Cross, the International Tracing Service and the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, as well as eyewitness survivor testimonies. ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Gematria

40

The Boca Raton Synagogue in Boca Raton, Fla., has set a world record for the world's largest tallit, which is 40 times larger than a standard prayer shawl.

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The value of a Russian-based Genesis Philanthropy Group's grant to Danish Jews to increase security at Jewish sites in the wake of February's shul attack in Copenhagen.

Quotable

"Ukrainian Jews are part of the Ukrainian political nation."

— Josef Zissels, Kyiv-based vice-president of the World Jewish Congress. See page 42.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz takes a look at Holocaust humour in Jewish & Digital

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Letters to the Editor

The importance of dialogue

Allow me, with great respect, to react to Rabbi N. Daniel Korobkin, who, in his March 26 exchange with Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, ("The value of interfaith dialogue") is skeptical, indeed negative, about interreligious dialogue.

What is the fundamental Jewish objective in Christian-Jewish dialogue? To counteract anti-Semitism. Period. Everything else is secondary, a means to that end.

Dialogue helped bring about the Second Vatican Council, which abolished Catholic teaching and preaching of anti-Semitism.

Dialogue was instrumental in moving the Carmelite convent, with its conspicuous cross, away from Auschwitz.

Dialogue includes Holocaust education. For close to 40 years, we have prevailed on Christian churches, of many denominations, to devote a regular Sunday service to commemorating the Shoah. If I, and Holocaust survivors, were unable to set foot in a church, how would we carry out that education?

Dialogue also allows us to defend the State of Israel. We are not always successful, but no other Canadian church has followed the lead of the United Church [which endorsed a boycott on goods produced in the West Bank].

We had 19-1/2 centuries of anti-Semitism. We have had close to 70 years of dialogue, and at least here in Canada, although anti-Semitism has not completely disappeared, it is no longer the mainstream, pervasive, discriminatory phenomenon it was before World War II. This fall, the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal will be holding a conference to mark the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. Dialogue is a major asset to the Jewish community.

Victor C. Goldbloom
Montreal

Tories also aided refugees

The column "Canada failed the Pusama family" by Bernie Farber (March 26) deals with a human tragedy, indeed.

It may well be that government inaction is to blame. Nevertheless, Farber should refrain from contorting that unhappy episode into a political party advertisement.

I have never been a member of any political party. However, I recall, with great pain, successive Liberal governments that practised what Farber now characterizes as "no mercy" and "cruelty" in rejecting, consistently, my pleas, on behalf of Canadian Jewish Congress, to provide temporary sanctuary to specific Jews trapped, along with 4,500 of their fellow co-religionists, in their own country of Syria.

No amount of pleading, in letters and in face-to-face meetings with ministers and government officials, ever resulted in a positive response. All I was able to get were statements that they were "monitoring the situation" in that country, which was a Jewish prison.

Only when there were Conservative governments in office was I able to get minister's permits for Jewish refugees. In addition, ministers such as Ron Atkey and Barbara McDougall went out of their way to assist in the endeavour to free Syrian Jewry.

Judy Feld Carr
Toronto

A recipe for school growth

Contrary to the report, "Jewish high schools struggle with enrolment," (March 26), I am very proud to say that Montreal's Herzliah High School has been experiencing a very real increase in enrolment over the last three years. For this current, as well as for the coming academic year, our classes at all levels are full to capacity.

With this good news though, there are specific directions that Jewish schools should consider to reignite the passion for Jewish education in our community.

First, it is essential to ensure that classroom education is on trend with cutting-edge pedagogic practices. Combined with this, Jewish schools should be accredited by the Canadian Association of Independent Schools. This process requires a deep introspection in pedagogy, governance, financial management, fundraising and more.

Equally important, boards of directors should be constantly seeking ways for schools to demonstrate to the community the value in attending a Jewish high school.

Finally, elementary schools must be advocating to their parents the many benefits of a Jewish high school, as we know that Jewish identity-building and Israel advocacy can best be accomplished in a Jewish secondary school environment.

Lawrence Kutler, Head of School
Talmud Torah-Herzliah
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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Partners in our own redemption

Is the lesson of the Exodus that God will do all the heavy lifting for us or that we must show initiative, courage and faith before God will act?

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Splansky: Our Sages teach that we should "wear out our lips by saying the word dayeinu," which means "it would have been enough for us" (Leviticus Rabbah 35:12). The most famous example of that effort is the song written more than 1,100 years ago that we sing at the seder. No less than 15 stanzas drive home the point: "If God had brought the plagues upon the Egyptians, but had not given us their wealth, dayeinu!. If God had split the sea for us, but did not bring us through it onto dry land, dayeinu!

Rabbi Fishman: Classically understood, *Dayeinu* is a chance to keep asking for more while saying thank you But perhaps we could look at the song from a new perspective – maybe the words actually mean what they say.

So underserved were the Hebrew slaves that had God done nothing more for them than take them out of Egypt, it would have sufficed. With each stanza, then, we are left feeling overwhelmed by gratitude to a greater power that keeps going above and beyond.

After a while, however, we realize that the greater the gift, the greater the dependency.

Rabbi Splansky: The 14th-century Spanish commentator Abudarham asks if we really mean what we say when we say dayeinu. Would it really have been enough if God had brought us to Mount Sinai, but not given us the Torah? Would it really have been enough if God had brought us out of Egypt, but not into the land of Israel?

On its surface *Dayeinu* is a pile-on of gratitude, but underneath may be the implied request for more. We can't help but want more from God's outstretched and open hand. We praise the Creator of the fruit of the vine and we drink deep from the four cups, but our story isn't complete until Eliyahu drinks from his cup, too. Ours is an insatiable desire that human history will yet give way to complete redemption.

Rabbi Fishman: What our Sages are most wary about is an omnipotent God outshining His people and not leaving any room for them. Perhaps, like a rich uncle who keeps spoiling his nephew, our tradition was able to turn around and say "Enough already! You have given us so much, but now let us discover our destiny for ourselves!"

Rabbi Splansky: Similarly, we begin Pesach with the Haggadah's rendition of how we came to freedom by way of God's miracles and wonders. Our sages who constructed the Haggadah wrote Moses out of the narrative. But we end Pesach with the Torah's account that includes Moses, Miriam, and the "mixed multitude" driving toward change.

Rabbinic legend drives home the point that redemption requires human initiative. With Pharaoh's army at our backs and the sea before us, Moses raised his staff, and nothing happened. The sea was unchanged.

Then, a man named Nachshon ben Aminadav stepped into the water while declaring God's power and might. The waters rose to his knees, his hips, his neck, filled his throat. He was all but drowning in his faith when the sea flung open. An ordinary man forced the miracle.

The Yiddish expression, "Be a Nachshon" means "Take initiative." It may also come with theological undertones, as Yiddish expressions often do: to be a Nachshon is to be active in faith that God will act.

Rabbi Fishman: One of the few songs Paul McCartney and John Lennon wrote for Beatles drummer Ringo Starr was *With a Little Help from My Friends*. I believe that is a fitting title for God's relationship with us.

Yes there can be miracles, but first there needs to be a partner that God can call upon, even rely upon. God would rather a partnership than a dictatorship. God is looking for someone, who can show initiative and courage. God would rather see humanity transcend and overcome human nature than perform acts that defy human nature.

Thus, what begins with God ends with man. In a saga that sets the God of history against the most powerful nation on earth, the true test of freedom is whether we mortals wish to take the plunge.

Perhaps God, too, can sing these lyrics looking for someone to love: "Do you need anybody?/I need somebody to love/Could it be anybody?/I want somebody to love." ■

Every winter, we like to go down south. Who needs the cold at our age? Last year, we signed up for the Benjamin's Funeral Service Listings email. It gives us peace of mind to know that if someone in our community dies, we won't miss the chance to send our condolences. Benjamin's updates us every day – a free service that helps us stay in touch.

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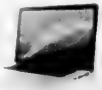

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From the Archives | Early Na'amat pioneers

PHOTO COURTESY OF MOLLIE ROTHMAN

A photo of the women of Club One of Pioneer Women, now known as Na'amat, taken in Toronto in the 1930s. Na'amat is celebrating its 90th year in Canada.

SeeJN | Clearance sale

HAIM ZACH/GPO PHOTO

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, seen in his office April 2 with Chief Sephardi Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef, left, and Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau, right, during a ceremony to sell the chametz of the State of Israel to Arab Israelis before the Passover holiday.

Guest Column

From disputation to dialogue

RABBI BARUCH FRYDMAN-KOHL

This past weekend, as Jews around the world observed Passover, western Christian communities marked Pâques, known in English as Easter. Eastern Christians will celebrate next Sunday.

This timely coincidence should remind us of the history of Jewish-Christian relations and help us realize how much has changed since the 1965 Vatican's *Nostre Aetate* ("In Our Era," Pope Paul VI's declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions), which reframed the relationship of the Church with the modern world and re-conceptualized the relationship of the Church to the Jewish People.

Although their spring dates often overlap, in 325 CE, the Church determined that Easter would no longer be dependent on Passover. Tragically, throughout the Middle Ages, European Jews experienced the Christian Holy Week as a time of physical danger and persecution, accusation and assault. In contrast, this season is now a time for Christians to note the Jewish roots and context of Jesus.

Six hundred years ago, the Disputation of Tortosa pitted a team of Jewish scholars against leaders of the Catholic Church. That encounter, and there were many others, sought to compel Jews to accept the arguments of their adversaries. In more recent years, notwithstanding moments of disagreement, the two religions have moved from disputation to dialogue, from conflict to conciliation.

Over the past 50 years, the Church has affirmed the teaching of the Apostle Paul that the divine covenant with the Jewish People is eternal. The Church has condemned anti-Semitism, affirmed that the "spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews" should lead to "mutual understanding and respect," accepted the continuity of the living Covenant between God and the Jews, and recognized the existence of the State of Israel as a manifestation of divine blessing for the Jewish People.

A year ago, Pope Francis made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, travelling to the land of the people into which Jesus was born. Already known for personal humility, modesty and a commitment to social justice, this Pope demonstrated remarkable solidarity with the Jewish community in the wake of the 1994 terror attacks in Buenos Aires and was involved in a joint Jewish-Catholic organization called Tzedakah (justice and charity). He has pledged to continue the values articulated in *Nostre Aetate*.

Last year, I joined with an imam, a priest and a minister to bring Jews, Muslims and Christians to the Holy Land. We travelled the Path of Abraham because Israel is the biblical and national homeland of the Jewish People, the spiritual birthplace of Christianity and the location of Muslim sacred sites. Our faiths are inextricably linked by ties of history, geography and theology. These ideals have been reaffirmed by Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, who has enjoyed a yom tov meal in my sukkah and who treasures a gift from the Toronto Board of Rabbis, *A Jewish Commentary to the New Testament*.

It would be an important gesture of solidarity for Canadian Catholic religious leaders to travel to Rome and Jerusalem with rabbis and significant lay leaders from the two communities. This would advance the mutual understanding and respect that already exists between our faiths. ■

Baruch Frydman-Kohl is the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Senior Rabbi of Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto and the co-chair of the Canadian rabbinic caucus of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

YONI WILL RETURN!

ESSAY

'No dogs, no Jews': no evidence

Toronto attempted to eliminate Gentiles Only signs like this one in 1932. ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Ron Csillag

The phrase has burrowed into the Canadian Jewish consciousness. Community leaders, politicians, local history buffs and yes, journalists, almost reflexively deploy the words to illustrate the horrible prejudices Jews encountered in Canada from the 1930s to the '50s.

The oft-cited message, repeats the *Canadian Encyclopedia*'s entry on anti-Semitism, appeared on signs in many places: at public parks and beaches in Toronto, outside resorts and hotels in the Laurentians and Ontario's cottage country, and in the vacation areas of Manitoba and British Columbia.

A few years ago, a Jewish candidate for public office uttered the "no dogs or Jews" meme. As recently as a few weeks ago, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), in a press release, recalled that "signs in public parks went so far as to declare: 'No dogs or Jews allowed.' "

There's a problem, however, and it may shock you: there is no proof that such signs existed. Several top Jewish historians don't recall ever encountering evidence of them in their research, with one acknowledging the signs could be an urban myth.

Pundits often say: "The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." True. But logic also tells us that given the voluminous files at various archives brimming with photographic and documentary material confirming rampant anti-Semitic attitudes in Canada in that era, wouldn't there be verification of the most insulting example, the sign declaring "No Dogs or Jews"?

There's not one.

The Canadian Jewish Congress national archives in Montreal and the Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre in Toronto hold photos of signs from the era with the following messages: "Christians Only – Jews Not Allowed"; "No Jews Wanted;" "Jews Not Allowed"; and several examples of "Gentiles Only."

They were found in Jackson's Point, Ont.; Forest Hill Lodge near Burleigh Falls, Ont.; the Mossington Park Resort on Lake Simcoe; the Cawthra Mansions Tea Rooms in Toronto; Lakeside Point in Scarborough; Musselman's Lake beach in Ontario; and Pleasant Valley Ranch in Oshawa.

There's one ominous number from the Quebec resort town of Ste. Agathe, north of Montreal, warning Jews to "scram while the going is good." (The French message says the village is French-Canadian, "and we will keep it that way.")

The Jewish Public Library in Montreal also has no record of signs referring to dogs.

The signs were said to be on two Toronto beaches: Sunnyside and Kew. The City of Toronto's online archives produced no evidence, while the response from archivist Liam Peppiatt to an inquiry a few weeks ago was: "I cannot seem to find anything in our database that reflects what you are looking for."

Toronto attempted to eliminate "Gentiles Only" signs starting in 1932, when the Jewish alderman John Judah Glass, chairman of the parks commission, succeeded in forbidding the erection of any signs on city property without commission approval. Ontario's 1944 Racial Discrimination Act banned racist signs and symbols (and would be used to overturn covenants forbidding the sale of land to Jews).

Several years ago, the late Stephen Speisman, the foremost historian of Jewish Toronto, wrote an irate letter to the *Toronto Star* complaining of an earlier writer's charge that the "No dogs or Jews" signs were myths. Speisman replied: "Although *I am not aware* of any photograph depicting such signs, there are enough long-time Toronto residents who claim to have seen them to suggest *they may have existed*," (emphasis added). With due respect to Speisman, that's a lot of waffling.

The writer of the original missive added that in a 1994 letter to him from Pierre Berton, the popular historian had said: "There is no evidence whatsoever – and I looked into this some years ago – that there was ever a sign in Toronto saying 'No dogs or Jews allowed.' "

Gerald Tulchinsky, in *Canada's Jews. A People's Journey*, noted the "no dogs" signs "allegedly" existed. Historians Lita-Rose Betcherman, Allan Levine and Frank Bialystok (and others) have written that the signs did exist (they were "displayed prominently," said Bialystok) but none provided references or examples.

Ira Robinson, chair of Concordia University's Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, said he could find "no visual evidence of 'No dogs and Jews' on the same sign." Such signs, he added, "may be an urban legend, but it is one solidly based on evident and pervasive anti-Semitic attitudes in both English and French Canada in that era."

Other Jewish academics said they had no knowledge of such signs, or just never researched them.

In their 1987 book *The Riot at Christie Pits*, Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir depended heavily on research by the late Ben Kayfetz, an expert in the history of Ontario Jewry. Both authors said Kayfetz claimed never to have seen such a sign and that he doubted their existence. There is "no hard evidence" to prove these signs existed, the authors concurred in a footnote.

However, "when challenged, several of our respondents emphatically asserted that they had seen them with their own eyes."

Irving Abella, co-author of *None is Too Many*, said he had no "personal knowledge" of such signs, though he, too, had met "many people who remember seeing them."

But memories can be notoriously muddy and conflate or combine different events. At resorts, on beaches and in public parks, there were doubtless signs reading "No Dogs" and others with some variation of "no Jews" or "Gentiles only." Over the decades, these two warnings could have morphed into a single declaration. CJC archivist Janice Rosen concurs: "I agree that there were separate signs and that memory fused them."

In no way does the issue of whether such signs existed detract from the virulent anti-Semitism of the era. But it's better to set record straight.

It's time to bring the dogs in. ■

Ron Csillag is a freelance writer in Toronto.

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Easily shunned: Canadian Jews behind bars

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

When Rabbi Zushe Silberstein heard that the Jewish inmate standing before him in a Montreal jail was due to be released in just three days, he didn't hesitate.

"My daughter is getting married this weekend," he said. "I would be honoured if you could attend the wedding."

The prisoner stared at him with unbelieving eyes, certain he had misheard. A rabbi inviting a newly released prisoner to a family wedding? It seemed impossible. But in the next breath, Rabbi Silberstein was offering to help arrange a suit if needed. It was clear his invitation came from the heart.

The conversation between the two men occurred two years ago, and that weekend, the ex-convict did indeed attend the wedding.

"No one knew where he came from, and at the wedding he danced with presidents of synagogues, family and friends, just like anyone else," Rabbi Silberstein recalls. "At one point he approached me, clearly emotional, asking what kind of gift he could give the bride and groom. I told him, 'The gift you'll give will be a promise that never again will you go back to jail.' He gave that gift and he's leading a straight life now."

The encounter was nothing extraordinary for Rabbi Silberstein, who heads Chabad Chabanel in Montreal and regularly visits Jewish inmates in Quebec jails. "We bring them food and sandwiches, we daven, put on tfillin with them and celebrate Jewish holidays with them," he says. There's a seder at Pesach, a Megillah reading on Purim, menorahs on Chanukah and services on Rosh Hashanah.

But it's not just about pushing spirituality, he insists.

"My main thrust has always been to tell these marginalized Jews, 'You're not alone, you're not forgotten. There's someone out there who cares about you.' We're there to comfort, to advise them and to show them the Jewish community cares about them... Chabad is at the forefront of this care, here and everywhere else," Rabbi Silberstein says.

Fifteen years ago, the rabbi founded Maison Belfield as a halfway house for up to six men at a time, offering newly released Jewish inmates shelter, food, clothing, therapy and reintegration assistance.

Correctional Service Canada said as of March 31, 2014 there were 177 offenders who identified themselves as being Jewish. SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO

Aiding Jewish prisoners is a consuming task and one he takes seriously.

"The [late Chabad] Rebbe [Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson] teaches us not to forget any Jew, no matter where she or he may be," he explains.

"If there's a Jewish person in need, we must care for them. It's why my children and I have more than once travelled 14 hours to help one single Jew in jail. My Shabbos table often has former inmates gathered around it."

Over the 30 years Rabbi Silberstein has been involved with Jewish prison chaplaincy, he's seen all kinds of Jews behind bars, "from a prominent lawyer to children from dysfunctional homes to people with substance abuse issues and those who are highly affluent," he says. "Nobody is immune to falling into this kind of situation."

He refused to disclose the number of Jews presently incarcerated in Montreal, saying only "one is too many" and acknowledging that High Holiday services and Passover seders in the jails see an attendance of up to 10 people.

Correctional Service Canada (CSC) said that as of March 31, 2014, there were 177 offenders who identified themselves as being Jewish, representing 0.8 per cent of the total prison population. That was up from 159 in April 2005.

CSC engages Jewish chaplains who regularly provide religious services, religious education programs and one-on-one counselling with Jewish inmates, said CSC spokesperson Julie O'Brien. "If a Jewish offender has a rabbi, the chaplain will put the two in contact."

Chaplains may approve kosher diets for inmates who require them, a religious dietary policy that was first formalized in 1992. It's a policy Rabbi Silberstein was very much involved in.

"Thirty years ago, the provincial government refused to allow kosher food, and we had to pay $30,000 to provide it to Jewish prisoners," he recalls. "Eventually, under threat that we'd go to the Supreme Court of Canada, the federal and provincial governments eventually provided that kosher food at government expense, after the minister saw that we were serious and would not give up. Today, in Quebec's prison systems, we have excellent co-operation for the needs of Jewish prisoners."

O'Brien says the CSC ensures spiritual accommodation to assist offenders in practising their religion or spirituality as fully as they desire within the correctional setting, up to a level generally available to people in the community. The Jewish community also has representation on the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy, an advisory group on religious and spiritual practice for inmates in CSC institutions.

Rabbi Ronald Weiss, director of chaplaincy services at Jewish Family & Child in Toronto, says that over the past 20 years, he and his team of chaplains have worked with federal, provincial and municipal correctional institutions across Ontario.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

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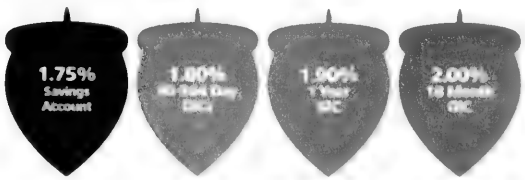

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 9, 2015

Finding plenty in simplicity

Mira Sucharov

When I was in Winnipeg several weeks ago to deliver a talk at the University of Winnipeg, my cousins took me on a stroll on the frozen Assiniboine River.

It was a crisp, sunny day, and we popped into several warming huts along the way that had been installed as part of an international design competition. One in particular caught our eye. Made of galvanized and painted corrugated steel in bright colours embedded in a snow drift, the hut included tubular openings protruding at various angles through which kids were keeping warm by climbing and laughing and sliding.

As we remarked on it, we heard a man quip that the "flying children" part was unintentional. We turned around, and there was Jason Halter, one of the installers of the hut, who had worked with architect Kevin Weiss's Weissbau design team on the project – made by Canada Culvert.

Turns out Jason is a fellow Jewish Winnipegger (I too spent my childhood there), who now lives in Toronto, where he runs a design company – with Anita Matusevics – called Wonder Inc. And while the jungle-gym aspect of the hut may have been unforeseen, there is a great deal of ecological intentionality – even infused with Jewish values, it turns out – behind Halter's own work. As we spoke, I stayed warm in my deep-freeze winter boots, and Jason kept steady on hockey skates, a pair of DJ-style earphones around his neck.

As Jason explained, the warming-hut structure – while itself not actually recycled – gives a nod to his current focus on simple and accessible "adaptive reuse." One of his latest projects is transforming shipping containers into small homes. Jason is passionate about the environmental possibilities of this – he sees it as an innovative way to develop more affordable housing. He calls it "micro architecture." With each container costing roughly $2,500, put four together and you've got an inexpensive, 1,280-square-foot house. Wonder Inc. works with Stor Stac in Toronto to retrofit the container for domestic use by spraying foam insulation, installing drywall and cutting out relevant openings.

Given that shipping containers are meant to withstand the rough, salty waters of an ocean journey, their high-iron-concentrated steel form is well suited to housing. He explained that the containers naturally turn orange with rust, making this form of architecture a contemporary statement about freezing the passage of time.

Jason's personal story is also one about the passage of time. His paternal grandmother, Rhoda Lechtzier-Halter, was the first Jewish girl born in Western Canada, in Winnipeg, in 1881. By the time he was born in 1966, there was an active and well-integrated Jewish community in Winnipeg. He, along with many other Jewish friends, attended University of Winnipeg Collegiate, while playing in Jewish hockey leagues.

Jason describes his work – and his "intensity and creative energy" – as being informed by Jewish values. "Inclusiveness and compassion are what I understand my Jewish roots to be. You always feel like an outsider. The type of work I do is on the fringe."

Jason might see himself as working on the margins, but that fringe is increasingly coming to find the centre. A September 2014 article in *The Atlantic* about a university professor in Austin, Texas, endeavouring to live in a retrofitted 36-square foot dumpster – replete with home decor items – captured the imagination of many on social media, who helped it go viral.

And visit Vipp's website – the company that's known for its trash bins – and you'll see it marketing its "Vipp Shelters" to urban hipsters who want all the design chic that any architecture magazine peddles.

On one foot (or boot or skate), as the old talmudic saying goes, we didn't get a chance to delve into the entire problem of housing and homelessness. But one could say that this was a good start, helping us enter the Passover season thinking about finding plenty in simplicity. ■

Mira Sucharov is associate professor of political science at Carleton University.

Ideology's captive

Mordechai Ben-Dat

The people of Israel selected their lists of new legislators almost a month ago. Benjamin Netanyahu's list received the most support among Israelis – 25 per cent – entitling his centre-right party to 30 members in the 120-seat Knesset and enabling him to undertake the task of cobbling together a governing coalition.

The president of the United States was clearly unhappy with the results. Ceaselessly, for nearly two weeks after the election he and his officials publicly pilloried Netanyahu whenever possible.

They justifiably criticized the Israeli prime minister for patently expedient, ethnically inappropriate remarks he made prior to the election in an 11th-hour appeal for their vote. But they unjustifiably criticized him for remarks he made that were appropriate, self-evident and truthful concerning the viability of reaching a two-state solution with the Mahmoud Abbas-led Palestinian leadership, especially in light of the current violent, unsettled circumstances in the region. President Barack Obama wilfully distorted the full context of Netanyahu's remarks, ignored his subsequent elaboration upon his original comments and resumed a personal campaign of ostracizing Netanyahu.

Some of our American coreligionists were also very unhappy with the results of the Israeli elections, none more so, it seems, than the political commentator Peter Beinart. He was so angry with "Jewish Israelis" for not voting the way he wanted that he urged Jewish Americans to "punish" the Israeli government for not adopting Obama's peace plan. In a March 19 article in *Ha'aretz*, Beinart suggested a list of punitive measures that he, like-minded Jewish Americans and the American government can – indeed must – implement until, presumably, Jewish Israelis finally behave the way he knows is best.

"Israelis have made their choice. Now it's time to make ours," Beinart wrote.

It does not seem to bother Beinart that his call to "punish" the lawfully elected government of Israel places him shoulder to shoulder alongside the haters of the Jewish state. He has substituted wishful thinking for reasoned judgment. This is not surprising since the ideology that provides him with the framework for solving Israel's conflict with the Palestinians – American liberalism – and that he unquestioningly embraces does not mesh with the facts-on-the-ground of the region, the irrefutable, harsh reality that he refuses to acknowledge.

The essence of that reality can be glimpsed in the following abbreviated list:

1. At least three times since 2000, Abbas has rejected signing a peace treaty with Israel.

2. Like his predecessor, Yasser Arafat, he cannot concede – among other things –that Israel is the sovereign state of the Jewish People.

3. Like his predecessor, Abbas has repeatedly violated the Oslo accords of 1993.

4. Three times since the summer of 2005, when Israel unilaterally left the Gaza Strip, the Jewish state has been at war with the genocidal, Islamist leaders of Gaza.

5. Abbas has entered into a unity pact with those same Islamist leaders.

6. Time and again, through its incitement against Israel, its collaboration with Israel's rabidly violent enemies and its hostile actions against the Jewish state, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has shown its indifference to trying to win the confidence of a majority of Israelis.

In a real sense, therefore, it was Abbas' PA that effectively "elected" Netanyahu's centre-right, 30-person list.

Beinart ignores this. He is slavishly captive to his ideology. Indeed, the ideology itself seems more important to him than the human beings for whose betterment he claims his ideology stands.

Beinart's repeated pronouncement of love for Israel reminds one of the *Peanuts* cartoon in which the often-testy Lucy dramatically professes her long-lasting and abiding love for all humanity. Then, noting the doubting look on Charlie Brown's face, Lucy clarifies her bombastic proclamation by stating that "it's just people I can't stand."

At every opportunity, Beinart proclaims his love for Israel. Perhaps, like Lucy, it's simply the Israelis he cannot stand. ■

The State of Israel is a wondrous dream come true

Rabbi Jay Kelman

"When God brought back those who returned to Zion, we were like dreamers."

Who would have, could have, believed that after 1,900 years – and a mere three years after the greatest tragedy in Jewish history – the Jewish People could become sovereign in their land? Throughout most of our exile, Israel was a distant place – physically, spiritually and, perhaps most important, conceptually.

Much of the opposition to Zionism was based on the notion that the mass return of the people to their land was something that had to await the messianic period. Re-establishing a Jewish state was considered otherworldly, the stuff of dreams, something we dare not try to implement in practice. The Holocaust "cured" most Jews of this way of thinking, but for the Jew living the nightmare of Auschwitz, the idea of the State of Israel was inconceivable even as a dream. Its creation would be a miracle as great – and likely greater – than any other in Jewish history. The return to our land, against all odds, allowed the people of Israel to turn the greatest of dreams into reality. As David Ben-Gurion famously remarked, in Israel, believing in miracles is the mark of a realist. The thrice recited prayer "to the city of Jerusalem [please] return in mercy" is being fulfilled before our very eyes.

The world is a much more scary place than it was 10 years ago, or even last year. The Jewish state and the Jewish People (and they are one and the same) are singled out for hatred more than any other. Missiles in the thousands – and perhaps hundreds of thousands – are pointed toward Israel. Yet the Jewish People have never been stronger, and we can and must confidently move forward.

One of the basic characteristics of a dream is the rapid pace at which time moves. While there may be much happening in a dream, the dream itself lasts mere seconds. The State of Israel has been in existence only 67 years. Yet in that historical blink of an eye, Israel has done what others have not accomplished in thousands of years. Torah, technology, science, art, music, innovation, agriculture and medicine – you name it, and Israel is a world leader. For a country with less than .1 per cent of the world's population, this is unbelievable, even for a dream.

The Talmud was greatly interested in the study of dreams, discussing their meaning and significance. Considering the role they play in biblical history, this is not surprising. Long before Freud, our sages surmised that dreams reflect reality – or if not actual reality, then the reality of our wants and desires: "A man is shown in his dreams only what is suggested by his own thoughts" (Brachot 55b). Furthermore, the Talmud teaches that "*hakol holech achar hapitaron*," all occurs according to the interpretation.

Nowhere is such interpretation more necessary than it is in regard to Israel. Sadly, not all recognize the tremendous gifts that God has blessed us with.

Israel is not a perfect country. It's run by humans, so how could it be otherwise? But it is a more perfect country than most, and perhaps it is more perfect than all. One can look at Israel and see division, challenges, political deadlock, social unrest and enemies all around. Yet one can interpret those as the inevitable growing pains of a young, dynamic, booming country. Should we not all be awestruck by all that Israel has accomplished? The rust of 1,900 years of exile does not come off overnight. Yet so much has been scraped off, revealing amazing beauty beneath.

If we want to see even more beauty, we must properly and positively interpret this most amazing of dreams, so that the greatest of dreams may continue to turn to reality. ■

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org

Celebrating the special moments

Norma Baumel Joseph

I write this column on March 27. You will read it during Passover. I mention these dates because they are significant to me both personally and communally. And I believe that the lessons I take from them are worth sharing.

Fifty years ago, on March 27, 1965, I married Rabbi Howard S. Joseph. Fifty years have passed, 50 years of a faithful, committed and loving relationship. It seems quite strange not only because of the rampant rate of divorce today, but because I am hard-pressed to locate such a long time span. Could it really be so many years?

I recall my father telling me that he could not imagine how he had aged, that in his head he was still a young man though the calendar said he was 85. Now it is my turn to experience that same dislocation. How could time have passed so swiftly that I cannot catch my breath? It has been a wonderful, adventurous life but there have also been many challenges. I never thought I would leave the United States. I never anticipated how much I would grow. I never understood how miraculous long-lasting love is. I never appreciated how much I would learn from my husband. And it all happened so quickly.

Consequently, I value the ability and necessity to celebrate these special moments. Celebrations help to mark the passage of time, to locate our transformations and perseverance. They make the private public, and in doing so, they generate a community of family and friends.

Correspondingly, we need the celebrations of our heritage that take place via holiday cycles.

Passover is the quintessential holiday for this type of experience. Passover marks the transformation of a group of slaves into a nation of free citizens. My marriage ceremony 50 years ago converted two individuals into one new entity; so, too, this holiday marks the creation of a new national unit. Before the Exodus, we were only a series of families. After it, even before Sinai, we became a people, united in history and legacy. We are not united politically or even in all our ritual practices. We are certainly not uniform in opinions. But we do comprise a unit, a known grouping of individuals. And that is celebrated most significantly through this holiday. Passover makes public our unique history and pride in our esteemed heritage.

And of course, it marks the transition of winter into spring (which we really need already). The natural element of our Jewish holidays is also a very important aspect of commemoration and tribute. Remembering who we are is aided by locating our existence within the cycle of the seasons. The ritual of the seder seems to be especially geared to stimulating this mindfulness. Celebrating the design of the seasons and the gifts of new agrarian cycles seems particularly appropriate.

Marking the passage of time through these rituals and ceremonies seems to me to be both ideally Jewish and incredibly necessary. How else can we grasp both our finitude and our eternal survival? The holidays link us to the past of our ancestors and bind us to the future of our inheritors. Celebrations of birthdays and anniversaries do the same. They all help to freeze frame our experiences and punctuate moments in our lives. In some sense, they stop the flow of time while celebrating it.

Finally, it is very important to me that the Passover process takes place in the domestic space. Of all our holidays, this one enables a sense of Jewishness that includes the private space of home with the public recognition of nationhood.

We sanctify ourselves and our history through this process of celebration. The public and private aspects of our lives can thus combine together to mark our own individual and communal existence and purpose. ■

News

Jewish friends group supports Yezidi cause in Canada

PAUL LUNGEN
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It's fair to say that until news agencies started taking the Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL) seriously, few people had heard of the Yezidi people. Or of the Chaldeans, the Assyrians or the Syriac, for that matter.

But as far as Mirza Ismail is concerned, they all share pretty much the same fate: they are non-Muslim minorities – considered infidels – living in Syria and Iraq, facing discrimination, forced conversion, sex slavery, mass rape and even death.

Ismail is an ethnic Yezidi, a member of an ancient people whose tradition states that they have lived in Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, for more than 6,700 years. They practise one of the world's oldest religions, but they have been oppressed and murdered in large numbers for generations. Ismail said the Yezidis have suffered 74 genocides over the centuries and have seen their number reduced from a high of 23 million to about two million, worldwide, today.

With the rise of the Islamic State, they have seen their ancestral lands occupied, their men slaughtered, their young women and girls made into sex slaves – bought and sold in markets – and their young boys kidnapped and raised to be jihadis.

It's a gruesome fate, one that the wider world has come to learn about as the Islamic State makes no effort to hide the mass executions and rapes that it perpetrates.

Ismail, who lives in the Greater Toronto Area, is looking for help. He's found some with a few Jewish activists who have formed a small support group called Canadian Jews and Friends of Yezidis.

A chance encounter last August led to formation of the group, said Rananah Goldhar, one of its founders. Following a rally at the Israeli Consulate on Bloor Street, some of the participants headed down to Queen's Park, where another rally was being held in support of Christians being persecuted in the Middle East.

They met a group of Yezidis taking part in that protest. Through them, they met Ismail, and soon after, the support group was formed.

"We were shocked when they told us that their women had just been kidnapped and there was a massacre in Iraq of their people," Goldhar said.

"I struggled with getting involved, but finally God answered my question: How can I work and take care of family and volunteer for Israel and be involved with the Yezidi effort? And God answered that you cannot be a Jew without weeping and running to help the Yezidis," she said.

Canadian Jews and Friends of Yezidis is sponsoring a speaking engagement by Ismail titled "Yezidis speak," on April 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the B'nai Brith building at 15 Hove St.

It has also posted a petition online, calling for Parliament to "provide military air cover and equipment to help the Yezidis stranded on Mount Sinjar [in Iraq]; bring to Canada as refugees some of the Yezidis who have been captured, raped, enslaved, and others who have survived their loved ones being killed; rescue women and children who were captured and enslaved by ISIS."

Mirza Ismail

Ismail, chair of Yezidi Human Rights Organization-International, was in Ottawa recently, where he made a pitch for increased Canadian aid for Yezidi refugees.

Just before that, he was in New York to meet officials of the United Nations, to press the Yezidi case for support.

The Canadian government can help with more humanitarian aid, by bringing refugees to Canada and by supplying arms to Yezidi fighters who are outgunned when facing heavily armed Islamic State personnel, he said.

Ismail believes the Jewish community should empathize with the Yezidis' fate, given their own tragic history of suffering genocide, and because Israelis well understand the kind of neighbourhood they live in. Israel has already aided the Yezidis with humanitarian assistance, but providing arms would help the 4,000 Yezidi fighters defend their community from ISIS jihadis, he said.

Ismail was in northern Iraq recently, near the border with Turkey, where he met Yezidi refugees. They have been living in tents or out in the open since last August, when Islamic State attacks forced Yezidis out of their homes with little more than the clothes on their backs. They found refuge on Mount Sinjar, but many were killed, abducted, raped and sold, he said. His own nieces, ranging in age from nine to 15, suffered that fate, he added.

Altogether, 10,000 Yezidis have been killed in the latest round of atrocities, and another 7,450 have been abducted. About 400 young women managed to escape their captors and find refugee in Yezidi areas, but they suffer from trauma, he said.

The Yezidi community in Canada is hardly equipped to help them. There are only about 50 families across the country, with the largest numbers in London (30 families), Winnipeg (20-25) and the GTA (10).

Ismail himself fled the region in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War.

There are about 23,000 Yezidi refugees living in Turkey and another 7,000 or 8,000 in Syria.

"Why not bring the Yezidi [to Canada] now?" he asked. "They will not be of harm to Canada. They are not a missionary religion... Canada would be assured that this religion would not harm the Canadian people," he said. ■

got community?

Chabad

Here To Help

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Chabad.ca

JEWISH RUSSIAN COMMUNITY CENTRE
JRCC.org

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF MARKHAM
ChabadMarkham.org

CHABAD @ FLAMINGO
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ChabadRC.org

CHABAD ISRAELI CENTER
Chabadisraeli.com

CHABAD OF MIDTOWN
ChabadMT.com

CHABAD OF YORK MILLS
ChabadYorkMills.com

CONGREGATION BETH JOSEPH LUBAVITCH
BethJosephLubavitch.com

CHABAD OF MISSISSAUGA
JewishMississauga.org

UPTOWN CHABAD
UptownChabad.com

CHABAD OF MAPLE
ChabadMaple.com

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JewishDT.com

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ChabadOfAurora.com

CHABAD OF DANFORTH-BEACHES
ChabadDB.com

CHABAD OF DURHAM REGION
JewishDurham.com

CHABAD NIAGARA
JewishNiagara.com

JEWISH YOUTH NETWORK
JewishYouth.ca

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CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF HAMILTON
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ChabadWestern.org

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JewishWaterloo.com

YORK U ROHR CHABAD STUDENT CENTER
JewishU.ca

CHABAD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
UTJews.com

CHABAD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
JewishGuelph.org

CHABAD OF KINGSTON
ChabadStudentCentre.ca

BRINGING THE LIGHT OF TORAH AND WARMTH OF MITZVOT TO JEWS EVERYWHERE

Cotler abstains from Syria vote in House of Commons

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Irwin Cotler broke ranks with the Liberal Party and abstained from voting on the Conservative government's motion to extend and expand Canada's military role against ISIS because he says it gives Syrian President Bashar Assad too much say over the situation.

On the other hand, Cotler has long called for military intervention against jihadist extremism, and specifically in Syria to stop what he considers war crimes perpetrated by the Assad regime.

Federal MPs voted 142-120 on March 30 in favour of extending the mission for up to one year and authorizing air strikes in Syria on ISIS targets. The Liberals and the opposition New Democratic Party did not support the original mission or its extension.

Cotler aide Michael Milech said some other Liberal MPs were absent for the vote, but Cotler was the only member of the party to be present in the House of Commons and to abstain.

Similarly, Cotler abstained in October on the government motion to approve a Canadian combat role in the U.S.-led coalition's campaign against ISIS.

At that time he abstained mainly because he could not abide any co-operation with Assad.

"My main concern has always been the protection of civilians in Syria and Iraq. In October, I was unable to support the government's motion because of the prime minister's statement that Canada would give a veto to the criminal Assad regime," Cotler said in a statement made in advance of the March 30 vote.

"I remain unable to support the government in this matter because its proposed expansion of Canada's mission continues to allow Assad to assault Syrian civilians with impunity. Moreover, the government's lack of clarity in October has only been compounded by a lack of forthrightness since."

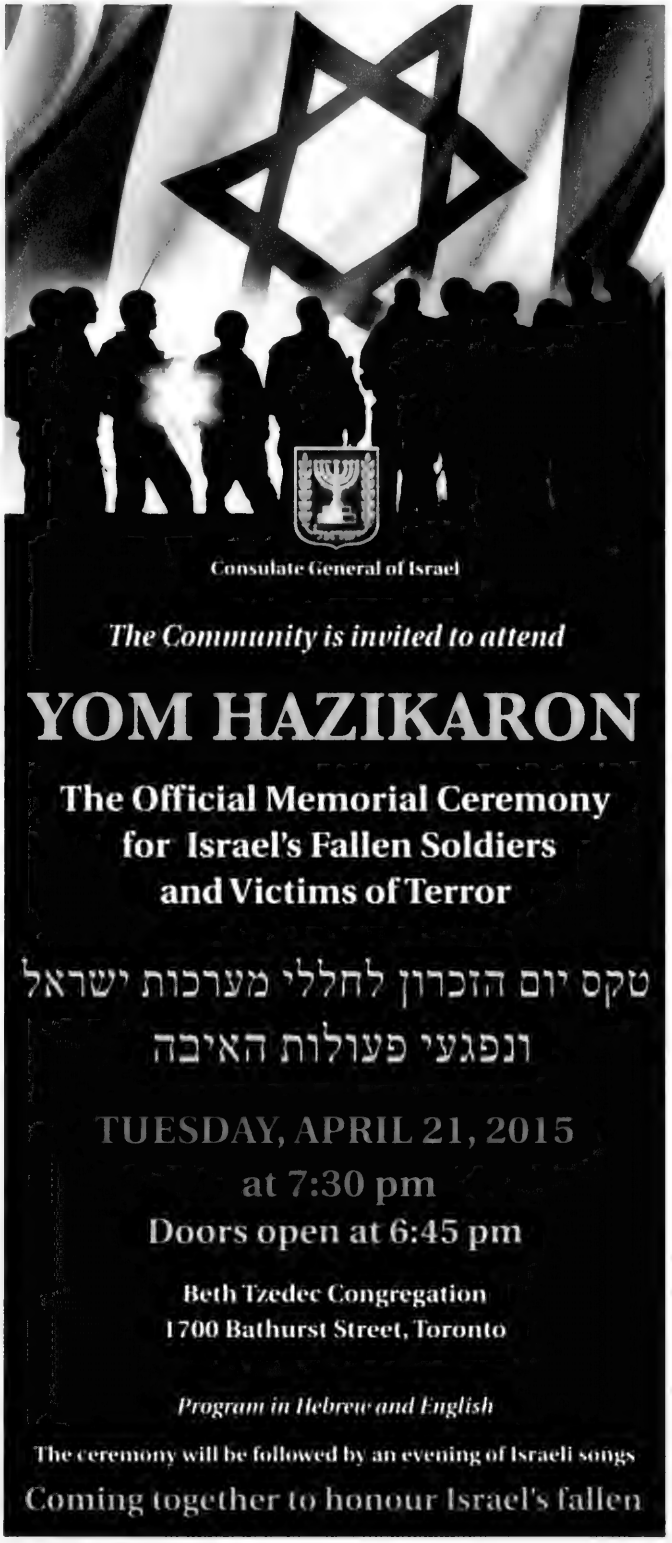
However, Cotler is not opposed to military intervention.

"I have been a longstanding proponent together with my Liberal colleagues – of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine.... It is because of international inaction three years ago against Syria's criminal Assad regime that radical jihadists including ISIS –have been able to take root, develop, and engage in a campaign of abhorrent brutality."

Cotler, who has represented Montreal's Mount Royal riding since 1999, is not running in the election later this year. ■

SeeJN | Sunnybrook veterans seder

Rabbi Ronald Weiss, director of chaplaincy services with Jewish Family & Child, led a seder April 1 for the 40 Jewish veterans at Sunnybrook Veterans Centre. Pictured are army veteran Lawrence Richmond, 88, left and RCAF vet Carl Dubin, 92, right, along with volunteer Hilda Harris, left, and Dubin's daughter Ellen Dubin.


Consulate General of Israel
The Community is invited to attend
YOM HAZIKARON
The Official Memorial Ceremony
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and Victims of Terror
טקס יום הזכרון לחללי מערכות ישראל
ונפגעי פעולות האיבה
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015
at 7:30 pm
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Beth Tzedec Congregation
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Jewish groups back motion on religious attire

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Jewish groups are watching with interest if a court will render an opinion on whether Quebecers' religious attire affects their access to justice.

Constitutional lawyer Julius Grey is scheduled to present a motion in Quebec Superior Court on April 30 seeking a legal opinion clarifying the right to wear such clothing as hijabs, kippot and turbans in the province's judicial system.

Grey and fellow Montreal lawyer Mathieu Bouchard filed the motion on behalf of Rania El-Alloul, the Muslim woman who was told in February by Quebec Court Judge Eliana Marengo to remove her hijab or her petition to get back her impounded car would not be heard. El-Alloul refused and the judge postponed the case. The matter was settled in March and the vehicle was returned.

Grey said this matter is about freedom of religion, equality and access to the courts.

"We are asking to establish a principle, a principle that is a legal one: that you cannot refuse to hear a litigant because of a hijab, a turban, a kippah," Grey was reported saying.

"A judge has to sit and judge between all the people who come, and we would like that to be made clear to all."

B'nai Brith Canada and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) said it supports the motion for clarification on Quebecers' rights. Both organizations felt the judge had no legal grounds to turn away El-Alloul from her court because she was wearing a traditional head scarf.

Marengo's refusal to hear El-Alloul if she wore her hijab is "an apparent violation of religious freedom protected by the Quebec and Canadian Charters of Rights," said lawyer Allan Adel, national chair of B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights.

"A legal principle needs to be established that a judge cannot refuse to hear a litigant because he or she may be wearing a hijab, turban or kippah."

David Ouellette, CIJA's associate director for Quebec public affairs, told *The CJN* that Marengo's decision was "wrong-headed and a denial of justice which should not be allowed to stand as a legal precedent."

It has no basis in law and went beyond even the Parti Québécois proposed charter of values, Ouellette pointed out. That charter would only have banned judges from wearing religious symbols on the grounds that they represent the state and should be – and look – neutral.

Ouellette said he has never heard of someone wearing a kippah being turned away from a court in Quebec. ■

SeeJN | Premier volunteers

Premier Kathleen Wynne, centre, lent a hand at the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section's Passover food drive on March 22, a week before delivery day, when an estimated 2,600 boxes of Pesach foods were given to people in need. With Wynne are NCJWC chapter co-presidents Ena Cord, left, and Dahlia Rusinek.

EMPLOYER
Federation CJA
1 Carré Cummings Square, | (5151, chemin de la Côte Sainte Catherine)
Montréal (Québec) | H3W 1M6 | Tel: 514 735 3541 | Fax: 514 735 8972

POSITION
Senior Advisor, Centennial Campaign

DESCRIPTION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Federation CJA is the central address for the Jewish community of Montreal. We lead in promoting a vibrant and caring Montreal Jewish community, one in which diversity is welcomed and Jewish life, education and values are nurtured and strengthened. Federation CJA embodies Jewish collective responsibility and advances communal interests locally, nationally, in Israel and beyond. Our fundraising arm, the Combined Jewish Appeal (CJA), raises funds annually from over 16,000 generous donors, enabling us to care for the vulnerable, strengthen Jewish identity, advocate for our community and stand with Israel.

SUMMARY OF THE POSITION

Federation CJA (FCJA) is looking for a senior endowment professional to help in designing, launching and implementing its centennial campaign to secure the future of the Jewish community of Montreal and to establish a permanent platform and infrastructure for endowments and planned giving. While the target figure of this campaign ("the Campaign") has not yet been determined, the Campaign will include endowed funds already raised for identity-strengthening initiatives, existing legacy gifts and commitments, and one or more capital projects to re-position the community for the realities of the 21st century.

This is a three-year position to advise and consult to both senior professionals and lay leaders of FCJA. We are looking for a highly seasoned endowment professional, with a track record of success in the Jewish federation world, who can forge consensus among top leadership on agreed Campaign goals and strategies, help to secure significant commitments to the Campaign itself, and lay the foundation for the establishment of a permanent endowment infrastructure for FCJA.

The position will be based in Montreal, but will require travel in the Greater Montreal area.

RESPONSIBILITIES

An Advisor will be hired by FCJA to advise and collaborate with its lay and professional leadership on the development and implementation of the Campaign. Reporting to the Chief Development Officer, the Advisor will provide overall direction to the Campaign and will oversee the following work:

- Development of a plan of action for the Campaign with appropriate time lines and educational, recognition and solicitation strategies
- Review and input into a budget developed by the CDO and CEO for the Campaign
- Securing, together with the CDO and CEO, of outstanding lay leadership for the Campaign
- Development and implementation of a strategy for working with lay leadership to make the Campaign successful
- Development of a financial goal for the Campaign
- Education and solicitation of donors as may be appropriate and in consideration of already existing donor relationships
- Education and solicitation of wealth advisors as may be appropriate to enlist their support of the Campaign
- Analysis of the donor base and development of research information as may be appropriate on each
- Development of a data bank of information on projects for funding currently or in the future, and assessment of the community's desire with regard to these two issues
- Development of a working relationship and written understanding with the Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal (JCF) with regard to its role in education, investment and asset management of contributed funds, and solicitation of leadership and major gift donors in connection with the Campaign
- Development of recognition strategies and educational programs and events to support the Campaign
- Supervision of staff and/or outside personnel or vendors to carry out all of the above strategies and tactics
- Development of a process to interact with and learn from other North American Jewish communities that have carried out similar campaigns
- Development of a planned giving and endowment infrastructure for FCJA

SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

- Strong emotional intelligence including excellent interpersonal, relationship building and leadership skills to interact with a diverse body of lay and professional leaders
- Ability to think strategically and guide others in a strategic planning process
- Proven ability to supervise, lead, mentor, coach and develop a diverse group of professionals
- Significant knowledge of planned giving legal instruments, law, and donor relationship management software
- Proven expertise in planning and executing a multi-faceted, multi-year fundraising campaign
- Experience and knowledge of developing the financial instruments for donors to fund
  - Capital Projects
  - Programmatic Projects
  - Endowments
  - Bequests and Life Insurance Policies
- Awareness and ability to effect both immediate and deferred gift planning endowment strategies
- Keen Understanding of the value and nature of the lay/professional partnership
- Extensive knowledge of the organized Jewish community, its practices and philanthropy
- Extensive knowledge of Jewish culture and values, and keen understanding of current issues in the Jewish world
- Knowledge of and connections to Jewish communities throughout North America, and relationships with key professionals in the field of planned giving and endowment philanthropy

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Graduate or professional degree in a relevant field
- Ten or more years experience working in or advising the Jewish federation system on endowment and planned giving
- Significant experience stewarding philanthropy with high net worth donors and families

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Full time position; 3-year term

SALARY

Salary in the range of $125,000 - $175,000

BENEFITS

A competitive package will include health, dental, life and disability insurance and pension benefits, 4 weeks' vacation, reimbursement of professional continuing education requirements, and may include a housing and car allowance.

APPLICATION

Interested candidates should send a résumé and cover letter to:
Mme Johane Codère | Director of Human Resources
johane.codere@federationcja.org | Tel: **514.345.2645**, Ext: **3238** | Fax: **514.735.8972**

EMPLOYEUR
Fédération CJA
1, Carré Cummings | (5151, chemin de la Côte Sainte Catherine)
Montréal (Québec) H3W 1M6 | Tél: 514 735 3541 | Téléc: 514 735 8972

POSTE
Conseiller principal, Campagne du Centenaire

DESCRIPTION DE L'ORGANISATION

La Fédération CJA est l'organe central de la communauté juive de Montréal. Elle est le chef de file de la promotion d'une communauté juive montréalaise dynamique et bienveillante, une communauté ouverte à la diversité qui favorise l'épanouissement et le renforcement de la vie, de l'éducation et des valeurs juives. La Fédération CJA incarne la responsabilité collective juive et fait valoir les intérêts de la communauté localement et nationalement ainsi qu'en Israël et au delà. Son organisme de financement, l'Appel juif unifié, recueille des fonds annuellement auprès de plus de 16 000 donateurs, ce qui lui permet de porter assistance aux membres vulnérables de la communauté, de contribuer au renforcement de l'identité juive, de défendre les droits de la communauté et d'appuyer Israël.

RÉSUMÉ DU POSTE

La Fédération CJA (FCJA) est à la recherche d'un professionnel expérimenté en fonds de dotation qui contribuera à la conception, au lancement et à la mise en place de la campagne de collecte de fonds de son centenaire. Cette campagne a pour mandats d'assurer l'avenir de la communauté juive montréalaise en plus d'établir une plateforme et une infrastructure permanentes pour les fonds de dotation et les dons planifiés. Bien que son objectif ne soit pas encore établi, cette campagne (« la Campagne ») se composera des fonds de dotation existants qui sont destinés à des initiatives de renforcement de l'identité, de legs et d'engagements existants de même que d'un ou de plusieurs projets d'immobilisation visant à l'arrimage de la communauté avec la réalité du 21e siècle.

Le détenteur de ce poste de trois ans conseillera et informera les professionnels principaux et les leaders bénévoles de la FCJA. Ce professionnel chevronné en fonds de dotation devra avoir fait ses preuves dans le monde des fédérations juives, pouvoir dégager un consensus au sein de la haute direction sur les objectifs et les stratégies de la Campagne, pouvoir contribuer à l'obtention d'engagements sérieux envers la Campagne et pouvoir poser les bases de l'infrastructure d'un fonds de dotation permanent pour la FCJA.

Le candidat sélectionné travaillera à Montréal, mais sera appelé à se déplacer dans la région métropolitaine montréalaise.

RESPONSABILITÉS

Le conseiller embauché par la FCJA devra travailler en étroite collaboration avec les leaders professionnels et bénévoles au développement et à la mise en place de la Campagne. Il relèvera du Chef du développement et fournira une orientation globale à la Campagne en plus de superviser :

- Le développement d'un plan d'action pour la Campagne comprenant un calendrier de même que des stratégies d'éducation, de reconnaissance et de sollicitation
- L'examen et les données du budget de la Campagne développé par le Chef du développement et le Chef de la direction
- De concert avec le Chef du développement et le Chef de la direction, la formation d'un groupe exceptionnel de leaders bénévoles pour la Campagne
- Le développement et la mise en place d'une stratège de travail en collaboration avec les leaders bénévoles afin d'assurer le succès de la Campagne
- L'établissement d'un objectif financier pour la Campagne
- L'éducation et la sollicitation des donateurs en fonction des relations existantes avec les donateurs
- L'éducation et la sollicitation des conseillers en gestion du patrimoine pour obtenir leur soutien à la Campagne
- L'analyse de la banque de données des donateurs et le développement des recherches, selon le cas
- La mise au point d'une banque de données de renseignements sur des projets de financement actuels et futurs et l'évaluation des attentes de la communauté relativement à ces deux enjeux
- L'établissement d'une relation de travail et d'une entente écrite avec La Fondation communautaire juive de Montréal (FCJ) quant au rôle de cette dernière dans les secteurs de l'éducation, des placements et de la gestion des actifs des fonds recueillis, la sollicitation des leaders et des grands donateurs en lien avec la Campagne
- Le développement de stratèges de reconnaissance ainsi que de programmes et d'événements éducatifs en appui à la Campagne
- Le travail du personnel interne ou externe ou encore des fournisseurs pour assurer l'exécution des stratèges et des tactiques ci-dessus
- La mise en place d'un processus d'interaction avec les communautés juives d'Amérique du Nord qui ont vécu des campagnes semblables
- Le développement d'une infrastructure de dons planifiés et de fonds de dotation pour la FCJA

COMPÉTENCES ET QUALITÉS REQUISES

- Intelligence émotionnelle supérieure incluant d'excellentes aptitudes en relations interpersonnelles, en établissement de relations et en leadership afin de pouvoir interagir avec un éventail varié de leaders bénévoles et professionnels
- Habileté à penser de manière stratégique et à guider ses collègues dans un processus de planification stratégique
- Habileté reconnue à superviser, diriger, servir de mentor, encadrer et développer un groupe de professionnels
- Solides connaissances des instruments juridiques relatifs aux dons planifiés, de la loi et des logiciels de gestion des relations avec les donateurs
- Expertise reconnue en planification et exécution d'une campagne de collecte de fonds à multiples volets étalée sur plusieurs années
- Expérience et capacité à développer des instruments financiers à l'intention des donateurs pour financer
  - Des projets d'immobilisation
  - Des projets liés à des programmes
  - Des fonds de dotation
  - Des legs et des polices d'assurance-vie
- Connaissances et habileté pour mettre en place des stratèges de dotation pour la planification de don immédiat et différé
- Compréhension approfondie de la valeur et de la nature des partenariats entre bénévoles et professionnels
- Vaste connaissance de la communauté juive organisée, de ses pratiques et de la philanthropie
- Vaste connaissance de la culture et des valeurs juives, compréhension approfondie des enjeux actuels du monde juif
- Relations avec les communautés juives d'Amérique du Nord, liens avec des professionnels clés du domaine des dons planifiés et des fonds de dotation destinés à la philanthropie

COMPÉTENCES RECHERCHÉES

- Diplôme universitaire ou professionnel dans un domaine pertinent
- Expérience d'au moins dix ans à travailler ou à conseiller des organisations du réseau des fédérations juives sur les fonds de dotation et les dons planifiés
- Solide expérience dans le milieu de la philanthropie auprès des familles et des donateurs fortunés

STATUT D'EMPLOI

Poste à temps plein; mandat de trois ans

ÉCHELLE SALARIALE

Le salaire se situe entre 125 000 $ et 175 000 $

AVANTAGES SOCIAUX

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MISE EN CANDIDATURE

Les candidats intéressés doivent faire parvenir leur curriculum vitae accompagné d'une lettre de motivation à :
Mme Johane Codère | Directrice des Ressources humaines
johane.codere@federationcja.org | Tél: **514.345.2645**, poste **3238** | Téléc: **514.735.8972**

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In Memory Of

ETEL SZPRINCE BRONSTETER, Z"L

The Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, extends our heartfelt condolences to the Bronsteter and Silver families on the passing of Etel Bronsteter, a Holocaust survivor, supporter of Holocaust education and friend of the Neuberger.

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B'nai Brith campaigns to stop Al-Quds Day rally

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

B'nai Brith Canada thinks that getting an early start and the introduction of Bill C-51 might give it a real shot this year at persuading the Ontario Legislative Assembly to prohibit an Al-Quds Day anti-Israel rally from taking place at Queen's Park this summer.

In association with a number of partner organizations, B'nai Brith launched its first "Stop Al-Quds Day" online petition March 25, and by April 1, it had collected more than 1,200 signatures.

Critics of the annual rallies say they promote hatred and anti-Semitism and that a protest calling for Israel's destruction should not be allowed at Queen's Park.

Jewish groups have tried unsuccessfully to have the events banned in the past, and they've brought comments made there to the attention of police, who also monitor the events, but no hate charges have been laid.

B'nai Brith communications officer Sam Eskenasi said that since 2009, his group has lobbied Ontario's three provincial political parties to push the Legislative Assembly to refuse a public permit to Al-Quds Day protesters.

He cited the federal government's recently proposed anti-terror law, Bill C-51, as a reason B'nai Brith's online campaign could gain traction with the legislature.

"We're trying to get our voices heard early this year, because in the past, the [Jewish] community only heard about the rally in the news or in a press release just before it happened," he told *The CJN*.

The online petition is addressed to David Joseph Levac, speaker of the Legislative Assembly, who is in charge of the grounds where the rally usually takes place: "We the undersigned... demand that you no longer allow hateful rallies promoting propaganda contrary to Canadian values at the seat of government power."

It continues: "With the increasing threat of home-grown radicalization, we cannot allow this anti-western rhetoric to continue unabated on the grounds of our legislature."

International Al-Quds Day, typically celebrated after the fast month of Ramadan, was started in 1979 by Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in solidarity with the Palestinians and in opposition to Zionism and the existence of Israel as a Jewish state.

Al-Quds Day rallies are held annually in cities across Canada and the United States. Last year's rally at Queen's Park was held July 26. Ramadan ends this year on July 17.

STOP AL-QUDS DAY

Screenshot from www.stopalquds.ca

According to an International Al-Quds Day website, "International Day of al-Quds is an annual event supporting a just peace for Palestine, and opposing apartheid Israel's control of Jerusalem."

The website's authors are not specifically identified, and the "About us" section says the Al-Quds Day events are "funded through many small, individual private donations within the U.S. and Canada."

B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn said that "as Canadians, we can no longer tolerate the grounds of our legislature being used for promoting Iranian government propaganda and supporting international terror as can be seen [at past years' protests] by things such as the waving of Hezbollah flags."

Partners of the "Stop Al-Quds Day" initiative include the groups One Free World International, Canadian Thinkers' Forum, Christians United for Israel Canada, Hasbara York and Canadians for Israel's Legal Rights.

Muslim, Pakistani Tahir Gora is director of the non-profit Canadian Thinkers' Forum, whose mission is to "address the challenges of Muslim segregation and radicalization faced in Canadian society."

Gora said his organization supports the campaign because it believes the Al-Quds Day rally is "based on hatred toward communities, especially Jewish... and creates a kind of tension between Jews and Muslims that we don't want to see in Canada."

Mostyn attributed non-Jewish groups' support of the cause to the fact "radicalization is an issue that affects all Canadians" and called the B'nai Brith-led campaign a "non-partisan... grassroots initiative comprised of individuals who believe in a tolerant and pluralistic society."

B'nai Brith has not received an official response yet from the speaker, Eskenasi said, but it expects to, and it hopes to garner more support in advance of the rally.

The petition can be found at www.stopalquds.ca.

Calls to the speaker of the legislature and were not returned by *The CJN*'s deadline, and efforts to reach last year's rally organizers were unsuccessful. ■

GUEST VOICE

Ontario should fund Jewish day schools

Cantor Eric Moses

As a leader in our Jewish community since 2001, I have watched the debates regarding funding for faith-based schools with keen interest. I also have a personal stake in this issue, as I have three children in the Jewish day school system.

I understand the politics of this debate. I understand the history surrounding the Ontario Liberal Party's position on this issue. What I can't grasp is how in today's society, when statistics show that organized religion is on the decline, Ontario is the only province with a significant Jewish population that doesn't partially fund its faith-based schools – unless you're Catholic. Not only does the province not fund faith-based schools, the Liberals repealed the tuition tax credit enacted by the previous Conservative government. How is this possible when we represent the largest Jewish community in Canada?

Ontario embraces its multiculturalism. Toronto is an example to the world of how a model society comprising people from all ethnic backgrounds can work and live together. However, among the provinces containing Canada's main Jewish centres – Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Ottawa – Ontario is the only province that does not provide some form of government funding to its non-Catholic faith-based schools. It is unconscionable to let this hypocrisy continue.

Based on the March 26 *CJN* article on this subject, in real terms, this means that Ottawa's Jewish high school will be closing its doors at the end of the academic year, while the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto has seen its enrolment decline from 1,500 students to 1,161 today, and somewhere between 1,000 to 1,100 next year.

I attended Premier Kathleen Wynne's Chanukah celebration at Queen's Park with my daughter. I heard the premier's words and those of her caucus members praising the efforts and contributions of the Jewish community to this province. However, without the necessary funding to sustain the education of our young people, they will not know what it is to be Jewish in another generation.

The present cost of a Jewish high school education is in excess of $25,000 per child. With an average family having two to three children, fees aren't sustainable for middle-class working parents. They must make incredible sacrifices and financial choices to give their children a Jewish education. It's a choice fewer are making.

> *It is unconscionable to let this hypocrisy continue*

We know that this cannot carry on. The cost gap between Jewish day schools and secular private schools has narrowed too much. For those who can afford the fees, many are opting for private schools that have fancier facilities and more extra-curricular activities. I speak to parents on a regular basis about the choices they're making regarding their children's Jewish education or lack thereof. I am speechless, because I am watching this situation unravel before my own eyes. Are we so powerless as a community to right this wrong?

I worked as a cantor in post-referendum Montreal from 1996 to 2000. While there were many negative things an anglophone living in Quebec could say about the Parti Québécois government of the day, it supported and funded Jewish schools, and the enrolment in Montreal's Jewish day schools per capita was exceedingly high.

Why can't Ontario's government do the right thing like British Columbia, Quebec and Manitoba have done? We must urge our MPPs to reopen this discussion. We must be unwavering in our pursuit and make our voices heard on this subject. We cannot sugar-coat this issue. It is blatantly unfair – period! We all know it, but what are we going to do about it? Jewish schools deserve some form of government funding. We owe it to our children.

After all, shouldn't every Jew know the difference between *Kiddush* and *Kaddish*? ■

Cantor Eric Moses is the chazzan at Beth Sholom Synagogue in Toronto.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 9, 2015

Parliament unanimously passes Cotler's Magnitsky motion

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Sergei Magnitsky is not that well known in Canada, but in Russia, he's a household name.

That's because he was jailed in his homeland on trumped up charges after exposing massive corruption and theft from state enterprises. He died in custody in November 2009 after nearly one year in jail.

Irwin Cotler, the Liberal MP who has followed the Magnitsky case for several years, presented a motion in Parliament about two weeks ago calling for a Magnitsky law. The motion called for legislation that would impose "sanctions against foreign nationals involved in the detention, torture and death of Sergei Magnitsky."

The motion also asks the government to "explore sanctions as appropriate against any foreign nationals responsible for violations of internationally recognized human rights in a foreign country, when authorities in that country are unable or unwilling to conduct a thorough, independent and objective investigation of the violations."

Sergei Magnitsky

The motion was adopted unanimously and the Conservative government has indicated it will present a bill to sanction officials in any country that are involved in human rights violations.

Cotler first introduced a private member's bill about four years ago calling for a Magnitsky law. The bill called for asset freezes and travel restrictions, among other measures.

> *"I'm pleased, but it's in remembrance not only of a great hero, Sergei Magnitsky, but the great hero of the human rights movements in Russia, Boris Nemtsov."*

Cotler noted that Boris Nemtsov, one of the most prominent liberal politicians and opposition leaders in Russia, had been a supporter of Magnitsky legislation in Europe to address Russia's "culture of corruption."

Nemtsov had come to Ottawa three years ago to show his support for Cotler's Magnitsky law proposal.

"He called on us to do what we are doing now," Cotler said. "I'm pleased, but it's in remembrance not only of a great hero, Sergei Magnitsky, but the great hero of the human rights movements in Russia, Boris Nemtsov."

"Nemtsov was the leading global advocate for Magnitsky legislation and sanctions. He was a strong supporter outside of Canada for the adoption of this legislation within Canada," Cotler said.

Nemtsov was assassinated in Moscow on Feb. 27. He had criticized widespread official corruption in Russia and had objected to Russian involvement in Ukraine.

Magnitsky was a lawyer and auditor who was hired by Hermitage Capital Management to investigate charges of tax fraud that the company was facing.

Hermitage's co-founder and CEO, Bill Browder, had invested in Russia and had revealed widespread corruption in the country before he was barred from re-entering the country.

During his investigation, Magnitsky uncovered a $230-million tax fraud. He was arrested soon afterward. ■

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Students learn about each other at interfaith seder

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

From left, Marwa Salyani, Zahra Jaffer and Sabrina Sefton

About 140 Jewish, Muslim and Catholic students gathered at Leo Baeck Day School's north campus on March 31 to take part in an interfaith Passover seder, in an ongoing effort to build bridges between the faith communities.

Rabbi Noam Katz, Leo Baeck's dean of Jewish living, explained that while this is not the first time As-Sadiq Islamic School and St. Joseph the Worker Catholic School have come together, this is the first year that visits were planned at each school "to enhance and promote the interfaith dialogue and learning."

Last month, Grade 7 Leo Baeck students were invited to As-Sadiq in Thornhill, Ont., where they received an introduction to Islam from the school's imam.

Students from both schools participated in a group-building activity, a tour of the school, a discussion about the similarities between the Jewish and Muslim faiths, and Rabbi Katz was invited to speak about the values of Reform Judaism.

Before Passover, Leo Baeck students hosted As-Sadiq and St. Joseph the Worker students at an interfaith seder.

"Our students are not just in the role of seder leaders, but teachers of some of the Jewish traditions, the symbols on the seder plate, the story of the exodus from Egypt," Rabbi Katz said in advance of the March 31 event.

"But we'll also have some activities that the kids do interactively throughout the course of the seder. So, for example, we come to the piece about the plagues that befell Egypt, and in interfaith groups, the kids will talk around the table about modern-day plagues, whether environmental or man-made."

He said representatives from each school were also invited to speak about their own holidays, such as Easter and Ramadan.

"I think another important goal for us as a school is to make sure that students understand... the commonalities between them," said Yvette Burke, Leo Baeck's principal of the north campus. "And that they are just kids and they do share certain elements of growing up together that are very similar, and to sort of demystify the whole idea that they are not so different."

Rabbi Katz said one of the driving forces behind the initiative is to help students and the rest of the Jewish community, broaden their horizons.

"We want to help our students, and by extension our school and our community, know our neighbours who often live in the same neighbourhoods, but whom they might never speak to without this kind of an experience," Rabbi Katz said.

"One of our Jewish and universal teachings is to love our neighbour as yourself, and my commentary or addendum to that is, how can you love your neighbour if you don't even know your neighbour?"

This interfaith program expanded last year to Leo Baeck's south campus. The Islamic Foundation School and Holy Rosary Catholic School are the other two schools involved.

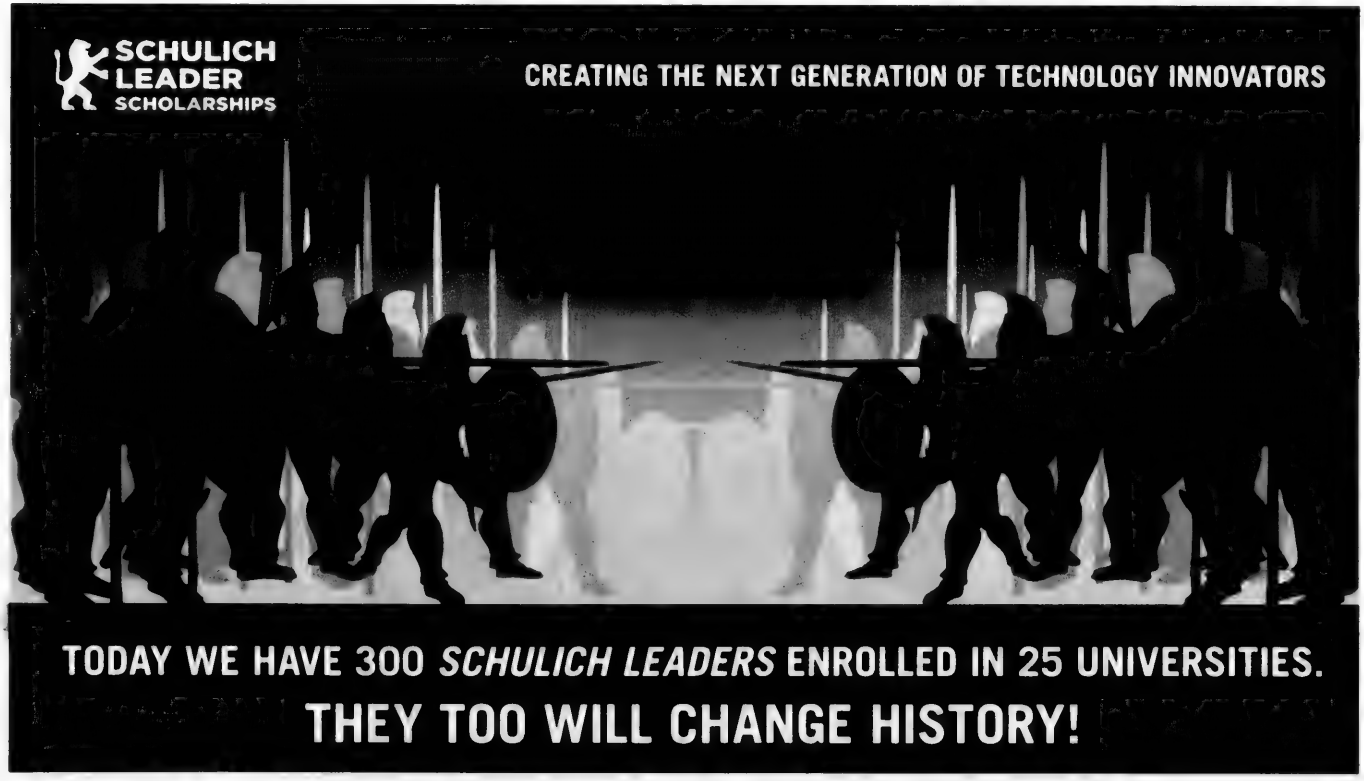
Burke said the interfaith activities have been positive and eye-opening for the students. "They spoke about it quite a bit and reflected upon it."

As-Sadiq student Zainab Saleh said it was fun to learn about the different religions and meet other students.

"We all have the same hobbies, and even though we're different, we're pretty much the same and we live the same lifestyle. We made many friends and it was fun," Saleh said.

Leo Baeck student Leeor Freiman said, "I showed them my religion and they showed me theirs... It was a great experience and I learned a lot from their cultures and I hope they learned a lot from mine, and I look forward to another time that we do this together."

Following the Pesach break, there are plans to visit the Catholic school. ■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No charges for 'Dawgfather' over tweets, Halifax police say

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

Halifax hot dog vendor Jerry Reddick, also known as the Dawgfather, has avoided charges after he posted offensive and disturbing anti-Semitic remarks on social media in January.

"An investigation into the nature of comments posted on a social media site in January has concluded without charges," a spokesperson for Halifax Regional Police said in a statement March 30.

On Jan. 14, Reddick posted several comments on Twitter, some referring to Jews and the Holocaust, including a reference to ovens, as well as the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States.

Police received a complaint about the comments the day they were posted.

In the statement, police spokesperson Pierre Bordages said, "As a result of the investigation, which included consultation with the Public Prosecution Service, investigators determined that the posts do not meet the threshold for a criminal code charge to be laid. While Halifax Regional Police and undoubtedly many other people found these comments distasteful, shocking and offensive, they do not constitute a hate-related offence and the investigation into this matter has been concluded."

Jerry Reddick a.k.a. the "Dawgfather"
TWITTER PHOTO

When confronted about the remarks in January, Reddick said he made the comments to prove a point about the different standards applied to freedom of expression, a hot topic that was under intense debate around the world after the mass shooting at the Paris satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and the deaths of shoppers at the Hyper Cacher supermarket days before.

However, a couple of days later, Reddick, a proud Muslim who has sold hot dogs outside Dalhousie University's Student Union Building for many years, deleted the controversial postings and apologized.

> *I used a sledgehammer instead of a feather to get my point across about the double standard in free speech*

"I used a sledgehammer instead of a feather to get my point across about the double standard in free speech. I was wrong and I apologize!" he tweeted.

Speaking March 30, Reddick said he's glad the case is over.

"It wasn't anti-Semitic," he said. "My question was how do you post a picture of a Muslim-looking man with a bomb on his head [and] that's not considered hate speech."

Given the upset his posts caused, Reddick acknowledged he could have been clearer in what he what he was trying to do.

One of Reddick's offending tweets read, "Hitler asked his people, "How do you like your Jews"? Well done with a bagel and a kosher pickle. Freedom of speech goes both ways."

Reddick also tweeted, "What do you call a Jew sitting in one of Hitler's ovens? Toast, because they're cooked. Freedom of speech goes both ways!" And, "What does one Jew say to the other Jew when they walk by a hot oven? Do you recognize anyone?"

Another post read: "In 2001 I thought Americans could fly by the way they were jumping from the twin towers in New York."

Jon Goldberg, executive director of the Atlantic Jewish Council, said he was disappointed, but not surprised that charges weren't laid, because it's very difficult to get someone charged under that particular Criminal Code section.

"The threshold is high," Goldberg said. "Whether remarks like that qualify as a prosecution or not, we will never stop my efforts to rebut such comments and to combat this overt anti-Semitism that was shown by the Dawgfather." ■

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FEATURED SPEAKERS:

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Michael Korman, B. Comm, FMA, FCSI, *Financial Advisor*, Raymond James Ltd., Michael will discuss financial challenges and review portfolio documentation required for memory challenged clients. If you have a loved one with early or advanced dementia, we'll examine portfolio process best suited for managing income.

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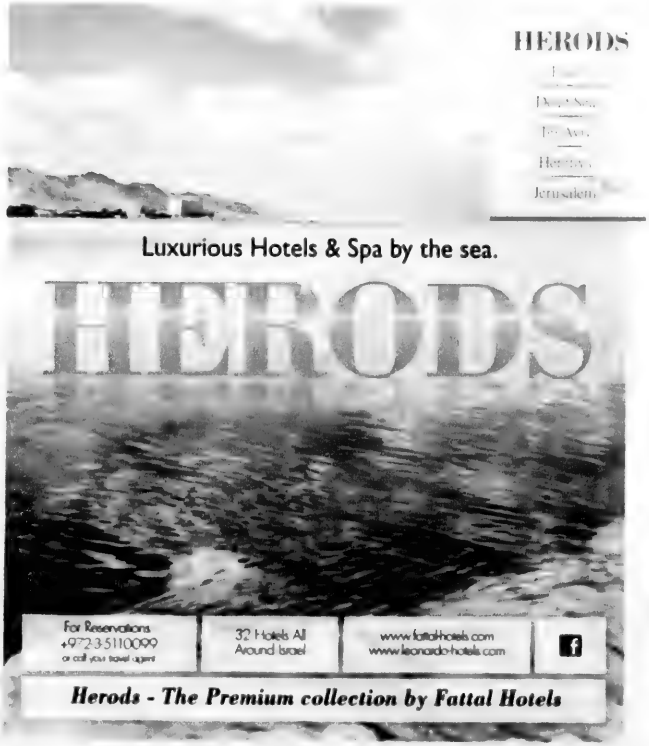

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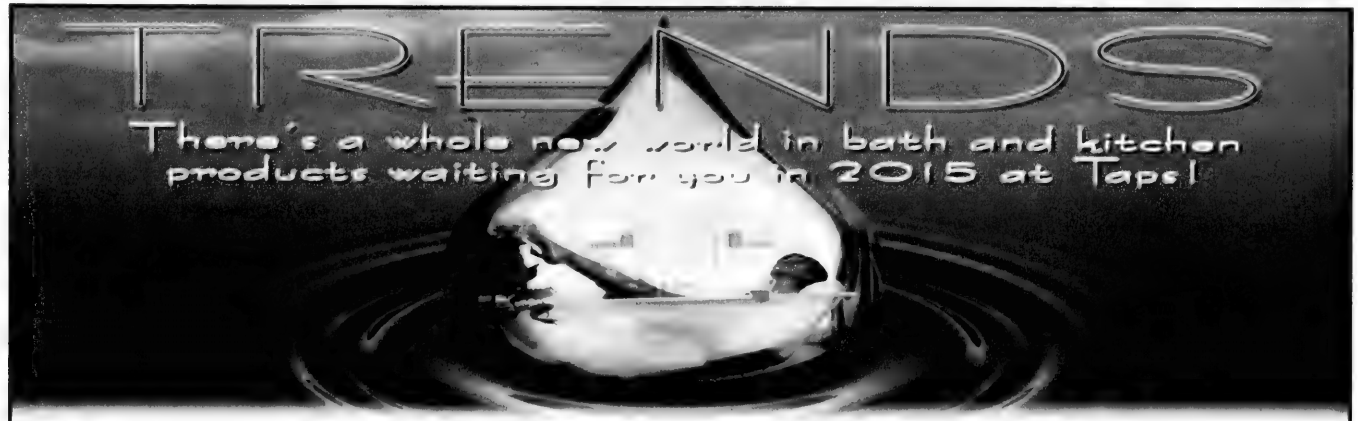

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***Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman** is President of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and the Director of its iEngage Project. He has a Ph.D. in Jewish philosophy from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a Master of Arts in political philosophy from New York University, a Master of Arts in religion from Temple University, and Rabbinic ordination from the Shalom Hartman Institute*

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York prof to make aliyah this summer

Toronto Partnership Minyan honouring couple

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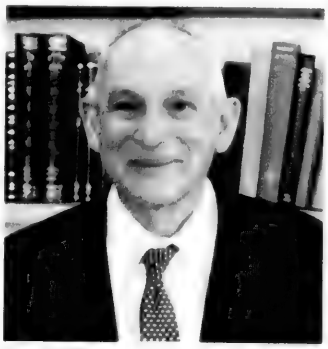

Martin Lockshin

York University professor Martin Lockshin and his wife Ruth will fulfil a longstanding dream when they make aliyah at the beginning of the summer. He will be on a one-year sabbatical as of July 1 before retiring next year.

While the Lockshins look forward to joining two of their adult children and four grandchildren who live in Israel (the other two are in the United States), he said, "It is with great sadness that we're anticipating leaving."

Lockshin, who grew up at Beth Tzedec Congregation, has family roots in the city dating back more than 100 years. His grandparents were married here in 1906.

Now winding up a stint as chair of York's humanities department, Lockshin, who turns 64 this month, has been on the faculty since 1978. A former director of the school's Centre for Jewish Studies and a former co-ordinator of its Jewish Teacher Education Program, his main area of academic expertise is the history of Jewish biblical interpretation.

As well, Lockshin, who has smichah from Yeshivat Mercaz Harav Kook in Jerusalem, is a *CJN* columnist and has served as rabbi and halachic adviser for the Toronto Partnership Minyan (TPM) – one of a small subset of Orthodox congregations offering increased ritual participation for women – since its inception in 2008. The congregation will honour him and his wife on April 19 at an event celebrating the donation of a Torah that Lockshin's late father Louis, a former president of the Jewish National Fund of Canada, bought many years ago.

Over the coming year in Israel, Lockshin's research will focus on the history of pshat, the "plain meaning" interpretation of biblical text. He expects to continue writing and researching after his sabbatical year.

As a Jewish studies professor on a campus that has seen its share of high-profile anti-Israel activity, Lockshin said, "It's a challenge, [but] people have to remember that universities are such better places for Jews now than they were 50 or 60 years ago… There were quotas for Jews entering into university. It was almost impossible for a Jew to become a professor."

When Lockshin was growing up, university-level Jewish studies, as a rule, were only offered at Protestant or Catholic schools of theology, he said.

It wasn't until he was in his early 20s that he met David Berger – then a professor of Jewish studies at Brooklyn College, now the dean of the graduate school of Jewish studies at Yeshiva University – and realized he might be able to pursue an academic career in Jewish studies.

To a certain degree, Lockshin said, he sees the amount of on-campus opposition to the State of Israel as "my fault – our fault – that we're not getting across [Israel's] message well enough." A founder of Canadian Academic Friends of Israel, Lockshin has also met with senior colleagues at York, representing only himself, to discuss issues facing students who are "made to feel uncomfortable" for supporting Israel.

"It's not a problem that was created by the universities," Lockshin said. "It's a problem that exists in Canadian society, and we have to figure out better how to solve it."

To the best of his knowledge, in his early years at York, Lockshin was the only person to wear a kippah on campus. Even among his Jewish studies colleagues at other universities, it was a rarity, he said. But no one ever gave him a hard time about it, he noted, adding that York is "truly a multicultural place."

Neither has it been a problem for him to be an observant Jew in a department where most of his colleagues are not Jewish, he said.

A firm believer in the value of liberal arts and humanities, Lockshin said that those studies "give you a wonderful education that will help you in life in everything you're doing." He said that a former student of his, now a lawyer, told him that learning to read and interpret biblical text has helped him to critically read law texts.

"I still believe in this enterprise called the liberal arts," Lockshin said. Many years ago, as a student at the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, he didn't imagine that his Latin courses would be useful in his future career. "You never know what's going to be practical." ■

'Torah relay' marks Ottawa shul's move uptown

Beth Shalom president Peter Greenberg, centre, Jewish Federation of Ottawa president Andrea Freedman and Cantor Daniel Benlolo arrive at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre.

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

A weekend of festivities marked the end of an era as Congregation Beth Shalom concluded its 60-year history as Ottawa's "downtown shul."

The culmination of the March 27-29 weekend – which included a sold-out (with large waiting list) Shabbat dinner; a celebratory Shabbat service and kiddush that honoured all past presidents of the congregation; and a Saturday night open mike musical event that lasted into the wee hours – was a unique 10-kilometre Torah relay walk.

"We wanted to involve as many of our congregants as possible," said the Conservative congregation's vice-president, Jane Shore, as she explained the plan for moving the sacred Torah scrolls from the old location to the congregation's temporary new location at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre (SJCC) in the city's west end.

Sixty years ago, when the synagogue was built, the hub of the Jewish community was downtown, but over the years, Jews moved to the suburbs and the congregation dwindled. It currently has about 300 families.

In 2011, the congregation voted to sell its 81,000-square-foot property, which will be redeveloped with condominiums and retail space.

The congregation has a one-year lease with the SJCC, where it will hold Shabbat and holiday services. Weekday services will take place next door at Hillel Lodge seniors residence. There have been ongoing discussions about amalgamation with conservative Agudath Israel Congregation, but as of now, no decisions have been made about where Congregation Beth Shalom will find itself at the end of its Soloway lease.

For the Torah relay, it was decided that volunteers would carry the scrolls the entire way, passing them from hand to hand as they went.

"Each segment was eight minutes and we [did] it in groups. Some groups [were] families, some were friends," Shore said. "The route went past City Hall, through Centretown where many Jews lived at one time. Many people chose the section according to where they had lived."

After a brief send-off at the old Chapel Street location and good wishes from Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak and several local politicians, the relay began.

One of the first group of carriers was Dan Kimmel.

"My family joined the synagogue in 1960 and we have been members ever since. I was president from 1980 to '83," he said.

The walk's logistics were co-ordinated by board members Lorne Goldstein and Suzi Sauve, and it was a daunting task. People had to be at the right place at the right time in order to keep the relay going and keep the group together. A few people – including Liberal MP Mauril Belanger, who represents Ottawa-Vanier – walked the entire 10 kilometres.

At exactly 1 p.m., the target arrival time, the group arrived at the SJCC singing *Hava Nagila* and were met by enthusiastic supporters who accompanied them inside. As the Torahs were placed inside the ark, there was singing and dancing, followed by a quick Minchah service led by Beth Shalom spiritual leader Cantor Daniel Benlolo.

Many in the audience were visibly emotional as they and their families had grown up in the synagogue, marking all their important family milestones there. ■

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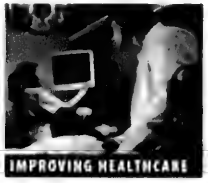
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GUEST VOICE

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents

Rabbi Ronald Weiss

What would you do if you met a child who was lost?

I have no doubt that virtually everyone who encounters a lost child crying in the street or at the mall would stop and offer assistance. I believe most people would try to calm the child and call 911 to alert the authorities of the whereabouts of the child. Then, I believe, most people would stay with the child until help arrives. I do not know many people who would continue on their way, leaving a lost child behind without the benefit or protection of adult supervision.

But what if the child was not lost in the street or at the mall? What if the child was lost in life? What would our response be then? What if the child was lost because he or she was bereft of a family or deprived of a home?

Children are the most vulnerable members of society. Every thinking person understands the fragility of a child's situation and the fundamental dependence a child has for a loving, caring, family.

Pre-eminent among the many indisputable truths in our society is the certainty that every child needs – and deserves – a home.

A place of safety and refuge, a home is where a child can grow and develop nurtured by the love, warmth and security of a family. It almost goes without saying that the absence of such a home in the life of a child can be devastating.

While many may live with the illusion that Jews don't have this type of problem, the harsh reality is that many families in our community today are troubled and do not function well. As the government mandated child welfare agency in the Jewish community, Jewish Family & Child works with families having difficulties in order to help keep them intact and improve their ability to work through their challenges in a healthy fashion.

We are pleased to announce that the number of children coming into the care of JF&CS continues to fall. This means that we, as an agency, are doing a better job at helping parents adapt, learn and grow in response to changes in the life of a family. Strengthening families makes them more resilient in dealing with the myriad of challenges we all face daily.

Nevertheless, we are not always successful. In those extreme cases where a family's problems actually place a child at risk, the need to provide a safe and secure environment for that child requires a foster home setting. A foster home is where people who care about the welfare of all children open their home and their hearts to give a child a place in their family.

> *A home is where a child can grow and develop nurtured by the love, warmth and security of a family*

The Talmud teaches us (Ketubot 50a) about one who is constantly involved in the mitzvah of tzedakah. Here the term tzedakah does not refer to giving money to charity, but of the literal translation – acting righteously. One who gives charity is a person who acts righteously but, of course, there are other activities through which one behaves in a righteous fashion. When the Talmud speaks of one who is involved in tzedakah at all times, the example it cites is one who raises and gives support to a child. Providing a safe haven to a child is seen by our sages as the pinnacle of continuous righteousness.

The first priority of foster care is always for the children in care to go home to their natural families. Sadly, this is not always possible. In the event a child or youth cannot go home to their biological family, we need to keep them connected to our community. Research has shown that the best way to do this is to keep them attached to a family that cares about them. (The same research demonstrates that there are poor outcomes for youth who age out of care. They often struggle. They frequently feel alone and disconnected from most things Jewish.)

There is only one thing worse than a troubled family placing a child at risk – and that is not having a safe place for that child – a place that can help restore the child's sense of well-being.

The message is simple: Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. ■

Rabbi Ronald Weiss is director of chaplaincy services at Jewish Family & Child. For more information, visit jfandcs.com/fosterandadopt.

Jewish prisoners tend to be marginalized, rabbi says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"I feel we do a good job within the constraints placed upon us in meeting the needs of those Jews in jail," he says. "The institutions by and large are very understanding and will do what they can to meet legitimate and reasonable requests. But individuals in custody are not happy campers – they're legitimately unhappy with their situation. I wish we could do more for them, but we're not lawyers, we're not able to put up bail or sign on as surety. There are specific rules within which we have to operate."

There were 50 Jewish inmates in Ontario jails 20 years ago, but today Weiss estimates the number is closer to 75.

Rabbi Zushe Silberstein

> *When Jewish inmates have needs that come to our attention, we meet them to the best of our ability*
>
> **Rabbi Ronald Weiss**

"When Jewish inmates have needs that come to our attention, we meet them to the best of our ability in working with the institutions," he says.

In some cases, this involves making tfillin available to Jewish inmates who want to put them on. Jail can present significant challenges to daily observance, Rabbi Weiss says. In most cases, an inmate can only put on tfillin under supervision because the straps are deemed a security risk by the Ministry of Correctional Services.

Funding for visits to Jewish inmates and to support the expenses of institutions such as Maison Belfield in Montreal is direly needed, Rabbi Silberstein says.

"Prayer books cost money and so does the seder, the tfillin and the food we bring to Jewish inmates each week," he says. "Our halfway house is also an expensive proposition, with a mortgage and heating to be paid and the costs of regular living supplies in addition to food, clothing and therapy."

Chabad of Richmond, B.C., recently replaced its High Holiday prayer books and was looking for a new home for its several hundred older versions, which were still in great condition. When Rabbi Yechiel Baitelman posted on a Chabad site that he was ready to pass them on, the first request came not from Canada, but from Rabbi Binyomin Scheiman in Illinois.

The founder of the Hinda Institute (formerly known as the Jewish Prisoners' Assistance Foundation), Rabbi Scheiman's organization aids families of Jews incarcerated, arranges visitation for incarcerated Jews in Illinois jails and helps with their re-entry process once they are released. He jumped at the opportunity to receive the machzorim. "We estimate there are up to 150 Jews incarcerated in the state of Illinois and these High Holiday prayer books are so important," he reflected. "For Jewish inmates, Rosh Hashanah is a time in their life when they're very open and repenting for mistakes they've made in their lives. The prayer books are an extremely generous contribution."

In general, Jewish prisoners are very marginalized within Jewish communities, sometimes even demonized, Rabbi Scheiman says. "It's even worse than being forgotten – they and their families are sometimes shunned by the community." He works closely with the Chabad-affiliated Aleph Institute, an American organization founded in 1983 and one that has branches in many different states. One of its missions is to provide professional services to nearly 4,000 Jewish men and women in U.S. federal and state prisons and their approximately 25,000 spouses, children and parents left behind.

No such organization exists in Canada, though various rabbis in different parts of the country carry out initiatives on their own. Rabbi Baitelman visits the roughly six to 12 Jewish inmates in Metro Vancouver jails from time to time, and tries to send Purim packages to them on Purim. In Vancouver, semi-retired Jewish Renewal Rabbi Dina-Hasida Mercy has served as the Jewish chaplain to Pacific region federal prisons since 2012 and takes weekly excursions into B.C.'s Fraser Valley, where there are 10 federal prisons, to meet with the small number of Jewish inmates there and any others who want to talk to her. "There are definitely people in my group that are not halachically Jewish," she says.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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'Inmates need a way to regain self-sufficiency'

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

A basic need they all share is for a kind, listening ear, one that won't judge them and report on them, she says. She's also committed to practical projects, including the delivery of donated prayer books and general Jewish literature into the federal institutions. As a woman visiting men in jail, Rabbi Mercy says she's never felt physically threatened.

"The guys tend to be fairly protective of their chaplains," she says. "In many ways the prisons are far safer than the city streets, because the inmates have been called to task for their offences and are monitored, whereas out in the community, you have people who might still be in their crime cycle."

There isn't enough support and understanding for inmates in the Jewish community and the wider community in general, she laments. "It's a societal perception that bad guys are put away and should stay away, but these people need to find jobs and take a place in the community when they come out. Many have just committed incredibly stupid mistakes in judgment with terrible consequences, but they need our help to reintegrate into community."

> *Because someone committed a crime, this means he or she should not do another mitzvah*

What's needed, she says, is a halfway house based on Jewish values, a place that might offer a job bank, educational opportunities and perhaps even a small business where they can get work experience. "Inmates need a way to regain their self-sufficiency. They come out of prison with $80, which is barely enough to get you from the Fraser Valley into Vancouver. As a society, we need to work on our compassion for people who want to rebuild their lives, and yes, it means doing things that are not comfortable for us."

Rabbi Menachem Matusof, head of Chabad in Alberta, has visited Jewish inmates in Alberta jails for the past 27 years. He estimates there's six to 12 incarcerated Jews in his province at any given time and finds funding a challenge. "The visitations take time and the travel expenses mount, books for inmates cost money and the process of getting security clearance each year is demanding," he says.

Rabbi Menachem Matusof

Sometimes, there are conflicts. One year he brought a mobile sukkah to the Jewish women's jail in Calgary, where an inmate was incarcerated for murder. In an old newspaper interview, Rabbi Matusof was asked why he would bother doing this for a murderer. "Murdering is a much bigger issue than sukkah and lulav," he was told. "My response was this: because someone committed a crime one time, this means he or she should not do another mitzvah? What does one have to do with another? The murder was being handled by the courts. Meanwhile, this is still a Jewish individual who needs help, and we're here to help them at whichever level they need."

He describes most of the Jewish inmates he visits as "sweet, wonderful people who unfortunately got caught in bad situations. It's not our place to judge," he says. "We need to reach out and help people wherever they are."

There are also schemers, and Rabbi Matusof gets lots of requests from non-Jewish inmates who want to speak with him about possible conversions to Judaism. His response is always to wait until they are released from jail, "but once they're out, they no longer have interest!" Other inmates claim they are Jewish and want kosher meals. "We talk to them and find out immediately if they're telling the truth," he says. "Most of the time, I'm not fooled." ■

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INTERNATIONAL

Obama and Netanyahu dig in for fight over Iran

URIEL HEILMAN
JTA WASHINGTON

For U.S. President Barack Obama, the framework agreement reached April 2 with Iran is a "historic understanding" that does more to roll back Tehran's nuclear program than any possible alternative and avoids the risk of a destructive war in the Middle East.

But to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, it's the complete opposite: a pact that "threatens the survival of Israel" and would "increase the risks of nuclear proliferation in the region and the risks of a horrific war."

With many of the deal's details yet to be worked out before the June 30 deadline for a comprehensive agreement, the fight is on over whether the outline of an accord reached this week is the best the United States and Europe can do to stop Iran's progress toward a nuclear weapon.

Critics say the Obama administration should press Iran harder for a better deal. Obama insists the agreement is the best one possible.

"Iran is not going to simply end its program because we demand it to do so," the president said at a White House news conference April 2.

The agreement reached between Iran and the six world powers – the United States, Russia, China, the U.K., France and Germany – has three main components:

• Iran will not develop weapons-grade plutonium, and the core reactor of its nuclear facility at Arak will be dismantled or removed from the country.

• Iran will reduce the number of its operating centrifuges by two-thirds, to 5,060; won't enrich uranium using advanced centrifuges for at least 10 years; and will cut its current stockpile of uranium from some 10,000 kilograms to 300 kilograms for 15 years.

• International inspectors will have unprecedented access to Iranian nuclear facilities and their entire supply chain.

In exchange, Iran will get relief from certain U.S. and United Nations sanctions, and the relief will be phased in as Iran takes steps to meet its end of the bargain. If Iran violates the deal, those sanctions will be restored. According to Obama, the deal ensures that Iran's "breakout time" to acquiring a nuclear weapon is at least a year and imposes strict limitations upon Iran's nuclear program for at least 15 years.

U.S. President Barack Obama in 2014. FILE PHOTO

Many details remain murky. It's unclear how fast the sanctions will disappear, exactly what steps Iran must take in order for them to be removed, or how they would be restored in the event Iran fails to meet its obligations. The framework agreement also does not say what will happen to the uranium that Iran must give up.

Critics say the deal allows Iran to continue working on perfecting its advanced centrifuges so that, once the deal expires, Tehran can more quickly assemble a nuclear weapon. In a rare statement by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the organization said it's concerned that the deal could leave Iran as a nuclear threshold state, igniting a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

"Some claim that the only alternatives to this framework are capitulation or military action. We reject that assertion," the AIPAC statement said. "A clear alternative to a bad deal remains the good deal that is achieved by the application of increased economic and political pressure on Tehran to reach an agreement that transparently does not allow Iran a path to nuclear weapons capability."

AIPAC called for the agreement to be subject to review by Congress, where there is more skepticism than in the White House about the deal's chances of success.

While Obama does not need congressional approval for the deal, he promised that he would brief members of Congress and welcomed a "robust debate" on the deal. Congress could scuttle the agreement with a veto-proof majority prepared to vote against the deal or if it approves new sanctions on Iran.

Republican Senator Bob Corker, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said after the deal's announcement that the United States "must remain clear-eyed regarding Iran's continued resistance to concessions, long history of covert nuclear weapons-related activities, support of terrorism and its current role in destabilizing the region."

Corker is the lead sponsor of a bill that would require congressional review of the nuclear deal.

House Speaker John Boehner, who was in the Middle East last week and held a joint news conference with Netanyahu, said Congress must be allowed to "fully review the details of any agreement before any sanctions are lifted."

In his news conference Obama acknowledged the battle he'll face in Congress.

"The issues at stake here are bigger than politics; these are matters of war and peace," the president said.

The U.S. administration also faces skepticism from Sunni Arab allies in the Middle East who feel threatened by Iran's Shiite regime and fear that America is reaching out to Tehran at the expense of its friends in Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have expressed alarm similar to Israel's about Iran's nuclear program.

In a nod to those concerns, Obama said he had invited the Saudi king and the leaders of half a dozen Gulf countries to join him at Camp David later this spring to discuss regional concerns. Obama also lifted a freeze on U.S. military aid to Egypt that had been in place since 2013, when the military deposed the country's democratically elected president, Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, and installed Abdel Fatah Sisi in his place.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia are the main Arab power centres in the Middle East and rivals of Iran; both countries are expected to pursue nuclear weapons of their own if they believe Iran is on a quick path to the bomb.

With the recent overthrow of Yemen's U.S.-allied president by Shiite Houthi rebels aligned with Iran, Tehran's allies now control four capitals in the region: Sana (Yemen), Damascus, Baghdad and Beirut.

Critics say the new agreement will enhance Tehran's ability to further threaten and destabilize the region. The deal does not address Iran's support for terrorism or the threats Iranian officials continue to lob toward Israel. In addition, they say, Iran's track record of lying, obfuscating and failing to fulfill previous commitments to allow inspection of its nuclear facilities does not bode well for its future compliance.

While Iranian and Western negotiators engaged in marathon sessions in Switzerland last week in an attempt to meet a self-imposed March 31 deadline for an agreement, the outline they presented April 2 – two days late – is still missing many key elements.

"Those details matter," Obama said. "Our work is not yet done."

But the president said if a deal can be made and Iran follows through, "we will be able to resolve one of the greatest threats to our security, and to do so peacefully."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

Nuclear deal leaves Israel with few options

MITCH GINSBURG
JERUSALEM

From an Israeli security perspective, the framework deal reached in Switzerland on April 2 with Iran will require three central efforts – in the realms of intelligence, diplomacy, and, perhaps, in Israel's regional posture.

The latter may be the most pressing. Israel has sat on the fence since the Arab Spring melted into sectarian war in March 2011.

Recently, a resident of the Israeli town of Majdal Shams, a Druze Assad loyalist, went to great pains, primarily via Facebook, to show that Israel was not merely an implacable foe behind a thick steel fence, but an active agent in Jabhat Nusra's battle against Bashar Assad and Iran's Hezbollah henchmen. Sudki Makat, a former security prisoner who has been re-arrested, posted videos, primarily against a dark night backdrop, of border regions where, he claimed, without providing evidence, Israeli troops were meeting with members of the Al Qaeda affiliate.

A senior military source confirmed in March that there have been debates within the Israel Defense Forces' General Staff regarding Israel's posture and which side it should prefer in the battle that still rages in Syria, but said that the prevailing understanding is that the forces run by Iran's al-Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani, a highly competent operative and one of the most influential regional actors, are a more dangerous foe.

The immediate repercussions of the world powers' deal with Iran – and Iran will surely portray the results as a glorious victory and vindication – is not a sprint to the bomb, but rather an emboldened posture across the region.

Iran-backed forces currently control four Arab capitals: Damascus, Beirut, Baghdad, and Sana in Yemen. Incredibly, even while its diplomatic chiefs were seated around tables in Lausanne, Iran aided – some say initiated – the Houthi overthrow of the Yemeni leadership.

With the deal in hand, Iran will likely take more strident steps. Israel, of course, will have to act to defend its immediate interests, such as the Iranian attempt to set up a Hezbollah front along the northern Golan Heights, as occurred in January. But it may, at least covertly, also have to increase the aid it provides to its allies as borders melt and the balance of power shifts more toward Tehran.

Diplomatically, the overt rift with the Obama administration is troubling in too many ways to detail here. But the key, from a security perspective, relates to understandings that might, at a future date, enable a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. Today, that option is off the table. Israel cannot act now in open defiance of the entire world. That window closed, as then-defence minister Ehud Barak warned it would (albeit for different reasons), sometime in early 2012. And while many, including the past two army chiefs of staff and the former heads of the Mossad and Shin Bet, were against a strike then, the debate has always been about timing, not need.

Israel is quite certain that the regime in Tehran will, as it has for the past two decades, begin cheating on the agreement when the time seems right. It will likely be a careful and well-calibrated advance.

In order to thwart such a move, Israel needs rock-solid intelligence. With a deal in hand and a presumed one-year buffer between Iran and the bomb, convincing the world powers of a violation so significant that it demands action will be a Herculean task.

It bears mentioning that in the summer of 2007 the prime minister of Israel reportedly showed up in the Oval Office with photos stolen from the computer of Ibrahim Othman, the head of the Syrian Atomic Energy Commission; the three dozen colour photos, the *New Yorker* reported in 2012, depicted a North Korean-made plutonium reactor near the Euphrates River. Israeli commandos, at great risk, had collected soil samples from the site. And still president George Bush, an uncommonly strong advocate for Israel, did not agree to launch a military strike.

He did, however, according to his own account, agree to let Israel do what it felt necessary.

At this stage, for Israel to possess a credible military option against Iran's nuclear program – and it is crucial that it possess one – the prime minister might want to weigh carefully how much effort he puts into rousing opposition to the deal in Congress during the coming months. And how much he invests in reaching an accord with the administration, alongside the nuclear deal, that would cement Israel's ability to act in the event of flagrant violations. ■

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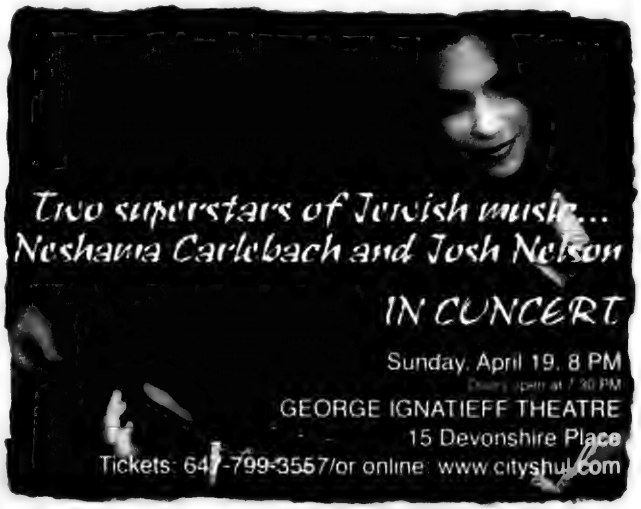
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Netanyahu, Obama differ over Iranian nuclear deal

JTA
WASHINGTON

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took to U.S. airwaves to criticize the framework agreement between Iran and the world powers on Iran's nuclear program, as U.S. President Barack Obama defended the deal while reassuring Israel that it stands by the Jewish state.

Netanyahu appeared on April 5 morning news programs on ABC, NBC and CNN.

"The entire world celebrated the deal with North Korea. It deemed to be a great breakthrough. It would bring an end to North Korea's nuclear program. You'd have inspectors. That would do the job. And of course everybody applauded it, but it turned out to be a very, very bad deal, and you know where we are with North Korea," Netanyahu told NBC's *Meet the Press*.

"I think the same thing would be true in the case of Iran, except that Iran is a great deal more dangerous than North Korea. It's a militant Islamic power bent on regional domination, in fact, bent on world domination, as it openly says so. They just chanted 'Death to America' a few days ago on the streets of Tehran, the same streets where they're rejoicing right now.

"Don't give the pre-eminent terrorist state of our time the access to a nuclear program that could help them make nuclear weapons. It's very bad for all of us," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu told *CNN* that under the deal, Iran's nuclear infrastructure will remain in place, with "not a single centrifuge destroyed, not a single nuclear facility shut down, including the underground facilities that they built illicitly. Thousands of centrifuges will keep spinning, enriching uranium. That's a very bad deal.

"They're getting a free path to the bomb," Netanyahu said.

Democrat Jewish Senator Dianne Feinstein told *CNN*'s *State of the Union* that the agreement does not threaten Israel's survival and that Netanyahu should "contain himself, because he has put out no real alternative. In his speech to the [U.S.] Congress – no real alternative. Since then – no real alternative."

Meanwhile, U.S. President Barack Obama defended his pursuit of a diplomatic resolution of the standoff over Iran's nuclear program and vowed to defend Israel.

In a lengthy interview April 4 with columnist Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*, Obama acknowledged that Israel

Benjamin Netanyahu being interviewed on U.S. television ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

"is right to be concerned about Iran," noting the regime's denial of the Holocaust and repeated threats to eliminate the Jewish state.

Still, Obama reiterated his view that a negotiated agreement with the Islamic Republic is the best strategy to prevent the country from acquiring a nuclear weapon while "sending a very clear message to the Iranians and to the entire region that if anybody messes with Israel, America will be there.

"There is no formula, there is no option, to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon that will be more effective than the diplomatic initiative and framework that we put forward — and that's demonstrable," Obama said.

Obama called the opportunity to reach an agreement with Iran a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." Comparing his engagement with Iran to his diplomatic opening with Cuba, Obama asserted that the United States could pursue detente with Tehran without risking its core strategic interests.

Obama spoke at length about Israel's concerns about Iran, acknowledging that Israel is more vulnerable to Iran than the United States and that Israel is right to be worried about the regime's expressed desire to destroy the Jewish state and its denial of the Holocaust.

"But what I would say to [the Israelis] is that not only am I absolutely committed to making sure that they maintain their qualitative military edge, and that they can deter any potential future attacks, but what I'm willing to do is to make the kinds of commitments that would give everybody in the neighbourhood, including Iran, a clarity that if Israel were to be attacked by any state, that we would stand by them," Obama said. "And that, I think, should be... sufficient to take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see whether or not we can at least take the nuclear issue off the table." ■

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Israeli man fakes his own kidnapping

JTA
JERUSALEM

The Israeli man who faked his own kidnapping said he did so because criminals were looking for him due to his massive gambling debts.

Niv Asraf, 22, was found alive on April 3 in Kiryat Arba.

Asraf told interrogators, according to reports: "I got mixed up in gambling and owed tens of thousands of shekels. The debt grew and grew because I couldn't pay back what I owed. Criminals are chasing after me and won't let up. I was afraid to tell police about them and my salary from work is not enough to pay the amount they want, so I panicked. I didn't mean to stage a kidnapping. I took a sleeping bag and some canned food in order to disappear for a few days."

The story contradicts a version offered by Asraf's accomplice, Eran Nagaukar, who said his friend staged the kidnapping to get the attention of his former girlfriend.

Asraf remained in jail over the weekend; he is accused of giving false evidence, breach of public order and obstruction of a police officer's performance of duty.

The search for Asraf last week involved some 3,000 soldiers and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Israeli security forces were alerted to Asraf's disappearance on April 2 by Nagaukar. Asraf reportedly entered the Palestinian village of Beit Anun, near Hebron, to get help after he and the friend became stranded with a flat tire.

Three Israeli teens were kidnapped and killed last summer near the same West Bank area. ■

Israel's security cabinet opposes deal with Iran

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Looming behind all this is whether the nuclear deal could lead to gradual detente between Iran and the West, though Obama administration officials insist that is not the goal of these negotiations. Critics charge that Obama's quest for a transformative moment is clouding his judgment when it comes to Iran.

On April 3, Israel's security cabinet met and expressed unanimous opposition to the deal, according to the Prime Minister's Office.

"On the Iranian issue there is no opposition and no coalition," Yair Lapid, head of Israel's Yesh Atid party, said. "We are all concerned that the Iranians will circumvent the deal, and Israel must protect its own security interests."

Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Rob Nicholson said Canada will continue to judge Iran by its actions not its words.

"To that end, Canada is announcing a contribution of $3 million to support the International Atomic Energy Agency efforts to monitor Iranian compliance with its commitments."

David Cape, chairman of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said Canada and Israel have long shared a desire for the Iranian nuclear crisis to be resolved through a diplomatic process and that it's crucial that any agreement ensures the Iranian nuclear program is, and remains, exclusively peaceful.

"Canada's position is based on a non-partisan consensus that a nuclear-armed Iran would be an unacceptable threat to regional stability, global security, and – given the Iranian regime's genocidal statements – Israel's very existence," he said. "Today's announcement of the parameters for a final deal, and President Obama's public remarks, underscore the need for all parties in Canada to reinforce these requirements and reaffirm the Canadian consensus." ■

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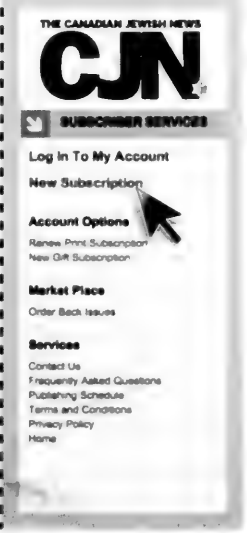
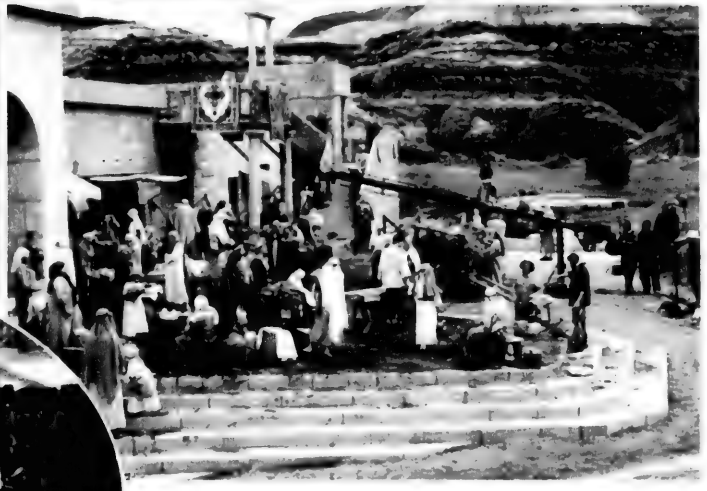


Jewish Life

Local filmmaker fascinated by Judaism and Israel



Israeli-Canadian filmmaker Igal Hecht (pictured left), is working on a docudrama television series about women in the Bible, partially shot in Alberta (set pictured above).

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

In some ways, Igal Hecht's approach to making documentary films is quite hands-off.

The Israeli-Canadian filmmaker, 37, and founder of Chutzpa Productions, has been determined to avoid what he calls the "North American, Michael Moore-style" of self-insertion in his movies.

"I hate that idea of, 'I'm the director and I'm going to be the champion,'" Hecht explained. "My job is to allow the people who I came to make the film about to be at the forefront."

Having directed close to 40 films, a number of which have been shown at international film festivals both Jewish and not, his most recent projects include *Daughters of Eve*, a docudrama television mini-series set to air in North America next fall, about iconic women from the Old and New Testaments and *A Woman's Story*, a film by director Azra Rashid that Hecht co-produced, about female survivors of 20th century genocides.

He recently teamed up with distribution company Syndicado, which is in the process of showcasing a dozen or so of his documentaries on video on demand web sites such as Vimeo, Amazon and Hulu – eight have already been posted.

While he avoids the spotlight in his movies, Hecht hardly shies away from looking at controversial issues from a certain slant – indeed, he said the very spirit of his production company is to address matters "no one wants to talk about" – and his oeuvre contains numerous films on political and social issues in Israel and Palestine, including Israel's 2005 disengagement from Gaza, the Israeli settler movement and LGBTQ Palestinians living in Israel. In *Not in My Name*, produced in 2005, Hecht examines the political Jewish left in North America.

"I disagree with a lot of the Jewish left. I think they're shielding anti-Semitism," Hecht said. "But I still wanted them to have their say. I presented counter-arguments and then let the viewer decide who they want to believe or not believe."

In *Disengaging Democracy*, made in 2006, he takes a hard look at the effects of Israel's unilateral pullout from Gaza on Jewish settlers in Gush Katif, underscoring the settlers' pain at being evacuated from their homes, their inability to find suitable homes or work following the evacuation, their sense of injustice at what they felt was insufficient support and infrastructure from government after the fact and the Israeli media's failure to report on their struggles.

The film's follow-up, *The Hilltops*, which premiered at the 2011 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival, looks at leaders within the Jewish settler community in the West Bank as they campaign to hold onto what they perceive as biblically-inherited land.

Hecht disagrees with criticism that *The Hilltops* is a pro-settler movie. "I just try to present the reality that exists…I don't think it's a [pro-settler movie], but what I didn't do – that is commonly done to settlers – is I didn't demonize them."

He stressed he's not an advocate for settlers, nor does he agree with many of their views, but wished to highlight the ways the Gaza withdrawal represented a breakdown in Israeli democracy.

"It was shameful. The media was so hell-bent on having the disengagement go through, they decided they were going to avoid asking certain questions and omit facts," he said. "Top members of the Israeli media later conceded they'd lied, and that they didn't talk about what would happen after the pullout."

After five or six years spent making films about weighty political situations, Hecht said he began to feel somewhat burnt out.

His later works, then, like television show *Muzika*, which explores voices in contemporary Israeli music and has aired weekly in North America for several years, and the acclaimed *A Universal Language* (2013), which documents six Canadian Yuk Yuk comedians as they tour Israel, have been more socially or culturally-focused.

"A lot of filmmakers want to focus on the bad [in Israel], and while there are a lot of contentious issues there, the political is not the only thing that defines it," Hecht said.

He is particularly interested in capturing women's issues around the world, he said. For *A Woman's Story*, he and Rashid traveled to Bangladesh, Rwanda and Poland to document the experiences of three separate women who are survivors of three separate genocides, one being the Holocaust.

While he hopes to continue evolving beyond making films exclusively about Israel, Hecht said it remains a significant interest of his.

"Judaism and Israel have always fascinated me. The world of diaspora Jewry is fascinating – more so today than before," he said. ■

For a complete look at Hecht's films visit his company's website at www.chutzpaproductions.com

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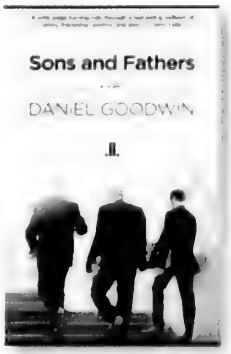
Canadian political crisis told through three distinct voices



Sons and Fathers
Daniel Goodwin
Linda Leith Publishing Inc

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's rare when we have an opportunity to examine a single event through multiple, disparate lenses or illuminate a singular truth through the refractive light of a multi-faceted diamond. But this is precisely the literary device Daniel Goodwin uses in his recently published novel *Sons and Fathers*. He tells us a story that revolves around three individuals through each of the men's distinct voices and unique perspectives.

And he does so to deeply satisfying effect.

The story is absorbing. Most of us are fascinated by the intrigues in the halls of government and *Sons and Fathers* deals with political crisis at the highest level of government, namely, with the prime minister, his main communications adviser and an enterprising, veteran journalist at a national newspaper.

The prime minister, adviser and reporter are Allan, Eli and Michael respectively. Each grew up in Montreal. Eli and Michael were childhood friends. But at university their friendship evolved into something far less, due to their shared interest in and rivalry for the affection of a beautiful woman. Eli and Michael meet Allan at McGill. Their lives intersect somewhat symbiotically from that point on.

Each man has been profoundly influenced by his father. These fathers hover throughout the novel somewhat like guidance counsellors at a high school who are visited occasionally for advice or assurance by trusting students. The fathers – for good or for ill – have sculpted their sons' characters and thus, perhaps, are most responsible for steering them toward the destiny that each son then further shapes for himself.

The political crisis creates the tension in the plot. But it also serves as Goodwin's narrative pretext for exploring the rich veins of political and philosophical reflections, social interactions, the possibilities of language and the ultimate human issues that lie just below the surface.

Each of the three men "speaks" to the reader and shares his particular insights regarding situations and people. But Eli tells the majority of the tale. And the reader is the fortunate beneficiary of Eli's narrative predominance because it is to Eli that the sheer beauty and poignancy of language mean the most. Eli's father is a renowned poet who infuses in his son curiosity and reverence for the esthetics of words well used and thoughts meaningfully conveyed.

To be sure, Michael has a sleek facility with words too. But as a journalist, his overarching concern is in the mastery of technique for the purpose of conveying meaning economically and efficiently, and of getting the message out within the unyielding confines of limited page space. Michael's father is an academic for whom the use of language is the means for recording thought. It is clear that Michael has inherited his father's utilitarian sense of language.

Allan is a master orator whose embrace of language is through the music and drama of the spoken word. Allan's father was one of Canada's most successful and respected federal cabinet ministers. And the son undoubtedly learned a great deal about the spoken word from his father. But Allan's ability to communicate, to persuade and inspire as a speaker is not the result of studied technique alone. It is the result of the substance of the man's words combined with the substance of the man himself.

Goodwin spends a great deal of time developing the characters of the three men, writing through their intersecting relationships about life's sustaining foundations, such as friendship, loyalty, sacrifice, empathy, compassion and love.

However, there are many other pleasing aspects to the book.

Goodwin provides authentic insights to the world of politics and journalism. Borrowing from his considerable experience as a journalist, communications and government relations' executive, the Montreal-born Goodwin thoughtfully expounds upon the roles and natures – in theory and in practice – of journalists and journalism, of politicians and politics, of ethics and cynicism, and of idealism and pragmatism.

As the elected politician, Allan astutely describes Eli's desire to work with him as Eli's "quest to write words that would change people's lives." From Eli's point of view, his motivations are encapsulated in a conversation he had with Allan's father when both he and Allan were embarking on their careers: "I have integrity. I'm always going to give Allan the best benefit of my professional advice, without regard to what I think he might want to hear, or to what is popular, or to what even he wants to do. I will tell him what is right, both from a pragmatic and from an ethical point of view. My biggest motivation is to do the right thing and do a good job."

Michael, the journalist, has a different point of view about the successful professional pairing of Eli and Allan. It is his involvement that provides the suspense that grips the reader from the first pages of the book.

It is worthy to note that because the story unfolds in Montreal and Ottawa, the references are, refreshingly, to Canadian iconography. For example, references to the Governor-General's literary awards, hockey, Don Cherry, Tim Hortons and numerous Canadian historic and literary figures provide the factual and colour background to the story. The cultural and geographic markers in the story are all based on a distinctively Canadian consciousness and sensibility.

But perhaps most gratifying of all is the near sacrosanct place that Goodwin holds for the use of words and the sense of responsibility he feels personally and professionally that writing imposes on the author.

Goodwin recently wrote on one of his blogs: "In many ways, although *Sons and Fathers* is clearly prose fiction, I see it in part as a bit of a love song to poetry and the role it plays in our lives."

The author has succeeded in combining this literary effort with an exciting political story. ■

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

CONCERT TO FEATURE MUSIC OF 17TH-CENTURY JEWISH-ITALIAN COMPOSER

Jewish-Italian violinist-composer **Salamone Rossi** (1570-1630) of Mantua – or Salamone Rossi Hebreo, as he was called on the title page of his publications – wrote sonatas and "sinfonies" that helped the violin stand out from the other musical instruments in the dance band, thus leading the way for the modern violin solo and the likes of **Isaac Stern** and **Yitzhak Perlman**.

Longtime concertmaster of the court of Mantua, Rossi was so well regarded that he was excused from wearing the yellow badge that other Mantuan Jews were required to wear. In a "Musicians in Ordinary" concert titled *In Stile Moderno*, soprano **Hallie Fishel** sings songs by Rossi and Italian composer **Claudio Monteverdi** and their contemporaries, accompanied by musicians playing theorbo, lute and Renaissance violins. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave., May 2, 8 p.m. $30, $20. www.musicians inordinary.ca. 416-535-9956.

• • •

Screenings of Lanzmann: Claude Lanzmann, the French filmmaker known for the epic, nearly 10-hour-long oral-history documentary *Shoah*, is himself the subject of a documentary film, *Lanzmann*. The film explores the difficulties he faced during the 12 years of production for *Shoah*, including financial difficulties, death threats and a severe beating from former Nazis.

Upon its release in 1985, *Shoah* attained critical recognition as one of the most important films ever made about the Holocaust and arguably one of the best documentaries of all time. Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of *Shoah*, Toronto Jewish Film Festival and Hot Docs co-present two screenings of Lanzmann. TIFF Bell Lightbox 3, Saturday April 25, 9 p.m. and Tuesday April 28, 5 p.m.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Second Story Press presents Stories from the Shoah for Young People and Adults, featuring four new books that focus on the experiences of the war both in Europe and at home in Canada. The authors will read from their books. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, April 13, 7 p.m. Free admission, refreshments. www.secondstorypress. ca/events

Faye Kellerstein

• Folksinger **Faye Kellerstein** performs "Beloved Yiddish and Hebrew Folksongs" accompanied by pianist **Jordan Klapman** and guitarist **Arnie Rose**. Non-members $5. Lodzer Synagogue, 12 Heaton St. Sunday, April 19, 8 p.m. 416-636-6665.

• Civic Light-Opera Co. presents the **Rodgers and Hammerstein** musical *South Pacific*. Tickets $28. Zion Cultural Centre, 1650 Finch Ave. E. at Don Mills. April 29 to May 10. 416-755-1717. www.musictheatretoronto.com

• Israeli choreographer **Sharon Fridman** headlines the second annual Contact Dance International Film Festival, a three-day fest that showcases independent films featuring momentum-based dance by top choreographers. Venues are Dovercourt House, Al Green Theatre and Revue Cinema, May 13 to 15. www. contactdancefilmfest. com

• • •

On TV: On April 14 VisionTV will be presenting the Canadian premiere of *Touched by Auschwitz*, a compelling feature-length BBC documentary from producer/director Laurence Rees.

Rees' documentary is not only about the incredible survival stories of six former Auschwitz inmates, but how they dealt with the challenge to rebuild their lives following their liberation.

Among the survivors are a Polish political prisoner who wound up practising as a doctor just 10 minutes away from Auschwitz and a woman survivor who went to Israel where she was not welcomed as expected by the original settlers who had arrived before the war. Max Epstein from Lodz reveals how he was shown 'enormous kindness' by one German soldier in a factory near Auschwitz.

The documentary is part of VisionTV's Holocaust Memorial Week programming to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation from Auschwitz. April 14 at 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. ET. ■

CORRECTION

The story "My Pet Goosey," which ran in the Passover Greetings Literary Supplement (*CJN*, April 2), was written by Rose Romberg. We regret the error.

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Mother and son collaborate on play

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When a son leaves home, he may not look forward to frequent visits from mom, but that's not the case for award-winning actor of stage, TV and films Jake Epstein.

His mother, multi-award-winning author and playwright Kathy Kacer, came to New York a lot when Epstein was performing on Broadway in *Beautiful: The Carole King Story*, in order to work on *Therefore Choose Life*, their first play written together. It took six years to complete.

Presented by the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company (HGJTC), *Therefore Choose Life* makes its world premiere, April 18 at The Greenwin Theatre at Toronto Centre for the Arts. The two always believed their play would be a perfect fit with the HGJTC and are thrilled about the partnership.

"*Therefore Choose Life* is a love story about Joseph, who lost his wife in the Second World War and moves to Toronto after the war, remarries and has a son. Then he discovers his first wife has miraculously survived the war and is coming to Toronto to see him," Epstein says. "It's about this man, his second wife, his son, his son's girlfriend and how they all get entangled in this one man's extraordinary dilemma."

Kacer, who's written many books on the Holocaust for young readers, says the play is loosely inspired by a true story.

"Someone told me of a man who survived the camps thinking he lost his first wife, and how she resurfaced many years later, after he had remarried," Kacer says. "I thought of writing it as a book, but something about it appealed to me more written as a play. Jake and I, at the same time, were talking about doing a project together.

"I loved Jake's writing and how he constructed stories, so when I brought him this idea, we both instantly agreed that we would love to give it a try. We wrote the first draft when he was still living at home and between gigs."

Epstein says he was interested in writing about his mom's experience as a second-generation survivor. "My mom tells stories about her parents and other survivors, but I thought her story, as someone who grew up with these stories of survival as a kid, deserves to be told about in the play. The story is about a man who survives the war, but it also tells the story of his son and how he has dealt with that growing up."

Kacer and Epstein worked together well and say the experience never felt hierarchical. To them, it felt collaborative right through, and they said they look forward to working together again.

During the first four months, they worked intensively on a daily basis, planning, creating, writing and rewriting.

"Over the years, as we have been rewriting and rewriting it, we've had to rely on technology to help us along," Kacer says. "We've spent many hours on FaceTime, Skype, and on the telephone sending drafts to one another until we got down to the nitty-gritty and I felt we had to work on it face-to-face, so I went down to New York often."

Jake Epstein

Kathy Kacer

"There was a point after the summer that we had written the first draft, that I felt this could be a writing team that could be effective," Epstein says. "I think we were able to bring something very different to the table from the perspective of two generations in two different worlds.... It makes for three-dimensional characters in the play."

Kacer hopes that *Therefore Choose Life* will prompt great discussions among the audience.

"The choice the character of Joseph has to make is an extremely painful one. We can imagine people will fall on both sides of his decision, and we want people to be moved and troubled by it. The play is called *Therefore Choose Life* and is really about choosing what you're passionate about and what moves you, embracing that and moving forward with it.

Epstein feels he's been able to separate being a writer from being an actor. When he's acting, he says he drops the fact that he's written it and any expectations he has about the characters, and lets the play breathe on its own, allowing the actors to bring their own perspectives.

Kacer, who has written a dozen books, all of which focus on stories of World War II and the Holocaust, has a new book coming out this fall called *Stones on a Grave*, published by Orca Books.

Epstein, best known for playing Craig Manning on *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, will be seen on *Remedy* on Global Television and has just completed two films, *Borealis* and *Full Out*.

Directed by Rachel Slaven, *Therefore Choose Life* also includes Lisa Horner, Sheila McCarthy, Amelia Sargisson and HGJTC's co-artistic director, Avery Saltzman. ■

Therefore Choose Life *runs April 18-May 10 at The Greenwin Theatre at Toronto Centre for the Arts. For tickets, call 1-855-985-2787 or go online to www.hgjewishtheatre.com.*

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
CJN

Exhibit focuses on little-known Jewish history of the Caribbean

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

The Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas is one of the synagogues featured in the *Jewish Treasures of The Caribbean* exhibit.

When award-winning photographer Wyatt Gallery, stumbled on an 18th-century synagogue in Curacao in 2009, it opened his eyes to a part of Jewish history that few know about.

"When I was living in Trinidad in 2009, the *New York Times* was using me as a travel real estate photographer in the Caribbean. They sent me to Curacao and Aruba, and while in Curacao, I stumbled upon a synagogue that I knew nothing about. I was really surprised, as an American Jew, to find out that the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere was in Curacao, in the Caribbean," said Gallery, whose exhibit called *Jewish Treasures of the Caribbean* is on display at the Beth Tzedec Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum in Toronto until April 24.

The exhibit, sponsored by the American Virgin Islands, features about 40 photographs of Jewish sites that date as far back as the 17th century and serve as the only complete body of professional documentary photographs of all the remaining Sephardi Jewish sites in the Caribbean.

Gallery, 39, who is based in New York but spends about eight months of the year travelling and photographing, said when he entered the Mikve Israel-Emmanuel Synagogue in Curacao, he was taken aback.

"I was really blown away by the beauty of the architecture and the sand-covered floors and old brass chandeliers," he said.

"Out of pure coincidence, the *New York Times* sent me to two other Caribbean locations that also had this Jewish history. They sent me to Barbados and Suriname to photograph travel stories that had nothing to do with Jewish history, but I would go and spend an extra day to photograph the synagogues."

He said following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and photographing the ruins of Haiti's Port-au-Prince Cathedral, he felt it was important to photographically document historical monuments.

"It made me realize that the five remaining historic synagogues in the Caribbean could also easily be ruined. It kind of inspired me to document all the historic Jewish sites so that there are records, and as well to raise awareness about this history and highlight the little-known history, but also inspire people to see the need to preserve these sites in order to preserve the history," he said.

In addition to the five remaining synagogues in the Caribbean, Gallery also photographed a number of Jewish cemeteries that are in disarray due to natural disasters, vandalism and erosion.

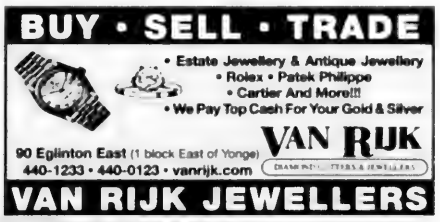
"If I could do anything, my goal would be to create some sort of a trust, something people could donate to – proceeds from people purchasing photographs could go toward a trust to help preserve some of these sites," Gallery said.

"The truth is, these Jewish communities in the Caribbean have dwindled substantially. Where there used to be maybe 2,500 people on an island, now there are only 200 or 150. It is difficult for them to maintain the cemeteries and the synagogues unless they have government support. It's really a challenge."

The photos in the *Jewish Treasures of The Caribbean* exhibit – which were taken in Barbados, Curaçao, Jamaica, Nevis, St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Suriname – will be featured in a photography book that will be released next spring.

"It would be a coffee table-style photography book with detailed captions and some history, so that you can first get excited and intrigued by the photos and also get all the history and information you need about it."

To view the photos from the exhibit, visit Gallery's website, at www.wyattgallery.com. ■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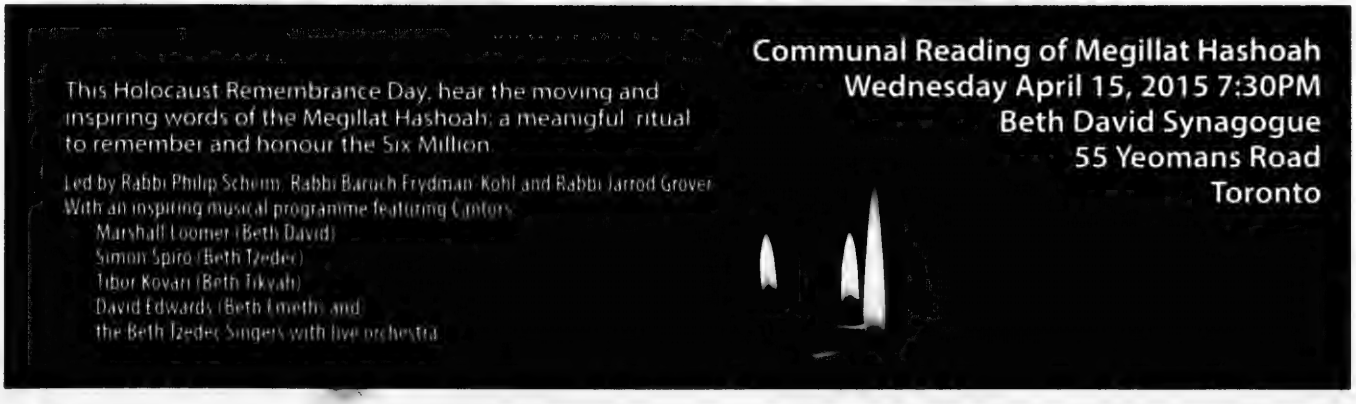
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Wednesday April 15, 2015 7:30PM
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What's New

APRIL 9 - APRIL 16

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, April 9

HONOURING RABBI DOLGIN
Temple Sinai honours **Rabbi Michael Dolgin** with a service of theatre, prayer and meditation, 7:30 p.m. The celebration continues April 10 at services at 10 a.m.

Friday, April 10

OPEN DOORS, OPEN MINDS
Bishop Mark MacDonald, national Aboriginal bishop for the Anglican Church, is the guest speaker at Temple Kol Ami's Kabalat Shabbat service, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 12

YEZIDIS SPEAK OUT
Yezidis now living in Canada discuss the genocide and enslavement of their community in Iraq, 7:30 p.m., B'nai Brith Centre, 15 Hove St. For more information, email CanadianJewsandFriendsofYezidis@gmail.com

THEATRICAL BRUNCH
Kathy Kacer and **Jake Epstein** are the guest speakers at brunch, 10 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. $12. RSVP 416-633-3838.

NONE IS TOO MANY
Irving Abella discusses "The Holocaust and anti-Semitism in Canada: The Untold Story of *None is Too Many* 1980-2015," 7:30 p.m. at Temple Emanu-El. $10 for non-members. RSVP by April 9, 416-449-3880.

POKER TOURNAMENT
Temple Kol Ami holds a poker tournament, 2 p.m. Email elaine@pageparalegal.com for tickets.

Monday, April 13

SPRING LECTURE SERIES
Sergei Plekanov discusses "The Ukrainian Crisis," 2 p.m., as part of Temple Emanu-El's lecture series. $45/series; $12/lecture. 416-449-3880.

Crafting for Pesach

Grade 6 students at Associated Hebrew School's Danilack Middle School participated in a matzah box woodworking workshop before the holiday.

BUILDING RESILIENT CHILDREN
Catherine Bancroft discusses "How to build resilient children in a time of stress and anxiety," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai. Free.

Tuesday, April 14

MARRIAGE COURSE
Chabad Markham offers a 6-week class with **Rabbi Avraham** and **Goldie Plotkin**. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

LUNCH & LEARN
Anna Shternshis discusses "Jewish folklore and Soviet Jewish culture," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

ISRAEL LEARNING SEMINAR
Ira Robinson discusses "Israel as a Jewish State, backgrounds and foregrounds," 6:30 p.m., Toronto Zionist Centre, 788 Marlee Ave. Sponsored by the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research. RSVP 416-630-0164.

Wednesday, April 15

MORASHA CLASS
Morasha presents "Stories that objects tell," with curator **Dorian Liebgott**, 10 a.m. Beth Emeth Synagogue. RSVP 416-789-7400.

HEART TO HEART
Heart to Heart premiers a film about the experience of 2014 program participants, with guest speaker **Usnat Atamna.** Live music and dancing to follow. Lula Lounge, 1585 Dundas St. W. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., program starts at 7:30 p.m. Register at www.heart-to-heart.ca

HASIDISM
Rabbi Lawrence Englander discusses "Hasidism: A revivalist mystical movement in Jewish life," Wednesdays 7 p.m., starting tonight, Temple Sinai.

POMEGRANATE GUILD
Artist **Myriam Nafte** discusses "Ancient text as image,"with the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, 7:30 p.m. Darchei Noam Congregation.

JUDAH AND TAMAR
Hana Werner discusses "Judah and Tamar: the story of disguise and intrigue," Beth Tzedec Congregation. Dessert at 1:30 p.m., lecture at 2 p.m. $40/5 sessions, $10/ class. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Thursday, April 16

CANADIAN AND ISRAELI ART
Two specialists from Sotheby's discuss "Canadian and Israeli art," 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $15/$20. 416-635-5340, ext. 308

ADULT EDUCATION
Bracha Feder presents 3 sessions in commemoration of Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, April 16, April 21, April 29, 7:30 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Free for members, $10 non-members.

YOM HASHOAH
A commemorative service will be held at Temple Har Zion, 7 p.m.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
Reena needs teenagers and young adults to volunteer as "rec buddies" at Camp Reena this summer. Call **Mille Chadwick** 905-889-2690, ext. 2112.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of April 23 is April 13. All deadlines are at noon.
Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

YOM HAZIKARON
The Consulate of Israel hosts the official Yom Hazikaron memorial ceremony, April 21, Beth Tzedec Congregation. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., program starts at 7:30 p.m.

RUACH SINGERS
The Ruach Singers will not be at Beth Sholom Synagogue, April 18 as earlier advertised. They will next be at the synagogue May 16.

YIDDISH CLASSES
Intermediate-level, 10-week Yiddish class starts April 19, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth David Synagogue. $150. 416-635-2883, ext. 5189.

ST. CATHARINES CELEBRATES
Congregation B'nai Israel, St. Catharines, holds a gala dinner and reception April 26, 5:30 p.m. For tickets, **Diana,** 905-685-6767.

SHAAR SHALOM SINGLES
Historian **Ken Weber** discusses the world of inventions with the Shaar Shalom Singles, April 19, 7:30 p.m. $10. 905-889-4975, ext. 72.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com

- Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children aged 2-10. Starts April 21, 1 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave. (downtown), or April 23, 7 p.m. at Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St., or April 30, 7 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 2-session group for couples who are going to be married next year. April 26, May 3, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.
- Bullying and learning disabilities: A 1-session workshop for parents and professionals. Topics include prevention and intervention strategies for children who are bullied as well as those who bully, April 28, 7 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St.
- Mind, body connection for women: An 8-session group for women to learn meditation and mindfulness. Starts April 29, 2-3:30 p.m., 35 Madison Ave. or April 30, 7-8:30 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Israeli folk dancing workshop, April 23, 1-2:30 p.m. **Jack Gelbloom Quartet** performs *Something Familiar – A Musical Comedy Show*, April 30, 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, April 15; Balance and co-ordination class April 14, 10 a.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; High tea with live music, April 29, 1:30 p.m.; Spa day, April 23.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. April 14, **Shlomo Schwartzberg** discusses "International Jewish Cinema- Part I," 10 a.m.; April 15, lunch and concert at noon; April 16, Lecture on pedestrian safety, 1:30 p.m.
- **Baycrest Learning Academy. David Lipovitch** teaches a course on "Ancient Near Eastern Art," Wednesdays, 2-3:30 p.m., April 15-June 3. **Kevin Courrier** teaches a course on "The neglected art of film music," Thursdays, 2-3:30 p.m., April 16-June 4. Courses held at the Wagman Centre. 416-785-2500, ext. 2267. $40.
- **The PEP Group** presents entertainment and Passover refreshments April 9, Earl Bales Community Centre, 12:30 p.m. RSVP **Terri** 416-785-0335.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs, call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes are offered free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com
- PJ Plus is an active Jewish learning program for children with a parent, Fridays, April 17-June 19, 9:30 a.m.; or Sundays, April 12-June 28, 10 a.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "El Greco," Tuesdays, April 14-28, 1 p.m.
- Join the Shalom Singers, a seniors choir that entertains throughout the GTA.
- Pastel painting with **Sadko Hadzihasanovic** Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., starts April 21.
- Ceramics classes start April 10.
- Dance and yoga for young adults with an intellectual disability, April 14-June 16, 6:15 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, April 12, 1 p.m. Ext. 521.
- The Spur Festival, a festival of politics, art and ideas will be held April 11, Al Green Theatre. For schedule see spurfestival.ca/toronto.
- Second Story Press presents four new books for children about World War II in Canada and Europe, with readings by authors **Kathy Clark**, **E. Graziani**, **Gisela Sherman**, April 13, 7 p.m.
- Adult Hebrew classes start the week of April 13. Placement info, ext. 388.
- Yom Hashoah memorial service, April 16, 2-3 p.m. with **Claire Baum,** author of *The Hidden Package*.
- Shabbat family party for children and an adult, April 17-June 19, 10 a.m. or 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Register now for the Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singer's edition, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17- 21.
- Discuss Israel engagement with the downtown Shinshinim, April 19, 9:30 a.m.
- *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, presented by the Alexander Showcase Theatre April 30-May 3, Al Green Theatre. For tickets, www.alexandershowcasetheatre.com
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Emily Carr and Vincent Van Gogh, April 27, May 4, 1:30 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147.
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk**, Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein**, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs ext. 3025.

- Day and evening ceramics classes start the week of April 10.
- Develop your skills in painting, April 16-June 18. 1-4 p.m.
- **Dr. Joey Shulman** discusses "Balance hormones, boost energy and burn fat naturally," April 16, 7 p.m.
- **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m.
- Silk painting on scarves, April 24, May 1, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Learn to make large floral works on canvas, paper or fabric, starts April 14, 1 p.m.
- Paint your family history from realism to abstraction, April 17-June 19, 1-4 p.m.
- PJ Plus is a program for children and a parent to engage in active Jewish learning. April 14-June 16, 9:30 a.m. or April 12-June 21, 10 a.m. ■

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Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click on "Family Moments"

Ask Ella

Manage expectations in your own mind first

Ella Burakowski
ellacjn@gmail.com

Dear Ella,

I've been dating Mike for a few months. We get along famously and are growing closer all the time.

Mike seems to have a disturbingly disproportionate number of female friends. He doesn't hide them from me, but it nevertheless raises a red flag for me.

I don't want to be that jealous girlfriend, but I guess I am. I would prefer to be the only woman in his life. I don't feel comfortable asking him to give up all his female friends yet. I'm afraid he will see a side of me that he won't like.

How should I approach this?

Too Many Women

Dear Too Many Women

Jealousy is a powerful emotion and can make you miserable. It's perceiving a normal circumstance as a potentially damaging one. It can ruin a relationship that would otherwise be fine.

The bigger picture is one of trust, respect and love, the three basic must-haves for a successful union to flourish. Examine your relationship with Mike. Think long and hard about each of these traits. Do they exist? Other than having many female friends who existed before you walked into his life, has Mike given you any reason to mistrust him?

If the answer to that is no, then you have to turn the mirror to yourself. Why are you jealous when there is no reason to be? Jealousy can stem from a past experience – for example, if someone has cheated on you. Or it could be because you feel inadequate or insecure. If that's the case, you need to be mindful of your feelings and find a way to control them.

You say Mike and you are growing closer. You also mentioned that he doesn't hide his friendships from you. Work with that. Rather than putting restrictions on his friendships, maybe get to know some of these women a little better. He would probably be open to your meeting people who are important in his life. Try to be open minded about his life prior to your becoming part of it. If you force him to give up people who are important to him, he may end up resenting you.

Two lives coming together to form one bond takes work. It is not always easy or automatic, but if you keep the lines of communication open at all times, the rest will work itself out.

Dear Ella,

After a few years of dating, I met Sonia. We have much in common, and both of us are divorced with kids. We share the same family values, are very involved with our children and enjoy having fun both alone and with our kids. However, I'm afraid of the financial commitment that may be expected of me down the road. I work very hard and am still raising my own family. I have extra financial obligations because of the divorce, and the thought of having to support children who are not my own is far from appealing.

I don't know if it's appropriate to approach the subject and get it out of the way. Sonia has made no financial demands on me, but I know it's just around the corner.

What's Mine is Mine

Dear What's Mine is Mine

It's nice that you've made a connection with someone who makes you happy, but I'm not clear on why you feel the financial burden of Sonia's children will fall on your shoulders. Sonia has raised her children without your help till now. She must have some kind of income and chances are she receives child support from her ex as well.

Right now you are simply in the "getting to know you" phase of your relationship. Putting up road blocks is not a great way to start. First, see if there is something developing between you.

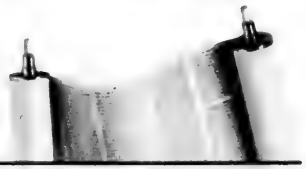
As you are both parents, you must be able to respect each other's choices when it comes to the children. You will both do what's best for the kids first.

Chances of finding a soul mate with no history are slim. You have to grow and learn about each other and decide what you can and can't accept. Relax and enjoy each other's company for now. If you're meant to be together, you'll work out those financial details in time. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

Parshah

Pesach | Deuteronomy 14:22 - 16:17



Rabbi Ilan Acoca wonders why many Jewish holidays revolve around the number seven
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl finds a common thread uniting the songs of Passover
Rabbi Catharine Clark explores the theme of infinite gratitude found in *Dayeinu*

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

We're all familiar with the historical reason for celebrating the seventh day of Passover, for, according to the midrash, the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea took place seven days after the Israelites left Egypt.

Yet, to our surprise, that reason never appears in the Chumash. In fact, the Torah simply commands that we eat matzah for seven days, then make a special celebration on that last day, without explaining why (Shmot 13:3-7).

In regard to other Jewish holidays, seven also seems to be a "magic" number. Not only is Pesach seven days, we also count seven weeks to Shavuot, then in the seventh month, we celebrate several holidays, including the seven-day holiday of Sukkot!

So why do so many holidays revolve around the number seven? Is it simply because there are seven days in a week?

Jewish tradition teaches us that the number seven is the divine number of completion. When God created the world, the completion of the task happened on the seventh day.

Our sages compare the Nation of Israel's slavery to a rough diamond that is being refined. It takes time to get to the point of having a beautiful diamond, but the hard work is worth it. The Israelites had to go through long and hard slavery in Egypt in order to refine themselves and get to the point of being freed.

God chose to free them on the seventh day to remind them that the number seven represents completion, thus the Nation of Israel reached the point of completion.

I believe the reason God did not reveal this in the Torah was because completion is something personal. Often, life is challenging, and it's up to us to go through the challenge and reach the point of completion.

May God give us the guidance to always get to the point of completion in our lives.

Chag Samayach! ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

There are four types of songs associated with Passover. The seder songs are playful melodies sung with gusto. The psalms of *Hallel*, chanted during the seder and each morning, are poems of praise and thanksgiving. The *Song of the Sea*, read on the seventh day of Pesach, recalls the redemptive crossing of the Sea of Reeds. The *Song of Songs*, descanted on the Shabbat of the festival, celebrates the love of youth and the Land of Israel. What unites these songs?

While some of the seder songs refer to the Exodus, others devote attention to and articulate a yearning for the future redemption of the people of Israel and the building of the Temple. Quite appropriately, the evening commemorating the Exodus culminates in the prayerful hope, "Next Year in Jerusalem."

The six *Hallel* psalms (113-118) also do more than recall the Exodus. They speak of joyfully entering Jerusalem, bringing offerings to God. "I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Eternal... in your midst, O Jerusalem."

According to Torah tradition, the crossing of the Sea of Reeds corresponds with the seventh day of Pesach. In addition to praising God for the miraculous deliverance then, *Shirat Hayam* speaks of God's care throughout the journey from Egypt to the Land of Promise and extols God for successfully building the Divine sanctuary, the Temple.

Shir Hashirim, a dialogical song of two lovers, is read allegorically by our rabbis to refer to the relationship between God and the people of Israel. The *Song of Songs* is replete with images of spring in the Land of Israel with references to the daughters of Jerusalem who serve as witnesses to the ardour of the two lovers.

These four songs remind us of the singularity of the Land of Israel. They indicate that the Passover Exodus was not simply intended for liberation from Egypt. It was to direct our people to the Land of Promise. ■

Follow me at www.beth-tzedec.org and https://www.facebook.com/bfrydmankohl. Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

On the seventh day of Passover, the Torah reading includes *Shirat Hayam*. The *Song of the Sea* is part of the Torah's best drama. The Israelites are trapped between the Sea of Reeds and Pharaoh's charioteers. Perhaps the Israelites have been delivered from slavery in Egypt only to die so close to the land of their oppression and so far from the Promised Land. Moses holds out his arm over the sea, and the Israelites cross safely to the other side while the Lord destroys the Egyptian army. The Israelites express their gratitude by singing *Shirat Hayam*.

If it were a Broadway musical, the story would end there. But this is Torah, and the reading for the day continues. The Israelites trek to the wilderness of Shur. Three days pass, and they have found no water. They arrive at the well in Marah, but the water is bitter. The Israelites complain to Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" What a reverse from the gratitude they expressed when they sang *Shirat Hayam*.

The epilogue of this Torah reading is a telling contrast to another great Passover song. Only a few days before we sang *Dayeinu* at seder. We declared over and over that it would have been enough if God had delivered only intermediate steps in the Israelites' salvation. By all rules of logic, these statements are not true. If God had only split the sea for the Israelites but not led them through to dry land, they would have died. If God had sunk the Egyptians but not provided manna for the Israelites in the desert, they would have died.

Yet we declare at seder that each step on its own would have been enough. *Shirat Hayam* is followed in the Torah reading by complaint. Each line of *Dayeinu* is a statement of infinite gratitude. May the spirit of *Dayeinu* be the attitude with which we approach each day. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is the spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ont.

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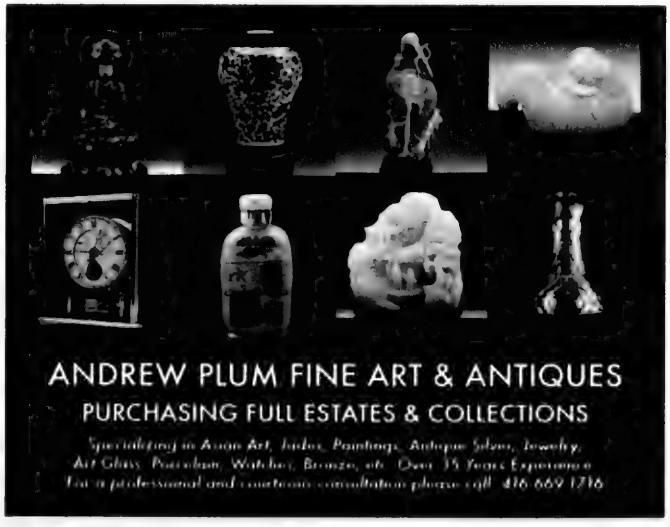
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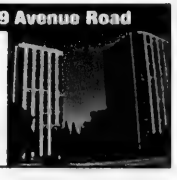

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Winnipeg electronic artist wins Governor General's Award

MYRON LOVE
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Pioneering electronic artist Reva Stone is in Ottawa this week to kick off a four-month exhibit of her work at the National Gallery and to collect the 2015 Governor General's Award in visual and media arts.

The award, which recognizes outstanding career achievement, was to be presented April 8 by Gov. Gen. David Johnston at Rideau Hall. It comes with a $25,000 cash prize and a medallion produced by the Canadian Mint (in addition to the exhibit).

"I am thrilled and honoured," the Jewish Winnipegger said about the award. "It's not something I ever expected. I am going to enjoy every minute of it."

She noted that, at a youthful-looking 70, she is among the oldest recipients of the award.

The former Reva Atnikov was born in Winnipeg and raised in Regina. She returned to Winnipeg for university, earned a BA and married a young dentist named Harold Stone.

After being a stay-at-home mom raising her two children, Stone went back to university in 1985 to pursue her passion for art. While she began her artistic career with traditional oils and brushes, she was soon drawn to creating art through electronic and digital means. Over a seven-year period, she transitioned to producing videos and, later, interactive art that explores humanity's relationship to technology.

"I had to learn everything from scratch," she said. "There were no resources available to learn from."

She began using computers in 1990.

"In my work, I try to portray the evolution of technology and how technology changes how we live," she explains.

Her *Carnevale 3.0*, for example, is a life-size aluminum figure – meant to represent the artist at nine years old – on a robotic platform that uses heat sensors to photograph visitors to the art gallery.

Reva Stone

Portal combines software, robotics and cell phone technology to create a work that seems almost human.

Stone was nominated for the award by a board member of the independent support group Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, a group she's been associated with for a long time.

Her works have been exhibited and are in collections across Canada, as well the United States and Europe. One of her pieces is owned by Seneca College in Toronto, and her most recent exhibition in Toronto was last year at New Adventures in Sound Art.

In August, she's slated to take part in a show in Vancouver as part of the 2015 International Symposium on Electronic Art. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 9, 2015

Josef Zissels: 'Ukrainian Jews are part of the country's political nation'

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

The Kyiv-based vice-president of the World Jewish Congress and chair of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, Josef Zissels, visited Ottawa March 3 and Toronto March 4 to share his perspectives on Ukrainian-Jewish relations in Ukraine and trends in the overall political climate.

The CJN spoke with him about Ukrainian Jews' involvement in the Maidan protest movement in Kyiv in 2013, when then-president Viktor Yanukovych was overthrown; anti-Semitism; and the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter, a multinational group that promotes stronger ties between Ukrainians of Jewish, Christian and other heritages in Ukraine, Israel and the Diaspora.

Were Ukrainian Jews generally opposed to Yanukovych before his overthrow?

We didn't do any surveys on this, but I feel the majority of Jews in Ukraine are normal, adequate people, so they couldn't like what Yanukovych was doing… Some made money under Yanukovych, so they supported him. But we also saw businessmen who were against Yanukovych… If you asked Jews, 'Are you for or against Yanukovych?' it would be difficult to answer. But if you asked if they are for democracy, you would find they are reasonable people [who want democracy] and dignity.

They see how Jews live in Europe and how they live in Russia, and of course, they choose [to be closer to Europe], even though there is much more anti-Semitism there than in Ukraine and Russia combined.

To what extent were Ukrainian Jews involved in the Maidan movement?

Every ethnic group living in Ukraine, including ethnic Ukrainians, can be divided into three categories:

1. People who belong to an authoritarian, Soviet past and actively defend it and don't desire to live in a European Ukraine (they are anti-Maidan).

2. People who are indifferent – it doesn't matter when and how to live. They have no obvious preference.

3. People who are sincerely trying to break away from their authoritarian, Soviet past and to live in a democratic, prosperous and decent Ukraine (the pro-Maidan).

Among Jews, there are, to this day, Soviet Jews, the Jews of Ukraine and Ukrainian Jews. For the past 23 years, we have seen a process of transformation take place – the transformation of [some] from Soviet Jews to Jews of Ukraine to Ukrainian Jews. The latter were the ones on the Maidan: they spoke, helped and defended the Maidan (three died there and are among the "Heavenly Hundred" – Euromaidan protestors who were killed in the clashes).

Now Ukrainian Jews are among the volunteers in civil society's main activities. They help displaced persons; help the army and National Guard with money, medication, weapons; they fight as part of the armed forces.

We don't have statistics, but from general considerations, it's clear that Jews are very active in various areas. That's why they were disproportionately more present on Maidan and in parliament, business, science and civil society.

Ukrainian Jews are part of the Ukrainian political nation, just like French Jews for nearly 200 years have been an integral part of the French political nation.

How common was anti-Semitism under Yanukovych's rule and now, under President Petro Poroshenko?

During Yanukovych's rule, the problem was not anti-Semitism, but total theft from the people and a government with no end to its corruption, the lowering of human dignity, a disregard of the nation's interests. This brought out protest [among people], not anti-Semitism. In the last years of Yanukovych's [rule], and now, there is very little anti-Semitism in Ukraine.

How does Poroshenko treat Ukraine's Jews?

We don't want the Ukrainian authorities, including the president, to especially single out our community from other ethnic minorities in Ukraine. Of course, there are our particular issues related to memory of the Holocaust, migration and others, but we see that the president relates positively to our community. He spoke at the annual commemoration of the Babi Yar tragedy, assured us there is no place for anti-Semitism in Ukraine, and attended the recent anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Where did the notion that the new Ukrainian government is anti-Semitic or fascistic originate?

This began under former Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma, when the label of "fascist" was first used to identify the opposition. And the Yanukovych government last year did all it could to show that the opposition was fascist and nationalist. We understood these elaborations came from Russia.

Ukraine had an interim government before the election that brought Poroshenko to power. That government had in it several members of the Svoboda party, which is radical, but was also in opposition to Yanukovych (although many believe the party was financed by Yanukovych, so when faced with the next presidential race, Ukrainians would pick him over Svoboda's leader). Because the label of opposition equals fascist was already there, it was easier for Yanukovych, his followers and Putin to call the opposition fascist. Labels stick… although time is showing that the Ukrainian leadership is neither fascist nor anti-Semitic.

Josef Zissels

Has it been your sense that Ukrainian Jews or Jews outside Ukraine believed it was fascist or anti-Semitic?

After the government changed, almost all the Jewish organizations in Ukraine supported the new government. In Ukraine, few believed this, but for Jews outside the country, they did more, because a stereotype exists.

What sort of work does the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter do?

UJE has sponsored many activities, including developing a shared historical narrative that engages scholars and experts to produce a truthful account of the Ukrainian-Jewish relationship over the centuries. Before last year's presidential election, it was one of the sponsors of a major conference in Kyiv called "Ukraine: Thinking Together," which brought together leading intellectuals to discuss the situation in Ukraine as a way of supporting the democratization process taking place there.

UJE is a sponsor of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptysky Award, an honour bestowed annually on an individual in Ukraine, Israel or the Diaspora who has made an important contribution to Ukrainian-Jewish understanding and cooperation.

At this year's book fair in Jerusalem, UJE presented a new, Yiddish-Ukrainian dictionary and sponsored a famous Ukrainian writer, Irena Karpa, who talked about cultural and literary movements in the country today.

My organization works closely with UJE. It has sponsored a number of our initiatives, including youth camps that advocate tolerance. My trip to Canada and the United States, where I met with Ukrainian and Jewish communities, their leaders and leaders of various ethnic Diaspora groups, was made possible through the support of UJE.

What non-Jewish groups, if any, are friends or allies of the Jews in Ukraine?

We co-operate with many organizations in civil society, and almost all of them are our compatriots. We see very positive attitudes from them toward Jews. Among the Kyiv Patriarchate [of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church], the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Protestants, there is great sympathy toward Jews, and co-operation, for example, with the Ukrainian Catholic University, which also works with UJE, and various human rights group.

The Russian government is considered quite friendly to Jews. Would you say that's true? And has that changed at all, in light of the recent conflict?

I think the Russian government is friendly only to itself, and has used the Jewish question to its benefit. It wants to show the world that in Russia, there is a civilized approach to others. But if it becomes beneficial to its interests, if it suits its purpose, the government will make Jews an internal enemy. We've seen this done in history before.

Approximately how many Jews live in Ukraine?

Around 300,000. They typically live in large cities, with the majority living in the centre, southern and eastern regions of the country.

What is their typical socio-economic status?

They are middle class and work in all industries.

What's their typical religious affiliation?

They're mostly secular, but there are religious Jews. There are 70 synagogues working in Ukraine today. ■

Einstein's Jewish and Zionist awakening

Backstory

ALLAN LEVINE

Albert Einstein's parents were assimilated German Jews who considered themselves "Israelites," which was typical of westernized Jews in Germany in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Einstein, who was born in 1879, did not have a bar mitzvah, though as a young man he did show a keen interest in religion and for a time adhered to Jewish dietary rules.

After spending more than two decades studying and working in Switzerland, where he developed his theory of general relativity, he returned to Berlin in 1914. He accepted a position as the director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics, where he would remain until he was forced to flee to the United States in 1933 following the Nazi's rise to power.

In Switzerland, as he later admitted in a 1921 interview, he was ambivalent about his Jewish heritage. "There was nothing in my life that would have stirred my Jewish feeling or stimulated it," he said. Yet in Berlin during and after World War I, he was confronted with anti-Semitism. It was then that Einstein began to reflect more seriously on his Jewish identity and write about it.

Tracking his Jewish and Zionist awakening online is now possible, owing to the recent digitization (and translation from German to English) of thousands of his letters and papers – a joint effort between the Hebrew University, which Einstein helped found in 1918 and where the Albert Einstein Archives are located; Princeton University, where he taught after he came to the United States; and the California Institute of Technology.

In a newspaper article published at the end of 1919, Einstein denounced the widely held right-wing propaganda that Germany's approximately 30,000 east European Jews were "black marketers, Bolsheviks [and] elements that are averse to work." The agitation against these Jews that called for their expulsion, he asserted, "raises the suspicion that calm judgment is being dimmed by strong anti-Semitic instincts."

In another unpublished article he penned in the spring of 1920, he was more critical of German Jews like his parents, those who perceived themselves to be "German citizens" of the "Mosaic faith." To Einstein there was "something comical, even tragicomical in this designation." In a world in which "race" and nationalism were powerful concepts, he believed strongly that there was a "Jewish nationality" that defined Jews, no matter what their socio-economic status. And pretending otherwise was "useless and morally questionable," in his view. Moreover, at the time it was a no-win situation since, as he put it, "anti-Semites have no intention of clearly distinguishing between eastern European and western European Jews as some western European Jews might wish."

Einstein was initially indifferent to Zionism and at one point scorned Zionists as a "small band of impractical people that strike one as medieval." Yet like Theodor Herzl, who wrote in 1895 that "only anti-Semitism" had made him a Jew, Einstein, too, was drawn to the movement as a backlash against anti-Semitism and as a necessity for Jewish survival.

"I am not a Jew in the sense that I would demand the preservation of the Jewish or any other nationality as an end in itself," he explained in 1921. "I rather see Jewish nationality as a fact, and I believe every Jew must draw the consequences from this fact. I consider raising Jewish self-confidence necessary, also in the interest of a normal living together with non-Jews. This is the major motive of my joining the Zionist movement…The founding of a free Jewish community structure in Palestine will again put Jewish people in a position where they can unencumbered fully uphold their creative capabilities."

By then, he had concluded that European Jews needed access to higher education, and if that was not possible in Europe, then a university in Jerusalem was a necessity. And more significantly, that fostering Jewish pride was essential. "We Jews need a revival of the feeling of community in order to preserve or rather regain a dignified existence," he wrote to a friend in November 1929. "I see in Zionism the only effort which leads us closer to this goal."■

Historian Allan Levine's most recent book is Toronto: Biography of a City.

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Milton Bernstein	Mar 24/15	7460 Bathurst Street
Sarah Goldman	Mar 25/15	42 Denmark Crescent
Harry Senders	Mar 25/15	85 Skymark Drive
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Marjorie Detsky	Mar 25/15	1555 Finch Avenue West
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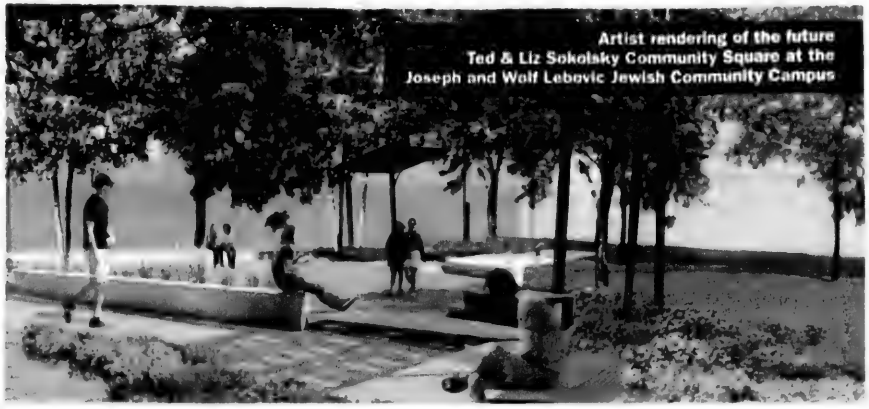
Community Section
[illegible]



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Inside

Comforting the IDF's lone soldiers

Non-profit Ach Gadol helps recruits who don't have family living in Israel. **PAGE 12**

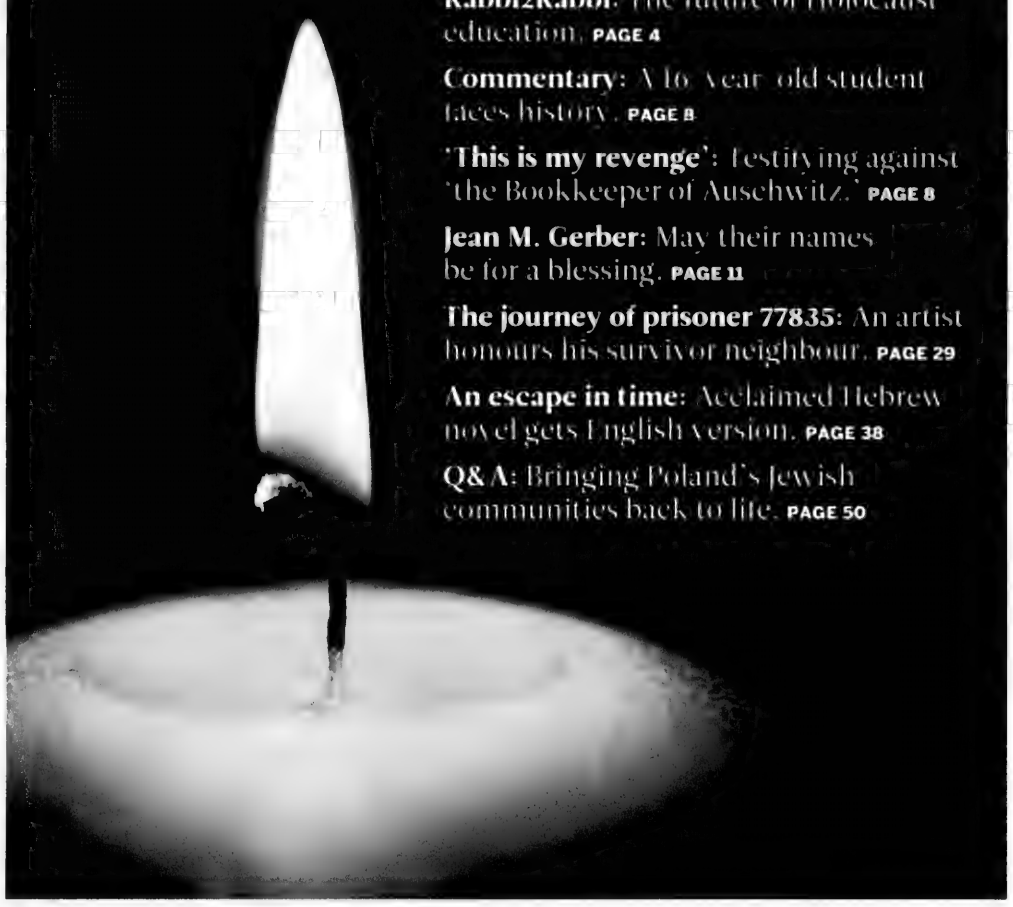
The merits of solo bat mitzvah celebrations

Orthodox boys get their own ceremonies, so why shouldn't girls have them, too? **PAGE 7**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	7:43 p.m.	8:49 p.m.
Montreal	7:24 p.m.	8:32 p.m.
Ottawa	7:33 p.m.	8:40 p.m.
Toronto	7:45 p.m.	8:50 p.m.
Winnipeg	8:07 p.m.	9:19 p.m.
Calgary	8:17 p.m.	9:31 p.m.
Vancouver	7:49 p.m.	9:01 p.m.

Confronting the Shoah



Rabbi2Rabbi: The future of Holocaust education. **PAGE 4**

Commentary: A 16-year-old student faces history. **PAGE 8**

'This is my revenge': Testifying against 'the Bookkeeper of Auschwitz.' **PAGE 8**

Jean M. Gerber: May their names be for a blessing. **PAGE 11**

The journey of prisoner 77835: An artist honours his survivor neighbour. **PAGE 29**

An escape in time: Acclaimed Hebrew novel gets English version. **PAGE 38**

Q&A: Bringing Poland's Jewish communities back to life. **PAGE 50**

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Mad Men's day of mourning, and keep that chametz out of the park

Draper breaks down during shivah visit

Jewish fans of *Mad Men* saw something familiar in the final season's premiere: a full-on shivah, with anti-hero Don Draper in attendance no less. Draper shows up at the shivah for his dead ex-lover Rachel Menken and is met by her sister Barbara, who knows Draper ultimately rejected Rachel to save his unhappy marriage. When Barbara starts explaining what "sitting shivah" means, he says he's lived in New York for a long time and knows what it is (he even brought cake). But his non-Jewishness becomes an issue when he's asked to help form a minyan. "He can't. He's not Jewish," Barbara says with disdain. As he leaves, he starts crying as he hears prayers in Hebrew in the next room.

Apparently he doesn't count in a minyan.

FIFA president rejects Israel ban

The president of FIFA, soccer's global governing body, expressed opposition to a Palestinian request to ban Israel from international competition. Sepp Blatter told *AFP* April 7 that "such a situation shall not occur at the FIFA Congress because suspension of a federation for any reason is always something which harms the whole organization." Blatter, who met later in the day with Palestinian Football Association chief Jibril Rajoub in Cairo, didn't comment further. The Palestinian soccer group said it will ask for Israel's suspension from FIFA competition at next month's FIFA Congress in Zurich, for "racist behaviour against Arabs." It has called for a ban on Israel several times, most recently last fall after Israeli forces raided the association's Ramallah offices. Blatter threatened to suspend Israel in 2013 for West Bank travel restrictions the Palestinians say inhibits their athletes.

Cracking down on bread

Visitors to a public park in Afula, Israel, were turned away last week by a security guard checking bags at the entrance for weapons and chametz. Several scofflaws ate their sandwiches outside before entering the grounds. Israeli law bans the display and sale of chametz on Passover. It's also banned from hospitals and other public institutions. One Tel Aviv lawyer told *Ha'aretz* that he was considering suing the municipality on behalf of those turned away. ■

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Gematria

839

The number of entries to Iran's Holocaust cartoon contest, a sequel to a 2006 competition that minimized the Shoah. Organizers said 312 artists – 104 from Iran and 208 from other countries – submitted works.

56%

The percentage of Jews backing Prime Minister David Cameron's Tories in the May 7 U.K. election, compared to 18 per cent for Jewish leader Ed Miliband's Labour party.

Quotable

There are liberal Protestants celebrating Jewish culture clearly, Jewish revival is a very popular phenomenon that goes way beyond the borders of the Jewish community.

— Sociologist Genevieve Zubyrzycki on Poland's Jewish renaissance. See p. 50.

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Letters to the Editor

After the elections

Collective support of Israel, peace and of human rights has long been the hallmark of Canada's Jewish community, demonstrating our incredible strength and unity. Organizations that attempt to drive a wedge between the Jewish People and Israel are harmful to this unity. It is a cause for celebration that Israelis, on the front lines facing threats to their safety and security every day, uphold a strong and free democracy enjoyed by everyone.

Yet it is easy to condescend, to condemn your own, to criticize and to express disappointment from the comfort and safety of Canada. It is more difficult to try to steer the Jewish People through a sea of hatred while struggling to find a realistic way to build a lasting peace.

Of the many different conversations we should have had at our seder tables, perhaps the most important now is confronting anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism and the virulent delegitimization of Israel. Weakness, disunity and the politics of defeatism can only diminish us and undermine our own human rights. We must continue standing shoulder to shoulder as a strong, proud and free people.

Avi Benlolo, President & CEO, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies
Toronto

Pluralism is a virtue

As a rebbetzin for 22 years, I have come across many people within the Jewish communities where I have lived and worked who try to pigeonhole Judaism and try to clarify that their way is the correct way or the only way.

The miracle at Mount Sinai was witnessed by the entire population with a clarity and understanding. "I am what I will be," God said to everyone.

I find the miracle was not only the dramatic scene, but the realization at that moment by everyone of what was being said. "I am what I will be to you, the one who speaks to you, moves you and guides you to get there with love. I will give you guidance for the job that needs to be done for the world to work according to my word. Here is the outline and the guide. Use it to be my people among all other people."

The true miracle of Mount Sinai was thousands of people understanding exactly what was being said and all agreeing!

Today we have rabbis who teach the credos of the moment at Mount Sinai. Some rabbis work through social action, others work through knowledge and others form policy and governance.

Each of us individually hears what speaks to us through our rabbis. What works for me religiously might not work for another, but am I wrong for hearing or moving in a different way from my neighbour to obtain the same goal?

If a teacher/rabbi has the legitimacy and credentials necessary to teach, and people have the ability to hear, observe and grow spiritually, morally and humanistically, then for what purpose is it to say it doesn't work or is questionable?

I am extremely glad there is the *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne* designed for all Jews. I am disappointed that Rabbi Mordechai Bulua would criticize a work written by an educated rabbi ("Not truly Orthodox," April 2). For everyone to hear the words of the Almighty, we have to speak the language of the people, otherwise it is not really communication, and "I am what I will be" turns into "I am what your rabbis want me to be."

Elizabeth Bright
Cote St. Luc, Quebec

No to a two-state solution

With the re-election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel, it is suggested that there is now a significant different point of view between Canada and Israel with regard to a Palestinian state.

Netanyahu has indicated that during his term in office there will not be a Palestinian state. The Harper government is publicly committed to a two-state solution as the best outcome.

I believe that Prime Minister Stephen Harper is astute enough to realize that there cannot be a Palestinian state while the Palestinian Authority refuses to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and while Hamas is still committed to the destruction of the State of Israel.

A so-called Palestinian state would have to include Gaza and land controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Until both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas agree to Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, there can never be a two-state solution.

Bert Raphael, President, the Jewish Civil Rights Association
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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RABBI·2·RABBI

How will we memorialize the Shoah?

Education should become more focused on actionable change, and the Holocaust can be incorporated into rituals with meaningful theologies attached to them

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
FOUNDER, THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY, MONTREAL

RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Scheim: As we observe Yom Hashoah, this year marking 70 years since the end of the darkest period of our history, we are painfully aware of the effect of the passing of time on the number of Holocaust survivors still among us.

We have been strengthened by the presence of those who have shared their testimonies of the horrors they experienced, as well as their memories of the richness and vibrancy of their communities that were destroyed. We have been inspired by their courage and tenacity. So many who survived have been instrumental in building our community institutions, and establishing and strengthening the State of Israel.

How will future generations face a time, when, sadly, there will be no more survivors to offer living testimony to the Shoah? Will they be ready to face a survivor-less future?

Rabbi Finegold: There seems to be a gap between the message sent by the Jewish community and the message received by the future leaders of the community. I am not as concerned about the fact that there will be no more survivors in the near future – that is the nature of history. We have no survivors of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, yet we have a robust system in place for remembering that tragedy.

The current model of Holocaust education is not working. I often hear people express that the last thing they want to hear is another Shoah testimony or a scholar pontificating on what happened. The message being expressed is "Yes, yes six million. It's terribly sad. But I'm here in Montreal and we have clearly learned as a society to police these kinds of things and prevent them from happening again."

This is an oversimplification, of course, especially considering the many genocides perpetrated in recent history, but it is not far from the truth. Very little of the current Holocaust education is focused on actionable changes. I think we need to start rethinking our model to change the response from "So what?" to "Now what?"

Rabbi Scheim: We continue to remember the Egyptian enslavement and Exodus and the destructions of the Holy Temples, because they were ritualized. Pesach and Tisha b'Av, along with regular liturgical and ritual reminders throughout the year, remind us of these early transformative events.

Similarly, in an attempt to ritualize the Holocaust, my synagogue was instrumental in creating Megillat Hashoah, which we read on Erev Yom HaShoah. Our annual program focuses on the reading of the text, some of which is chanted in the traditional Eicha trope, in the Tisha b'Av mode. There are no speeches.

Alex Eisen, my congregant, envisioned this project and raised significant funds to enable its production and translation into several languages. As a survivor, he understood the need to establish a vehicle to bring these essential memories into tomorrow's world.

Others have suggested fasting on Yom Hashoah as a means of ritualizing our Holocaust memories. And just as restaurants and entertainment venues in Israel are shut down on Yom Hashoah, a similar respect for the sanctity of the day would be appropriate in Diaspora communities as well.

I do agree with you. Our remembering has to lead to activism, to adding our voices, our energies and our resources into leading the world to a better place.

Rabbi Finegold: I am moved by your congregation's decision to ritualize this day and create powerful reminders that go beyond the typical synagogue response to Yom Hashoah. This is important for the future of Yom Hashoah, especially since many people deliberately choose not to observe it, claiming that Tisha b'Av serves as the umbrella for all tragic events in the Jewish calendar.

The key to making Yom Hashoah into a day of transformation is to change the tagline for the day – and indeed for any thinking related to the Shoah – away from "Never Again." The Egyptian slavery should never happen again. The destruction of a holy site and exile of a people should never happen again, either. Yet both events have more meaningful theologies attached to them. Perhaps this could be something you might begin to incorporate into your annual ritual – a message that creates positive work out of the senselessness of the Shoah. ■

How to reach us

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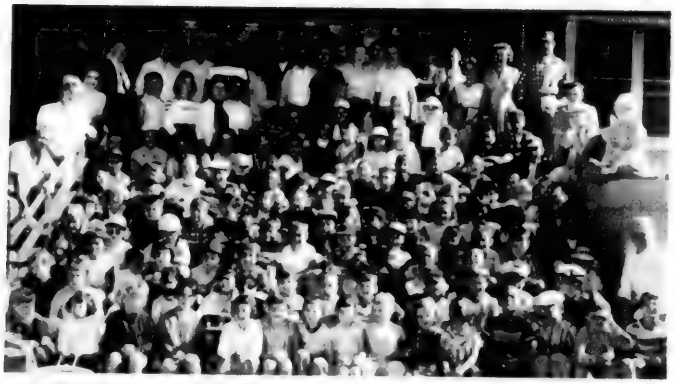


ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE

A group of Camp Kadimah counsellors and campers sit on the steps of a building in 1957.

SeeJN | Hidden no more

HADAS PARUSH/FLASH90 PHOTO

Thirty Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust as children recently travelled from Krakow to Israel for a weeklong visit organized by Shavei Israel and funded by money raised from the inaugural Ride of the Living that was supported by the Jewish Community Centre of Krakow. The participants were all hidden children who survived in Poland. For many, this was their first visit to Israel. Shavei Israel is a non-profit organization whose aim is to strengthen the ties between the Jewish People, Israel and descendants of Jews around the world.

Guest Column

Israel's achievements are a source of pride

DJ SCHNEEWEISS

The story of modern Israel has long been a central component of Jewish identity, part of the bedrock of Jewish life and collective Jewish purpose in the modern era. Nowhere is this truer than in Canada.

Israel owes a profound debt to the Canadian Jewish community. Without your engagement and support, and that of so many others around the world, Israel would not be what it is today.

But this relationship is by no means a one-way street. Israel also makes a huge contribution to the well-being of Jewish communities everywhere. Indeed, Jewish life could not and would not have flourished the way it has around the world since World War II without the existence and the enormous success of our tiny state.

On April 23, Israelis and Jews the world over will celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day.

There is so much to celebrate, even as we acknowledge that there is still much to do to ensure that Israel lives up to our highest ideals and aspirations. Together, the Jewish People have fashioned in Israel a pulsating Jewish democracy – a powerhouse of creativity and innovation that benefits mankind as a whole; a model society, not because it is perfect, but because its members and supporters are constantly striving to improve it.

Israel's qualities and achievements are rightly a source of great pride and inspiration to Jewish people everywhere. Reflecting this, a new initiative spearheaded by the Jewish Agency for Israel in partnership with UJA Federation and the Israeli Consulate hopes to energize the local Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations even further, by adding a new array of accessible, inclusive grassroots events that will open the door to contemporary Israel and its relevance to all Jews, irrespective of their age or religious or political affiliation.

The day before Yom Ha'atzmaut is Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Remembrance Day, on which Israel's citizens unite to mourn the more than 23,000 men and women who have paid with their lives for our sovereignty and security. We come together to grieve, to reaffirm our commitment to each other and our country despite all our differences, and to lend support to the families of the fallen and the victims.

Here in Toronto, as happens around the world, the consulate marks this central day together with the local community by holding an official memorial ceremony that directly parallels the ceremonies taking place in Israel. (This year's ceremony will take place at Beth Tzedec Congregation on Tuesday, April 21, at 7:30 pm.)

Here, as in Israel, we come together to acknowledge the debt we all owe.

The State of Israel has always been, and remains today, a remarkable achievement and a source of pride and unity for Jewish people everywhere.

I encourage everyone to join this year's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations and help make them more abundant, inclusive and comprehensive than ever before, and to come together as one on April 21, as we remember the terrible sacrifice that has been paid so that we can all thrive and we can indeed be a free people in our land. ■

DJ Schneeweiss is the consul general of Israel in Toronto and Western Canada.

YONI WILL RETURN!

FEATURE

Celebrating an individual bat mitzvah

Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold

After Joelle finished leading Kabbalat Shabbat and delivering a thoughtful dvar Torah from the bimah as a bat mitzvah, her mother, Samantha Mintz Vineberg, spoke, recalling her own bat mitzvah.

"The gift of my own personal bat mitzvah that my parents gave me sent me a strong, clear and direct message… that as a woman, I was an important and valued member of the Jewish community."

She explained that as her own daughter had approached bat mitzvah age, she had no doubts in her mind that Joelle would not celebrate in a group setting, but on her own bat mitzvah day. "I felt that it would be important for Joelle to be recognized in her own right and have a formal service celebrating her reaching the age where she would be responsible for her own mitzvot [commandments], the same way we do for sons," she said.

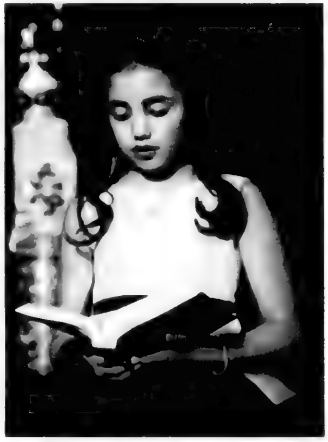
I first encountered the concept of a group bat mitzvah when I moved to Montreal from the United States two years ago. I had never seen one before, and I could not understand the idea. How can a girl celebrate her personal coming of age with others whose birthdays are months before or after her own? How significant a Jewish component could she perform when there were 10 other girls celebrating alongside her? And what could be the Jewish ritual context on a random Wednesday night? My curiosity soon turned to frustration and disbelief: if this milestone, which is meant to represent an individual girl's entry into the responsibilities of Judaism, is celebrated en masse, then we are sending our girls the wrong message. Besides, would you ever imagine a group bar mitzvah for boys?

It is worth recalling what lies at the core of bar and bat mitzvah. Technically speaking, girls and boys become bat and bar mitzvah on their 12th and 13th birthdays respectively. Having arrived at the age when they are responsible for keeping the mitzvot of the Torah, they are treated as full Jewish adults according to Jewish law.

Over the generations, it became customary for a boy to mark his entry into the age of mitzvot by performing a public Jewish ritual that he could not have performed as a Jewish minor. This usually has been an aliyah to the Torah, whereby the boy recites the blessings over the Torah scroll, recognizing his new state of commandedness to perform mitzvot.

For a young man to mark a bar mitzvah, he will perform a Jewish ritual as a full member of the adult community. There's no reason a bat mitzvah shouldn't be marked in the same way. In our synagogue, which strictly follows Orthodox Halachah, men and women have different obligations in mitzvot, and therefore different ritual roles. But this still leaves plenty of room for a bat mitzvah girl to powerfully step into Jewish adulthood by performing a public ritual within halachically acceptable boundaries.

A girl might lead Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday night, which consists of psalms and *Lecha Dodi*, all of which may halachically be led by a woman. Or, she might lead a women's tfillah on Thursday morning with her female friends and relatives, leading the prayers and chanting from the Torah scroll. We recently had a girl chant Megillat Esther on Purim morning to mark her bat mitzvah. Each of these rituals is accompanied by a dvar Torah, where the girl shares her understanding of Torah, which she has studied in preparation for the day. She thus celebrates her entry into the adult Jewish community in a ritually significant way.



Joelle at her bat mitzvah

This is not about being feminist, or about treating the girls like the boys. This is about sending a clear message to our daughters and granddaughters that they matter as individuals. I recently attended a bat mitzvah in a very religious Orthodox community, where girls do not participate ritually in the ways described above. However, this bat mitzvah was exactly what I hoped for. As the girl and her friends braided challah, she recited the blessing over the mitzvah of challah for the first time as a Jewish adult. As she uttered the words, one could feel the excitement of her being able to recite this brachah as a full participant in Jewish life.

There are good reasons for a group bat mitzvah. It provides the girls with a peer experience and a community with whom they celebrate their important year. However, a girl celebrating an individual bat mitzvah can still take part in group programming.

For several years, I taught a mother-daughter bat mitzvah class, a program created by MaTaN in Israel, in which pairs of moms and daughters shared in a weekly study experience. Most of the girls later used what they learned in speaking at their individual bat mitzvah celebrations. At the Shaar, we also offer a group experience for both our bar and bat mitzvah students, to foster that sense of community and commitment. However, each child also celebrates the religious milestone on his or her own day.

Many have argued that a group bat mitzvah option is especially important for the families who would not otherwise mark bat mitzvah. The fear is that if we eliminate the group option, many girls will have no bat mitzvah at all. I disagree. Without a group, families will find their own ways to celebrate this milestone, and over time, this will develop a spectrum of options for girls to choose from, to find their own voice and discover what this personal milestone means to each of them.

If we don't celebrate bar and bat mitzvahs as individual Jews, then how can we expect our children to choose to live Jewishly as they grow into adulthood? At the very least, we owe them their own Jewish identity. ■

Maharat Rachel Kohl Finegold is the director of education and spiritual enrichment at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Montreal.

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BRINGING THE LIGHT OF TORAH AND WARMTH OF MITZVOT TO JEWS EVERYWHERE

GUEST VOICE

Genocides still happen, and I'm sick of indifference

Shireen Afzal

I was in third grade when I discovered the Holocaust. Looking back, I can't recall the title or author of the book I stumbled upon in the library, but I do remember that my hands wouldn't stop trembling after I finished reading it. The disgust, horror and anger that rose within me then have yet to leave.

I have long since stopped pretending that stories are just stories. They echo the truth, they express the innermost emotions of humanity, and they contain answers to questions people never bothered to ask. Maybe that's why I read so much: fiction or non-fiction, fantasy or memoir – somewhere there has to be an explanation for humanity's behaviour and there has to be a way to halt our crimes.

Why do the horrors never cease? I come from a country where bombs exploding in marketplaces and men slaughtering hundreds of school children have become yesterday's news.

Why does racism still exist? Even in Canada, I can't truly escape the critical eyes of society as they study my brown skin, my hijab and my immigrant parents and then deem me unworthy.

How much has the world really changed since the Holocaust? Genocides still happen, and people still watch while others die. Some call it human nature.

I call it ignorance.

Most people simply don't know, or if they know, they don't want to understand, or if they understand, they shove the problem away to a corner of their mind and forget. But I'm a 16-year-old girl who doesn't know what major to choose in college, let alone how to change the world. What can I do to change their minds?

I can write.

If Facing History has taught me anything, it's that you can't just label an event as a tragedy and walk away. You have to confront it, strip away the complex layers of motives and causes in the hopes that you will become closer to understanding what lies at the core of humanity. I'm sick of indifference and whether it's through social media, newspaper articles, novels, or survivor stories, I don't intend to let the world turn away anymore. I want to be like Deborah Ellis when she interviewed Israeli and Palestinian children in her book *Three Wishes* in an effort to convey that their diverse wishes all stemmed from the simple, human desire for happiness. I want to use stories to force people to notice, to break down their walls of prejudices, to dissolve their hatred, to build bridges between communities so that maybe someone will realize, "We're not so different after all."

Shireen Afzal

Lawyer and Nazi war crimes investigator Benjamin Ferencz knew that "creating a world of tolerance and compassion would be a long and arduous task," but he fought for justice because he believed that it could be achieved. Even if my dream isn't attained in my lifetime, it's worth it if I can work toward developing awareness and compassion in humanity, one word at a time. ■

Shireen Afzal is a Grade 11 student at Woburn Collegiate Institute, Toronto. This essay was the winner of the Upstander Scholarship Contest, a pilot project organized by Facing History and Ourselves, an international educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry.

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Canadians to testify at trial of Nazi guard

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Hedy Bohm's first reaction to being asked to testify in a German courtroom against a former guard at the Auschwitz death camp was "a definite no. I didn't want to go."

But the more the 86-year-old survivor of Auschwitz thought about it, the more she realized she was destined to deliver justice in the case.

Bohm, who lives in Toronto, will be one of seven Canadian Auschwitz survivors who will travel to the northern German city of Lüneburg later this month and next to testify against Oskar Groening, a former SS sergeant charged with 300,000 counts of aiding and abetting murder.

That figure corresponds to the number of Hungarian Jews who were sent to the gas chambers immediately on arriving in Auschwitz in the spring of 1944.

The survivors are "co-plaintiffs" in the case – those whose parents, siblings or children were murdered at the camp. They will recount their experiences and what their losses meant in their lives.

There is no Canadian equivalent to their status under German law. Their testimony will come close to the victim impact statement that's often delivered in criminal cases in this country.

The co-plaintiffs "are a kind of co-prosecution," explained Rafael Wugalter, a Montreal lawyer and translator who is assisting in the case.

They will not be cross-examined by Groening's lawyers.

Bohm arrived in Auschwitz in early June 1944 with her parents, who were shunted to their executions "within moments." She told *The CJN* that when she was asked to testify, "I couldn't imagine why I would want to put myself through this. And then later on, I stopped to think about it and what it meant."

She was swayed, she said, by the entreaties of Thomas Walther, a retired German judge turned Nazi hunter who is representing about 50 co-plaintiffs worldwide and was in Canada a few weeks ago to videotape survivors' memories.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

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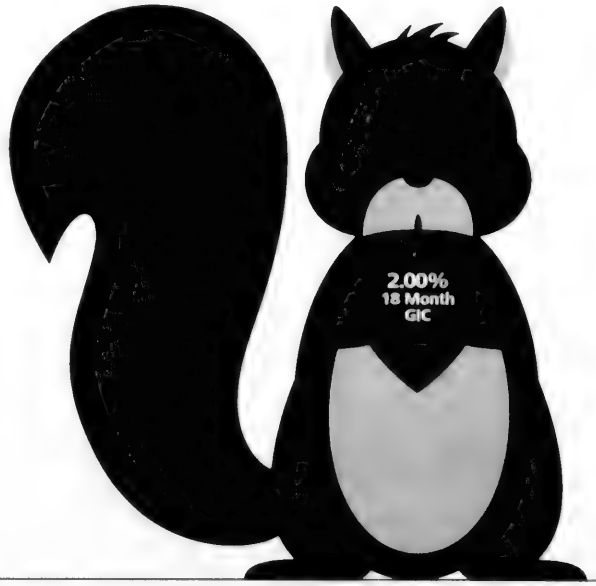

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Shirley Burnstein, camp mother and personal inspiration

Pamela Medjuck Stein

"As long as we all pull together,
Kadimah will grow more and more
Our camp will be bigger and better,
than ever it has been before."

Shirley Burnstein wrote these words, the Camp Kadimah song, with her cousin, Ralph Garson, in 1944 or '45. Burnstein's words will grab the attention of everyone who has attended Camp Kadimah since 1943, and so they should. Virtually every Maritime Jewish youngster has sung them since. In fact, the chorus now rings with voices across Canada, the United States and Israel.

The words evoke the joy of singing full out with your friends in the beautiful bubble of a Lake William summer. They call up the spirit of Maritime exceptionality, a community on fire with enthusiasm and unblemished confidence in a better future. As I sing them to myself, I realize they also encapsulate Shirley Burnstein.

Legends rise from the shores of Atlantic Canada. Some are even true, even as memories blur the awkwardness of small town Jewish living with the annual freedom of being all Jewish kids together at camp. We straggled in from Saint John's, Halifax and Woodstock in our individual town personae – the kids from the Wharf in Sydney had a culture, as did the gang from Fredericton. Yet, every summer, we achieved so much together. We had limited resources but even fewer roadblocks.

People often ask me, "Where do you Maritimers get your spirit? Why do you all love each other so much?" I credit Shirley Burnstein with teaching Maritime Jewish children to know and love what collective achievement and community happiness look like. It's probably why we began to love each other way back when.

At Camp Kadimah in the 1960s and '70s Shirley would take 40 or so campers (whoever came to the audition) ages eight to 18, and she would mount musical theatre extravaganzas in a barn-like hall, the rec hall (the ulam). She produced and directed *HMCS Pinafore, Fiddler on the Roof, The Sound of Music, Oliver* and more. It was hard work for everyone, with many hours of rehearsal time, building sets from two-by-fours and rolls of paper, and a lot of quietly waiting your turn. But the result felt so shockingly professional that even the cast was astounded. And this was the secret win.

Shirley would draw resilience, commitment and exuberant performance out of kids who didn't know if they could sing or dance, but "kinda" wanted to try. She was an artist herself, an opera singer by professional training. She respected the creative artist within each of her "protégés," and this respect instilled in each member of her cast and crew a sense of personal specialness and mission. Each shone like a star. She would also remind the audience that it was their special privilege to be there watching. It worked so well – as long as we all pulled together.

These long-ago productions contributed content to the pride that Kadimah alumni still exude. As they say, nothing builds commitment like success. The Kadimah musicals fostered a sense of camp-wide accomplishment every summer that Shirley led her shows. Her passion for the creative spirit was so strong that, as soon as one curtain came down, she was already talking about the next summer. Her enthusiasm made cast members thrill at the prospect of doing it again.

She was camp mom and a model of perpetual renewable commitment. It was never over. Like the song, our camp will be bigger and better than ever it has been before.

Shirley B, who died in January, taught several generations of Maritimers to pitch in, collaborate and give it their all. Through Shirley, we learned the sheer joy of achievement. It is a tremendous legacy. May her memory be a blessing. ■

Pamela Medjuck Stein is from Halifax, N.S., and is a Camp Kadimah alumna. She sits on the board of directors of The Canadian Jewish News.

Why not amortize day school tuition?

Daniel Held

Last month, our washing machine broke. It was the original machine in the house, built in 1968. I thought the repairman was going to cry when he couldn't fix it. "They just don't build them like they used to," he lamented.

The next day we went off to shop for a new machine. In each store, the salesperson showed us a set of machines with different features, but then continued to tell us about their financing specials. In one store we could get zero per cent financing for 12 months, in another two per cent for two years, and so on. It reminded me of buying a car a year earlier, when the sales pitch was both about the quality of the car and about the terms of payment.

With most major purchases, we are given the opportunity to amortize the cost over time. A mortgage for a house, a loan for car, and financing for a washing machine allow us to enjoy the benefits of the purchase while spreading out the expense.

In education, the key example is university tuition. In the United States, where tuition is significantly higher than in Canada, parents start saving from early in a child's life. Then, through college and for years afterward, parents and children continue paying off student loans. Rather than paying for college for the four years of an undergraduate degree, families pay for it over the span of several decades. As in the United States, the Canadian government incentivizes such amortization by offering registered education savings plans for the years before university and government sponsored student loans for the years after.

Student loans afford students the ability to defer the costs of education until they have a higher income to pay for it. During university, after all, many students have little to no income. Later, however, graduates are (hopefully) reaping the benefits of their education and earning a salary that allows them to pay back the school debt.

In many ways, we face a similar challenge with day school tuition. When children enter day school – in nursery, kindergarten or Grade 1 – their parents are still at the beginning of a financial journey. They may have recently bought a new house, they may be in the early stages of their career, and they may even still be paying off student debt. It can be a challenging time financially, and the cost of day school tuition adds to the burden.

As we experiment with ways to make day schools more affordable and sustainable, one of many ideas percolating is the possibility of amortizing tuition over time.

For some, personal financial security comes later in life – when a mortgage is paid off, when we have climbed the career ladder and found more solid professional footing. What if tuition were payable over a longer period, allowing families more certainty in their cash flow and the ability to pay for tuition when their income is higher and expenses lower? While doing so would require bridge funding to allow schools to sustain themselves while waiting for families to pay their full bill, it could go a long way to alleviate the crunch of paying for day school at a time in life when finances are especially tight.

I have written before that tackling the challenges of day school financial sustainability and affordability will require creative thinking and a willingness to experiment. This spring, as hundreds of high school students attend the March of the Living, we are dipping our toe into the experiment of amortizing Jewish educational costs. In collaboration with Jewish Free Loan Toronto, a group of participants in the March received interest-free loans, allowing them to pay the participation fee over time. The program is an experiment from which we'll learn, but it represents a helpful step in the right direction. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Yom Hashoah

Jean M. Gerber

"In Eternal memory to the men, women and children of Yaltushkow who perished at the hands of the Nazis in the summer of 1942"

These words are inscribed over an archway leading to graves of the Yaltushkower Landsmanshaft Benevolent Society, located in a vast city of the dead in Queens, N.Y. This is where my father-in-law and mother-in-law are buried with others who came to the United States before war swept the rest away.

My husband's father met regularly with transplanted Yaltushkowers. As with so many other immigrants, he bonded most closely with those from his own part of Ukraine. His father and one sister had gone on to the golden land before World War I, which trapped the rest of the family in Europe until they could be reunited.

According to family lore, his mother wanted to stay in Ukraine, but battles among White Czarist troops, Reds and Cossacks thrown in for good measure, made life unbearable. Finally, mother and the rest of the children came to America in 1920.

As well they did. Jews who stayed "home," perhaps because no one was in America to support them, or they felt they could ride out the civil war, or who knows why, died in the 1942 massacre, their names lost. Their only memorial is the arch in the cemetery.

After the war, someone went back to the site of Yaltushkow to see if anyone had survived. None had. For the family, only one picture remains of a cousin with her husband and child, who stayed in the USSR and vanished with the rest in 1942.

My husband remembers hushed conversations in his kitchen after the war, the sound of weeping. Only later would he learn why the adults cried.

Remembrance ceremonies around Yom Hashoah remind us that those who stayed "home" were the ones who paid the greatest price. All we are left with are stories those who survived can tell us.

Every year a unique cadre of survivors who contain the history of those years of darkness is diminished by death. Soon, only accounts that have been preserved through oral histories, recorded interviews, books and personal memoirs, will be all that remain for coming generations. Each one is a precious and irreplaceable repository.

Recalling someone who has died, we say, "May their name be for a blessing."

So many Jews died with their entire families in the Holocaust that their names were lost completely. Where names of those murdered millions remain, we are brought closer to them. By reciting their names, we maintain a memory of those who were consumed.

A poem by Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai, *The Synagogue in Florence*, includes some of those names we ourselves saw inscribed on the memorial wall:

"Tender spring in the courtyards
A tree blossoming, four girls playing
Between two lessons of the sacred language
In front of a memorial wall
Made of marble: Levi, Sonino, Cassuto
And others
In straight lines, as in a newspaper
Or in the scrolls of the Torah

The tree stands there in memory of nothing
But of this spring
A rivederci, our father
Buona notte, our king"

Even more devastating than the synagogue in Florence, if there are comparable moments of pain, may be the Pinchas shul in Prague. Its entire interior is covered with the names of the dead, so that one is wrapped in their names as in a tallit.

In these places, one is far from the concentration camps. In a camp, one breathes anonymous death; in a name, we may picture someone's life.

The Vietnam war memorial in Washington, D.C., the memorial in New York for those killed in the destruction of Sept. 11 – by naming those who died in those conflagrations, we are closer to them. So it is with the memorials in Florence and Prague, and others like them: at least their names will not be forgotten, but be a blessing for us. ■

Is the Iran deal good or bad? Depends how you look at it

Paul Michaels

It's been just two weeks since a long-delayed preliminary or "framework" agreement was reached between six major world powers and Iran on its nuclear program. A final or "comprehensive" agreement is supposed to be concluded by June 30.

Already, there's been a flood of analyses, from both Israel and the West, about whether the framework plan is a "good" or "bad" deal.

Where one comes down on this depends on where one begins, what one believes has been achieved thus far, and what one expects in the next few months.

Regarding the first point – where one begins – it's important to recall something that's been almost entirely ignored: that, when talks for the first interim agreement were launched in November 2013, their declared aim was bold and definitive: "The goal of these negotiations is to reach a mutually agreed long-term comprehensive solution that would *ensure* Iran's nuclear program will be *exclusively peaceful*. Iran reaffirms that *under no circumstances* will Iran *ever* seek or develop any nuclear weapons" (emphasis added).

Yet, no sooner had the objective that Iran's nuclear program would be "exclusively peaceful" been announced than we began hearing the talks were really about making sure Iran could not "break out" to a nuclear weapon for at least one year. So much for "under no circumstances… ever."

The lofty goal of preventing Iran from ever having a nuclear bomb quickly became an exercise in creating conditions under which it would be unlikely Iran could cheat its way toward building a bomb in under a year – arguably time enough for the ruse to be detected and possibly countered.

Tehran, after all, has mastered deceiving the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency, its nuclear watchdog agency, about Iran's obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), which it had signed, committing it to disclosing all its nuclear activities and sites. Secret sites – Natanz, and Fordow – were revealed by other means, a discovery that led the UN Security Council to pass binding resolutions first forbidding Iran from carrying out any nuclear fuel enrichment, and, when Iran defied it, imposing sanctions for its defiance.

The 2013 interim agreement, which allowed Iran to enrich fuel up to five per cent, was a step back from the Security Council resolutions. According to many analysts, however, it amounted to a recognition that nothing short of war, and perhaps not even that, was going to stop Iran from asserting its "right" to enrich, even though such a "right" doesn't exist under the NPT. In any event – and this brings us to the second point – the current interim (or preliminary) plan prohibits Iran from enriching "over 3.67 per cent for at least 15 years."

Still, according to the White House account of the plan, Iran is permitted to run slightly more than 5,000 first-generation centrifuges for enrichment purposes at Natanz while, at Fordow, another 1,000 centrifuges will be allowed to operate but "not to enrich uranium" in a "research" facility that is to be used "for peaceful purposes only." Does this imply, however unwittingly, the possibility that other facilities may be used for anything other than "peaceful" purposes? Apparently not.

This brings us to the third point. The only means to ensure that Iran's nuclear program remains "peaceful" – that is, that Iran doesn't cheat – is to ensure that IAEA inspectors will be allowed unfettered access to any site at any time. The details regarding such "intrusive" inspection remain to be worked out in the coming months. So too, critically, does the time frame for, and the extent of, sanctions relief, which is Iran's primary goal and one Iran reportedly believes (erroneously according to U.S. officials) it will attain as soon as it signs the comprehensive agreement, assuming it does so.

Expect the following weeks and months leading to the June 30 deadline to be fraught with heated disagreements about exactly what the preliminary plan, leading to a comprehensive deal, entails. ■

News

Israeli non-profit helps lone soldiers feel less alone

JODIE SHUPAC
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At the non-profit Ach Gadol's third anniversary celebration, the organization surprised a lone soldier from India by bringing his parents to Israel.

Being a lone soldier can make any problem – breaking up with a girlfriend, dealing with a difficult landlord, missing one's family – feel amplified, says Jonathan Singer, 24, an Israeli-Canadian volunteer with the Israeli non-profit organization Ach Gadol.

While visiting his family in Toronto this month, Singer helped raise awareness about Ach Gadol, speaking to high school students at Temple Sinai about the work the organization does.

Ach Gadol, which translates to "big brother," is a volunteer-driven non-profit that was founded five years ago with the mission to provide assistance and support to what Israelis call "lone soldiers" – those serving in the Israel Defence Forces whose families don't live in Israel.

In addition to co-ordinating social events, lectures and skills-building and cultural workshops for lone soldiers, Ach Gadol matches former lone IDF soldiers with those who are currently enlisted.

By doing so, it creates an infrastructure of support that ensures that lone soldiers have someone to turn to when dealing with issues of any kind.

"It's a way for them to have someone who can speak with them at eye level... Someone to turn to about just about anything, whether it's a problem they're having with the army, understanding their rights or wanting to know about studying in Israel after the army," said Singer, who was born in Israel but raised in Toronto and was drafted into the IDF in 2011 after making aliyah.

He and fellow Ach Gadol volunteers are assigned to act as mentors to small groups of lone soldiers living, when off base, in apartments funded by the American organization Friends of The Israel Defence Forces.

"I'm supposed to [visit] and make sure everything is OK with them," Singer, who is currently studying at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said.

At present, 200 volunteers have been assigned to support about 400 lone soldiers, and Ach Gadol hopes to recruit more volunteers and further expand its reach.

Daniel Aharon, Ach Gadol's founder and CEO, said the organization also helps prepare about 200 prospective lone soldiers for the army each year.

"Through joining the IDF, learning Hebrew and understanding Israeli culture, lone soldiers become true Israelis and an integral part of our society. Many lone soldiers do this with the help of their 'big sister' or 'big brother,' " he said.

The volunteers are mainly students or young professionals, and the lone soldiers include those who have come from countries all over the world to volunteer in the IDF or make aliyah as well as Israelis who have lost, or are estranged from, their families.

Though he said he was lucky to have been drafted into the army with a number of his friends from yeshiva and put up on weekends by the family of a rabbi he knew, Singer acknowledged the overall difficulty of being a lone soldier, especially when Israeli culture is foreign.

"The army is generally a stressful place, so not having that backbone of your family close by, that support system that everyone else does, definitely makes it that much more intense," he noted.

He cited issues such as navigating army bureaucracy, homesickness and even having to rush home on Fridays to shop and cook for the weekend for oneself, as experiences that can be particularly tough for lone soldiers.

"Israelis who have grown up with [the military culture] are more used to it. There can be cultural differences in terms of knowing how to work the system. If you're Israeli and say, you had an older brother who was in the army before and can tell you what to expect at every stage, that's easier," Singer said.

Aharon stressed that Ach Gadol volunteers serve as mediators to help lone soldiers "work with the system instead of against it, and become capable, confident young adults."

To expand its operations, the organization hopes to cultivate both awareness and funds from Jewish communities in North America, and Aharon said Passover is an apt time to consider the difficulties faced by lone soldiers.

"[At this time], we remember the challenges that the Jewish people have gone through, where we started out and how we became the nation we are today... These young adults are our future. It's our obligation to strengthen their connection to their Jewish roots and to the state of Israel." ■

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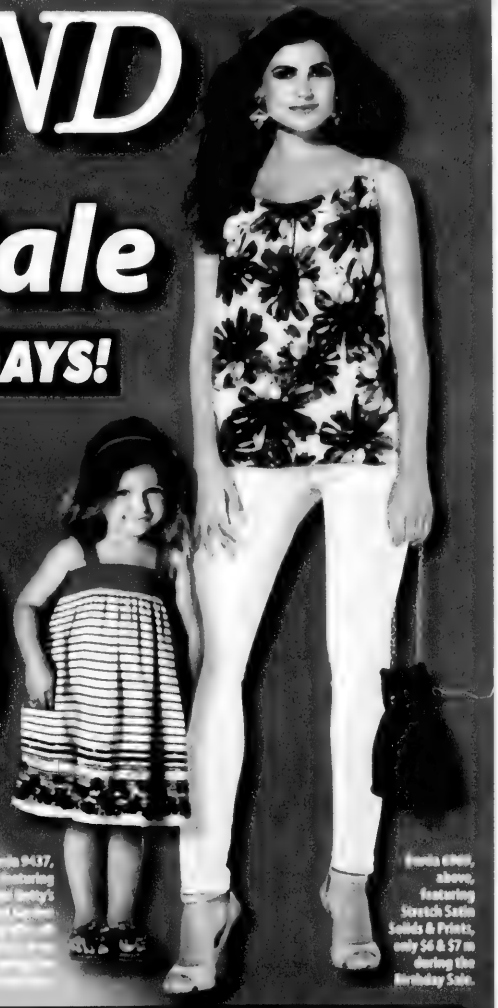

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 16, 2015

Federation honours community power couple

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto (UJA) will be honouring Ted and Elizabeth Sokolsky for their leadership and vision with a dedication ceremony to name the Ted and Liz Sokolsky Community Square, at the Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan.

The May 3 event will feature a community dessert reception hosted by Julia Koschitzky.

"I hope many people will come out to celebrate the dedication, because what Ted and Liz have done has been of great benefit to this community," said Morris Perlis, chair of UJA Federation's board of directors.

The Ted and Liz Sokolsky Community Square will be an attractively landscaped outdoor square at the heart of the Lebovic Campus. The facility was built during Ted's tenure as CEO of federation and houses the Schwartz/Reisman Centre, the northern branch of Bialik Hebrew Day School, the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre, as well as a number of community social service agencies.

"The campus is a roaring success. We have approximately 7,500 to 8,000 members. It's a gem in the crown of the Jewish community today," said Leo Goldhar, a past UJA Campaign chair and past federation board member who was active in the campus' planning and construction.

"We wanted to honour Ted and Liz for their visionary work that they have done."

Ted Sokolsky, 63, retired last September after 28 years with the federation, the last 10 as president and CEO. Prior to that, he served as senior campaign associate, associate campaign director, annual campaign director and vice-president for integrated fundraising.

His accomplishments include managing the extraordinary growth of UJA's annual campaign, which has increased from $32 million in 1995 to more than $56 million today, making it the third-largest campaign in the North American federation system, surpassed only by New York and Chicago.

Ted also spearheaded the planning and implementation of Jewish Toronto Tomorrow, a $350-million capital project known today as the Tomorrow Campaign, the largest-ever redevelopment of Toronto's Jewish community infrastructure. As well, he oversaw the growth of the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, which resulted in the rapid expansion of its assets from $120 million in 2004 to $253 million today, with another $300 million in planned gifts (bequests and gifts of life insurance).

Liz and Ted Sokolsky

In 2013, Ted became president of the World Conference of Jewish Communal Service Workers.

Elizabeth (Liz) Sokolsky, 55, has been a Jewish communal professional for 30 years. She began her career in Jewish experiential education as the assistant director of BBYO in Montreal. From there, she spent three years in Ottawa at its Jewish community centre, where she was responsible for youth and teen programs, and summer camp.

After marrying Ted, she moved to Toronto, where she spent nine years at the JCC, culminating in her position as branch director. Her roots at BBYO led her to leave the JCC and to become national director of BBYO Canada for the next three years.

In 1996, Liz became the national executive director of the newly created Canada Israel Experience, which was established in order to significantly increase both the quantity of participants and quality of Israel experience programs for Canadian teens and young adults.

Liz is currently vice-president of education and operations for Taglit-Birthright Israel in North America. She has been with this innovative and highly successful program since its inception in 1999.

"Liz has been an incredible force in the Birthright program and is an outstanding community person," Goldhar said. ■

To RSVP for the event, contact Livana Ohayon at 416-631-5725 or lohayon@ujafed.org

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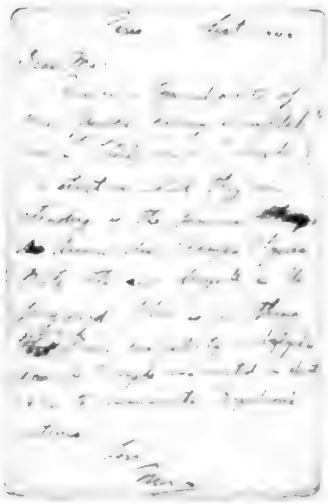

June 12, 2012 (386)

it appeared to be waiting for him. When it bounded off, he followed. The hare arrived at an immense rock that was split in two. Three or four powerful leaps carried the hare through the slot between the rock's two halves. The rock stood taller than Heinrich, and was shaped like a rounded hill. The hare emerged out the other side of the passage through the centre of the giant stone. Sniffing the air, it held still, as if waiting for someone or something. Heinrich entered the slit. No sunlight entered with him.

Beside the Weasel River. Baffin Island July 2010. M. Baillie.

Nico Rogers

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Images, Top (left & right): Malka Greene, *His Father Over Time* (installation detail – photo from the Estate of Morris Resnick), 2015. Middle & bottom: Martha Baillie, *Schlegel Archive* (installation detail – postcard image photograph by Martha Baillie taken July 2010, Aqsuitsuq, Baffin Island), 2014.

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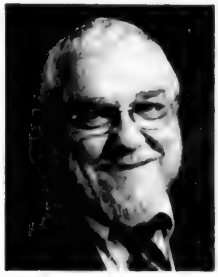
Film pays tribute to Hamilton rabbi

ABIGAIL CUKIER
SPECIAL TO CJN HAMILTON



Rabbi Zev Eisenstein

It seems everyone who knew Rabbi Zev Eisenstein has a story about the positive impact he had on their lives.

So it seems only fitting that as a tribute to his life, Hamilton Hebrew Academy (HHA) is producing a documentary of people sharing their stories about the rabbi, who died last November at age 75.

The film, *It's a Beautiful Day*, will premiere May 12 at the annual Hamilton Hebrew Academy Gala Tribute Dinner.

Rabbi Eisenstein was the principal of HHA for 28 years, retiring in 2001. He remained as a teacher until 2011. His motto was "It's a beautiful day." Every morning, he would open the door to the school and greet each student with those words.

"He touched so many people in countless ways. People from all strata of life – students, parents, people in the business world, people he met at RV parks while camping," said Rabbi Daniel Green of Adas Israel Congregation of Hamilton, who is also dean of HHA. "He was there for people in times of death and at joyous occasions. He had a profound impact on people in a variety of ways."

The film was shot in Toronto, Israel and Hamilton, with people from all areas of Rabbi Eisenstein's life coming to share their stories.

"Similar themes came up over and over again," Rabbi Green said. "So many said, 'He was like a second father to me.' They knew he was there and that he was someone you could always rely upon.

"Rabbi Eisenstein savoured the opportunity to give to other people. If you are woken in the middle of the night to help with a family dispute or to go to the hospital, there is an element of it being the last thing in the world you want to do. For Rabbi Eisenstein, it was the first thing he wanted to do. He wanted to be there for people in meaningful ways."

One of Rabbi Green's favourite examples of Rabbi Eisenstein's impact came from the head of a company where Rabbi Eisenstein was a kashrut inspector.

"He told me he didn't need [kashrut] certification," Rabbi Green said. "He told me, 'I pay so I can have a visit from Rabbi Eisenstein a couple of times a year. It's worth the money, and I don't want that to stop.' That is the most fitting testimony for him."

In addition to the film, the It's a Beautiful Day Fund aims to create a legacy of love and inclusivity through three projects: the Diverse Learning Centre, which provides instruction and resources for special needs students; a scholarship fund to enable children whose families may not have the resources to experience an HHA education; and transportation services for Jewish children who have no access to Jewish day school because of their geographic location in the Niagara, Halton and Kitchener areas.

Funds will be raised through the sale of leaves on the school's Tree of Life memorial wall, which will be dedicated in honour of Rabbi Eisenstein.

"We want to give back," said Rabbi Green. "We want to make sure that what Rabbi Eisenstein built and gave his life to is able to perpetuate and build into the future."

For information, visit HHAlegacy.ca. ■

Key goal caps player's career

Casey Rosen and family at the OUA final.

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Casey Rosen doesn't score a lot of goals, but when she does, they're memorable.

Known more for her penalty-killing and leadership, Rosen scored the final goal as the Western Mustangs rocked defending champs McGill Martlets 5-0 in the CIS (Canadian Interuniversity Sport) Women's Hockey Championship.

The tally came on her last-ever shift in her last-ever game as a collegiate hockey player. Rosen will be graduating this year with a bachelor of science degree, with a double major in biology and physiology.

Scoring the way she did with about a minute left marked a nice bookend to a career that began when she was a freshman four years ago and had to replace an injured player. She scored twice in her first game to impress Mustangs head coach Chris Higgins. "She scored two goals, and she's not missed a game since then," Higgins said.

Throughout her career, Rosen scored 18 goals and 10 assists in 70 regular season games. But she says her role wasn't to be a scorer. In fact the Mustangs, eventual Ontario University Athletics and CIS champions, had a hard time scoring goals all season. They played a lot of low-scoring, one-goal games.

But the team stressed defence and rode a strong 200-foot game to a remarkable 28-1-3 record including playoffs, which Rosen admits "was crazy." There's lots of talent on the team, she said. "We didn't rely on one person. We kept changing the lineup and found what worked. Everybody got points."

Rosen's main contribution was a strong forecheck and harassing the opposing defence. "We get the other team on their heels. We pressure them and cause them to be frazzled. My parents say when I'm on the ice, I'm like a hurricane," she said.

Rosen, who played right wing, got a lot of time on the penalty kill and toward the end of the season, on the power play, too. Higgins said Rosen had a key role on the Mustangs's penalty killing and provided energy. "Her biggest contribution to the team was through leadership," he added.

One of two co-captains, she was looked up to by the others, Higgins said. "Everyone listens to whatever she has to say."

"We bonded and had a close group," Rosen said.

Rosen comes from a hockey family. Her dad, Ian, still plays, as do her brothers, Neil and Jamie. Her parents, Neil and Annegail, came to every game she played this season, from North Bay in the north to Windsor in the south. They even flew out to Calgary for the CIS championship.

A United Synagogue Day School and Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto graduate, she excelled in hockey, softball and field hockey and was TanenbaumCHAT's female athlete of the year. Prior to joining the Mustangs, she played for the Toronto-Leaside Junior Wildcats. ■

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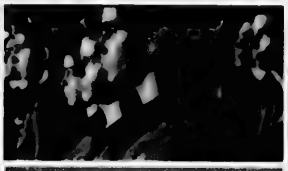

Tuesday, April 21 • 7:30pm
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Israeli consulate official ceremony for Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism.
Beth Tzedec Congregation
1700 Bathurst St.

Thursday, April 23
1:00pm-2:30pm
Israeli Folk Dancing Workshop
in celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut facilitated by Sofie Azen, Toronto isReal Dance Festival
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750 Spadina Ave
Info: mnjcc.org
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Thursday, April 23
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Wednesday, April 22
7:30pm
Talking Tachless: Israeli Speakers' Night
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 16, 2015

IAW 'demeans' anti-apartheid struggle, Cotler tells S. Africans

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Irwin Cotler, the McGill University law professor and former minister of justice, once served as the legal counsel for South African freedom fighter Nelson Mandela.

He had a close-up view of the horrors of apartheid and has long believed that Israel was being unfairly tarnished with the false accusation of being an "apartheid state."

During a recent visit to South Africa, he told MPs, political leaders and members of the Jewish community that the allegation of apartheid levelled at Israel demeans the real struggle for equal rights in South Africa.

He also urged South African leadership to use their moral authority to advocate for human rights abuses around the world, in places like Venezuela, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Cotler, Liberal MP for Mount Royal, was in South Africa to take part in events marking the 60th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, what he called "the iconic moral compass of the anti-apartheid movement that inspired the creation of a free, democratic, egalitarian and non-racial South Africa, with Nelson Mandela, an honorary Canadian citizen, as its first president."

During his recent South African visit, Cotler met with Susan Shabangu, the country's minister responsible for women, Tshililo Michael Masutha, the minister of justice, and Jeff Radebe, minister of the presidency. He also witnessed a BDS-Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) rally outside the venue where he was speaking. He met with some of the demonstrators, and found many had been bused in and didn't even know why they were there.

But in his meetings with South African leaders, both secular and Jewish, he made the case that "IAW demeans the real authentic anti-apartheid struggle. It betrays the real anti-apartheid struggle," which he called central to his own identity.

"Israel is responsible for human rights violations," he said. "No one is saying Israel is above the law, only that it should be held to the same standard as all other countries. Nobody is saying human rights standards should not be applied in Israel. But they should be applied equally to everyone."

> *No one is saying Israel is above the law, only that it should be held to the same standard as all other countries. Nobody is saying human rights standards should not be applied in Israel. But they should be applied equally to everyone.*

Cotler said "the shame of the anti-apartheid movement" is that it is discriminating by singling out Israel for condemnation while invoking anti-apartheid rhetoric to justify it. "It gives the real human rights violators exculpatory immunity. It shames the real anti-apartheid legacy, and is hypocritical," he said.

Cotler said he thought the South African MPs "were receptive" to his position.

He also urged them to make speaking out against resurgent anti-Semitism a priority and he called on South African leaders to speak out about human rights abuses in Iran.

He noted in particular the case of Hossein Kazemeyni Boroujerdi, an ayatollah who has received an 11-year sentence for insulting Islam. Boroujerdi had called for the separation of religion and state and he had condemned anti-Semitism.

Boroujerdi is known as the Mandela of Iran, making his cause particularly significant for South Africa, Cotler pointed out.

As to Venezuela, he said the country is morphing from an authoritarian state into a dictatorship. The democratic opposition is being jailed and one-third of the country's mayors are in prison, he said.

In Saudi Arabia, blogger Raif Badawi was sentenced to 10 years in jail, fined the equivalent of $266,000 (US) and given 1,000 lashes in 50-lash instalments, for insulting Islam, cybercrime and disobeying his father.

Those are the kinds of human rights cases South Africa should be addressing, he suggested. ■

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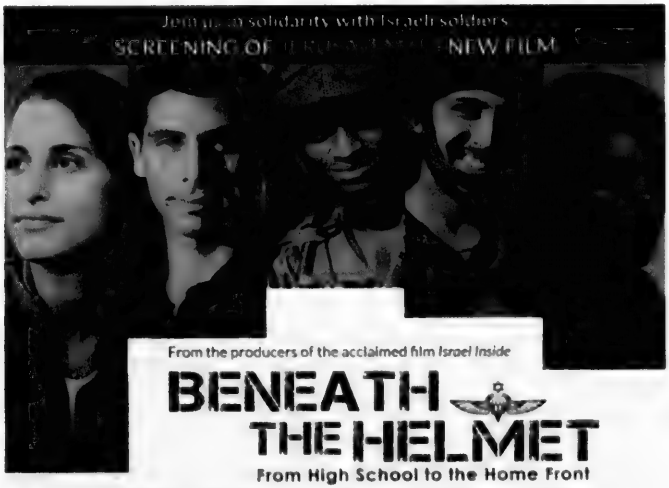

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Bialik educator to be honoured for 49 years of service

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Having served Bialik Hebrew Day School for nearly five decades, Ziona Hagler will be honoured for her retirement next month at a gala event to thank her for her dedication to Jewish education in Toronto.

"This is an unprecedented [amount] of time for someone to be at a school. We did check the *Guinness Book of World Records*," Shana Harris, Bialik's head of school, said with a laugh. "But she didn't qualify. It's probably unprecedented in Toronto."

Harris, who has known and worked with Hagler for 29 years, and whose children were taught by her, said that despite Hagler's 49 years at the school, her energy and passion never wavered.

"That's why we felt that we wanted to honour her with a tribute dinner and really give her the honour she deserves," she said.

The event, scheduled for May 6 at The Warehouse at Downsview Park, will raise funds for the Ziona and Dan Hagler Tuition Support Fund.

In an interview with *The CJN*, Hagler explained that she moved to Toronto in 1966, after being sent from Israel to Cleveland by the Jewish Agency for Israel.

"I got the job with Bialik before I moved. I was in the [United] States. I was sent by the Jewish Agency to Cleveland, but they begged us to come to Toronto, and they arranged the visa for us," Hagler said.

"The original plan was to stay for a few years and then go back [to Israel]. But I felt that I was doing a mission. And my family in Israel also felt that my mission was to educate children in the Diaspora and to teach them the love of Israel and the language."

Sandy Brown, past president of the school, a board member, and a friend of Hagler's for more than 40 years, said Hagler was the "Zionist heart and soul of the school."

Speaking about all the work she has done to bring extra-curricular activities and programs to the school, Brown said, "that's one of the things... we'll miss when she's gone because I don't know that she's replaceable in that area. It's quite sad in my view, bittersweet, that we'll be missing out on that contribution that she's made to the school," Brown said.

"She has made her work at Bialik her life... she has got a lot of energy and it is infectious. You can't be around her and not feel that you've got to do something," Brown said, adding that Hagler, who is now in her 70s, is a generous, caring, devoted and determined educator.

Harris said that although Hagler hasn't been in a classroom setting for about 20 years, she has been immersed in the co-curricular work, including the shinshinim program, which brings Israeli high school graduates to the Diaspora to volunteer for a year to educate the community about Israel and Israeli culture.

Ziona Hagler

"She's like the *savta* [grandmother] to the shinshinim," Harris said.

"She really cared deeply about the students and wanted the students to have the best experiences and to develop *ahavat Yisrael*, a love of Israel, a commitment to Israel, a connection to Israel and I think she worked hard on that."

She added that Hagler also ran all of the Grade 8 graduation trips to cities such as Boston, Washington and New York, and she always put her heart into planning the trips and providing meaningful experiences for the students.

"I think we'll miss her creativity that she put into every celebration that she co-ordinated and her energy and passion for Jewish education," Harris said.

"I think she leaves a very rich legacy at the school in the way she created celebrations and tried to put a spirit of Zionism and Israel in the school."

Hagler said the most rewarding part of her decades at Bialik was witnessing the results of her work.

"When students come to say things like, 'Thank you, it's because of you that we know the language,' those are my rewards," Hagler said.

As for her retirement plans, she said she plans to spend time with her daughter and three grandchildren.

She said she'll miss working with the students, teachers and administration.

"I had a very good time here. Everyone was so good to me," she said. "I'm really very emotional. I never expected such an honour." ■

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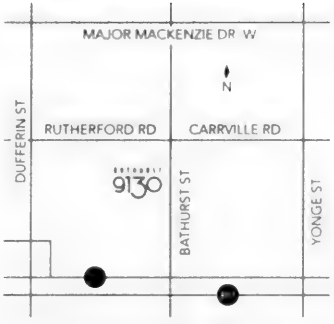

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Toronto unites for Yom Ha'atzmaut

UJA, Israeli Consulate and Jewish Agency partner to mark Independence Day

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

To highlight the daring and creative character of Israeli culture, several leaders from prominent Jewish organizations are hosting a panel event featuring three diverse Israeli speakers.

Talking Tachless: Israeli Speakers Night is being held April 22 at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre's Al Green Theatre in honour of Israel's 67th Independence Day – Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Panelists Maj.-Gen. Orna Barbivay, the highest-ranking female officer in the Israeli Defence Forces' history; Prof. Raphael Hofstein, the Israeli-born president and CEO of Toronto-based innovation hub MaRS Discovery District and Yaniv Waizman, Tel Aviv city council member and gay rights activist will discuss their career trajectories and accomplishments in the context of what they feel it means to be Israeli.

The event is being organized by Irit Stopper, Israel's deputy consul general in Toronto; Eran Shafir, regional representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel; Lee Mes, director of Israeli-Canadian outreach and engagement at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and Dan Horowitz, federation's editorial director and senior writer.

"The message for the whole evening is that Israel is very daring, and that's what makes it so successful and contributes to its survival," said Mes.

The event is part of a larger initiative led collaboratively by the Jewish Agency, UJA Federation and the Israeli Consulate to mark Yom Ha'atzmaut in an innovative and all-encompassing way.

The idea for what the group has dubbed Toronto Celebrates Israel came about a year or so ago, when Shafir and Mes started talking about wanting to do something different for this year's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations.

With that, Shafir said, "a unique partnership" between UJA, the Israeli Consulate and the Jewish Agency was born, and, as a group, they began discussing, "Why do just one event? Why not use the love for Israel in the [Toronto Jewish] community as a vehicle to bring people together?"

So, in addition to directly organizing the April 22 event, the group decided to create a platform where all Yom Ha'atzmaut events in the city can be advertised in one central place.

Several weeks ago, they launched the official Toronto Celebrates Israel website, which features a calendar and descriptions of upcoming Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations by schools, synagogues, community centres and even private events held at people's homes.

As of April 8, the website had about 30 events listed, and Mes said they hope to collect more.

She and fellow organizers have been reaching out to organizations – both those they're already affiliated with and those they haven't previously worked with – across the city and spanning the religious and political spectrum.

Part of their goal is to emphasize the diversity that exists within the Toronto Jewish community, Mes explained.

"We're not saying there is one way to celebrate Israel or emphasize the holiday – that is the beauty of this," she said.

Shafir noted that the advantage of advertising a wide variety of events "under one umbrella" is that it will engage a wider reach of people and build strength in the community.

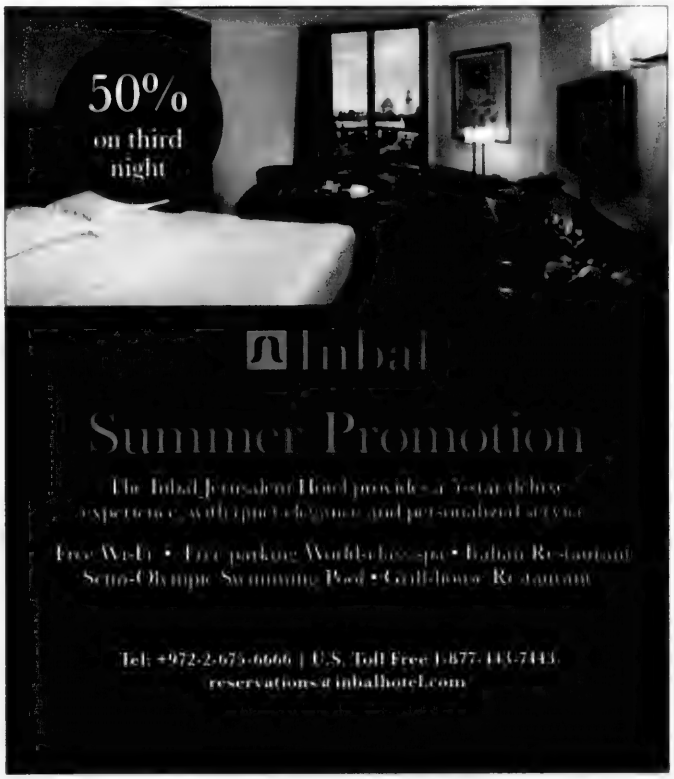
"It's a capacity-building tool... We're showing that we're much stronger when we're together and that we're all part of something bigger than ourselves," he said.

IDF Maj.-Gen. Orna Barbivay

Yom Ha'atzmaut events currently listed on the website run the gamut from a film screening about Zionism at Ryerson University to a celebration for kids at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre's supplementary Hebrew school to a "lunch and learn" with the host of TVO's *The Agenda*, Steve Paikin, presented by Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

The organizers of Toronto Celebrates Israel hope the initiative will happen annually. ■

Tickets can be purchased online at www.jewishtoronto.com/torontocelebratesisrael.



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Overnight CHAT event to raise money for cancer

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Anne & Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Wallenberg campus will come together as a community for a Canadian Cancer Society fundraising event aimed at enhancing the quality of life of people with cancer.

TanenbaumCHAT will be the first Jewish day school in the city to run Relay for Life, an overnight, non-competitive 12-hour event. Its fundraising goal is $50,000 and will take place at Esther Shiner Stadium at Bathurst Street and Finch Avenue from May 7 at 7 p.m. until May 8 at 7 a.m.

"The idea is that cancer doesn't sleep, so the 12-hour program is really meant to mirror the experience of a cancer patient. It is meant to be a challenging event where we stay up for 12 hours to raise awareness and raise funds to help those who are dealing with cancer," said teacher Josh Sable, co-director of student activities at the school.

"We start in the light together, we go into the darkness together. We have a period of struggle overnight. We get to 3 or 4 a.m. when we're not sure if we are going to make it or not, and then the sun comes up and we remember. We are ready now to face a new day and its challenges. That really is the goal of the program."

Sable added: "There is a real buzz around the school. It's pretty electric."

Relay For Life is the largest fundraising activity the Canadian Cancer Society runs. In 2014, more than $40 million was raised at some 400 Relay For Life events across Canada.

"Since 1999, Relay For Life events in Canada have raised $439 million toward lifesaving research of all types of cancer and support systems for people going through cancer and their families," said Kyle Smith, youth program specialist with the Canadian Cancer Society.

Event chairs Maxwell Charlat, Lauren Wintraub, and Miya Strauss are part of a 30-student Grade 12 committee organizing the event.

Grade 10 student Joseph Erlick lost his brother Evan to brain cancer in 2006 when Evan was only 13. Erlick will be participating in his memory.

"Evan had two dreams. He dreamed that children who needed cancer treatments like he did could have somewhere they would be able to relax, play with others and just be kids. He also dreamed that someone would find a cure for cancer.

"Our family did everything we could to make Evan's dream a reality. Unfortunately, the world is still trying to help Evan's second dream come true," Erlick said.

From left, Josh Sable and Joseph Erlick with event chairs Maxwell Charlat, Lauren Wintraub and Miya Strauss

The $20 registration fee includes a Relay For Life T-shirt, a security bracelet and a luminary bag – a small bag filled with sand and a candle. Students will be given an online web page and a pledge envelope and are encouraged to raise as much money as possible.

Relay For Life participants walk or run together around the track. Students are grouped to form teams of approximately 10 people. Each team will designate a captain. There will always be a team member walking throughout the event.

Cancer survivors from the Tanenbaum CHAT community – teachers, parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbours – will walk the first lap of the night, a "survivors lap." The community will then join them by walking around the track in solidarity.

"After it gets dark, we remember those that we have lost to cancer by decorating and lighting special bags called 'luminaries' that line the entire track," Sable said.

The event will have entertainment, food and activities running throughout.

"To date, $27,000 has been raised," he said.

"Our organization [Canadian Cancer Society] could not run without schools running these events for us. They make an impact on the fight against cancer," Smith said.

To donate, go to www.relayforlife.ca. ■

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Soccerthon a fun way to support kids with disabilities

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Gilad Epstein, president of the Canadian Friends of Beit Issie Shapiro (CFOBIS) hopes that in addition to raising funds for the Israel-based organization through the fifth annual Soccerthon, the event will also serve as an opportunity to raise awareness about the group's work on behalf of people with disabilities in Israel, and to solidify local partnerships.

Epstein said that when he assumed the role of president of the Toronto-based organization more than two years ago, his mandate was to add to the fundraising element by working with the local community to benefit Canadians as well.

"We felt that being the Canadian friends, it's wonderful to promote Beit Issie in Israel, but we also want to have a direct impact on Canadians and our local community. That's the theme of partnerships and that's why I'm so passionate about Soccerthon, because it embodies those values," Epstein said.

The Soccerthon, scheduled for April 26 at the Trio Sportsplex in Woodbridge, Ont., began five years ago as an adult-only tournament.

"Adults came and played a marathon of soccer for three hours at an indoor facility, and each player, each team raised funds, got sponsored by friends and family and that is how it started as a fundraiser."

He said in the first year, the tournament attracted six teams and raised $1,800. This year, the tournament will host 16 teams, and Epstein is confident the funds raised will surpass last year's total of $20,000 to support Beit Issie Shapiro in its mission.

Through Beit Issie Shapiro, there are treatment centres and a day school for children with disabilities, but there is much more than that," Epstein said.

"They've transformed into a research centre, and rather than open branches across the country, they've decided to utilize one location and spread the knowledge through partnerships, through education, through training, through policy and through international impact as well.

"Part of the mission is to promote a society that allows people with disabilities to be included in society, to have opportunities to have lives as close to normal as possible."

As for the upcoming event, Epstein said the soccer has almost become a second-

Participants in last year's tournament

ary part of the tournament.

"The kids program has become the crown jewel... We've partnered with Camp Aim, a camp for children with disabilities, and we will bring their campers and their caregivers to the event, and we will craft sport activity programs that will be adjusted to different skill sets and ability levels. It will be for all kids and will be inclusive," he said.

"We will have six indoor fields running in parallel for four hours – three hours of play – and one field will be dedicated to kids. In previous years, these were the kids of the players... This year, we've collaborated with a few partners... We will run our first inclusive program."

He said each team represents a country, such as Canada, Israel, Brazil or Argentina, and each team is responsible for raising a minimum of $1,000.

Other organizations, including Camp Breakaway, a Jewish Orthodox summer day camp for boys and girls; DANI, a non-profit that works to create employment, training and educational opportunities for adults with cognitive, emotional and/or physical challenges, and Maccabi Canada, have also partnered with CFOBIS on the Soccerthon.

"Recently, we were approached by the Jewish Agency [for Israel]... They want to create 67 events in commemoration of the 67th Independence Day of Israel and they were looking for events around the city, so we're partnering with them and this will be one of the 67 events."

DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general to Toronto and Western Canada, is also participating in the event.

"He will be there for the opening ceremony to welcome the crowd, and he will also be playing on Team Israel with his children," Epstein said, adding that he's expecting up to 500 people at the event. ■

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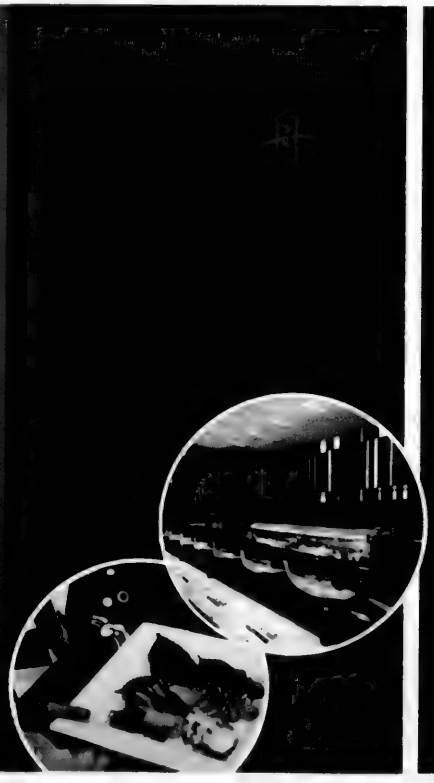

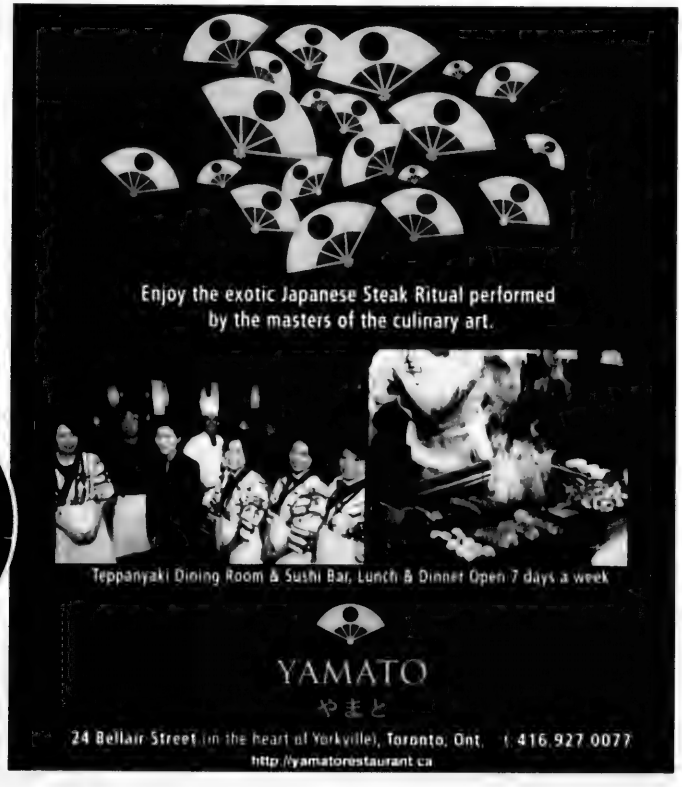
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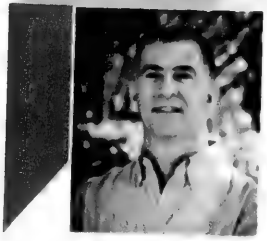

***Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman** is President of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and the Director of its iEngage Project. He has a Ph.D. in Jewish philosophy from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a Master of Arts in political philosophy from New York University, a Master of Arts in religion from Temple University, and Rabbinic ordination from the Shalom Hartman Institute*

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GUEST VOICE

It would mean so much if you join us on Yom Hazikaron

Sara Dobner

There is one event in the Jewish calendar year in Toronto where you are sure to find more Israeli Canadians than native Canadians in attendance. That is Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Memorial Day, which honours all of the Jewish state's fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism.

While it is not a religious holiday, this day is one the holiest days in the Israeli calendar and is deeply ingrained in modern Israeli society and the Israeli psyche. This is the one day when we are all united as one family in deep grief, memories and thoughts, sharing our collective existential destiny.

The intense passion that Israelis have in remembering those who have paid the ultimate price for the continued existence of the Jewish homeland exists both in Israel and in the Diaspora. This is a nation where most people have served in the army, where many have friends and family members – fathers, sons and brothers – who never came back from the battlefield, and where there are dozens of songs and poems dedicated to the fallen. This is the one day when all the conflicts, politics, debates and disagreements that so uniquely characterize Israeli society take a back seat.

In 1951, the fourth of the Hebrew month of Iyar was declared by the Israeli Knesset as Yom Hazikaron. It is always one day before Israel's Independence Day, so that when we celebrate our independence, we do not forget our debt to those who are no longer with us and to whom we owe our country and our independence. This year, we will remember 23,137 fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism who lost their lives since 1860, the year when Jews were first allowed to live in Palestine outside of Jerusalem's Old City walls.

Yom Hazikaron in Israel has always been unique, as it is a day when all public and entertainment venues are closed. There are two sirens sounded, during which everybody observes a two-minute halt of all traffic and daily activities. And all of Israel's radio and television stations broadcast, throughout the day, programs about the lives and heroic acts of fallen soldiers, along with Israeli songs.

Growing up in Israel, some Yom Hazikaron rituals became part of our identity. For years, we read Nathan Alterman's poem, written during the 1948 War of Independence, *Magash Hakesef* (*The Silver Platter*), at every Yom Hazikaron ceremony. And almost every Israeli remembers the memorial corner in their school that was filled with pictures of school graduates who fell in one of Israel's wars. Some schools invite the families of the fallen graduates to participate in their ceremonies. School children dress in blue and white, while thousands of soldiers in uniform make their way to military cemeteries across the country.

> *This day is one of the holiest in the Israeli calendar*

The unique atmosphere of this day that Israelis are used to explains why many feel out of place on Yom Hazikaron when they are outside Israel. As I mourn my personal loss, like so many others, I have a wish that I know I share with many Israeli Canadians, a wish that the warm Jewish community of Toronto will come out in large numbers and share with us our sorrow on this special day.

Israeli Canadians and Canadian Jews have learned, over the years, to recognize the cultural differences between them and have made considerable efforts to learn about each other's unique manifestations of Jewish life, and to build bridges. Yom Hazikaron represents one of those unique Israeli existential experiences and, therefore, presents an opportunity for Canadian Jews to add one more building block to the bridge by taking part in it.

We hope to see you at the Yom Hazikaron ceremony this year. It would mean so much to us if you join us. ■

Sara Dobner is a member of the board of directors at Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, and chair of the Israeli Identity Program, Hamifgash Program at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre. Toronto's official Yom Hazikaron ceremony will be held on April 21 at 7:30 p.m. at Beth Tzedec Congregation. The program is in both Hebrew and English. A program with Israeli songs will follow after the ceremony.

Three vie for Mount Royal Tory candidacy on April 26

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Neil Drabkin entered the race March 26.

The winner of the vigorously contested right to be the Tory candidate in Mount Royal, a federal riding that has been Liberal for 75 years, will be known April 26 when the party holds its nomination meeting.

The three contenders are ex-Côte St. Luc mayor and Montreal executive committee member Robert Libman, former TVA broadcaster Pascale Déry and lawyer Neil Drabkin.

An early entrant, Beryl Wajsman, editor of the *Suburban*, withdrew shortly before the March 26 deadline, while Drabkin, a former chief of staff to two of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's ministers, entered near the cut-off.

The Liberal candidate in the election, expected to be held Oct. 19, is Anthony Housefather, mayor of Côte St. Luc, who was chosen last fall. Liberal Irwin Cotler, Mount Royal MP since 1999, announced more than a year ago he won't seek re-election.

Libman, 54, who was first out of the gate in September, is an architect who co-founded and was an MNA for the provincial Equality Party after his upset victory in the staunchly Liberal D'Arcy McGee in 1989.

Déry, 38, a political newcomer, announced her bid in January, when Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney spoke in support of her nomination.

Both Déry and Libman have been actively campaigning and signing up party members, which is key to their chance of capturing the nomination. The deadline for becoming a member was April 2 at midnight.

Drabkin, who will be 54 in May, said he entered the race late after appeals by longtime Tories in the riding, who are concerned "the contest between the two existing candidates has become so polarized that the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish communities are being pitted against each other. This, they believe, will result in division in the community come the federal election... and, thereby, damage our party's chances of winning the seat."

Drabkin said he has earned the respect of both parts of the community because of his years of experience, and "those longtime Conservatives... believe that I have the credibility and stature to unite the membership... behind out prime minister."

He was chief of staff to then-natural resources minister Joe Oliver and, prior to that to Stockwell Day, who held portfolios in Harper's cabinet. Drabkin began his political career in 1984 working for Gerry Weiner, who became a Mulroney cabinet minister.

Drabkin has run unsuccessfully for Parliament five times since 1993, for the Progressive Conservatives, the Canadian Alliance and the Conservatives, including twice in Mount Royal in 1993 and 2006. He ran for the Tories in Westmount-Ville Marie in 2011.

Libman said it speaks well for the party and Harper that four qualified people sought to run. Less than a decade ago, the Tory flag-bearer in Mount Royal would have been considered a sacrificial lamb, but Liberal support has been eroding, and, in 2011 election, Cotler garnered only 41 per cent of the vote, well down from the 90-plus per cent he once enjoyed, and only about 2,200 votes ahead of Conservative Saulie Zajdel.

The Tories are working very hard to take Mount Royal, banking on Harper's strong support for Israel among Jewish voters, who represent 35 per cent of the population and traditionally turn out to vote. Currently, the Conservatives hold only five of the 75 Quebec seats and none in Montreal.

But Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau is determined not to lose Mount Royal, which his late father, Pierre Trudeau, held for two decades. And how strong support for Harper remains among non-Jews is not as clear.

Libman said at this point, it's all about getting the vote out. He said the official list of Conservative members in Mount Royal has not yet been compiled, but said he's done "extremely well" signing up members at $15 per person. (The Liberals' fee was $10.)

The rather late nomination meeting call means the "snowbirds" supporting Libman will be back in Montreal, but it has also given Déry more time to gather people.

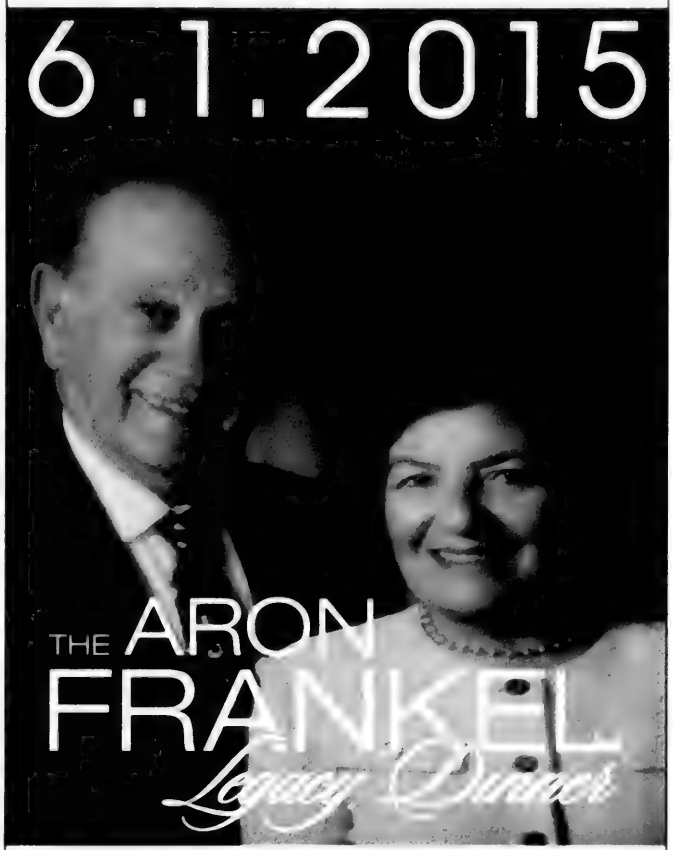
She said she's confident she'll win on April 26. "My campaign has gone very, very well. I've had a great response on the ground and reached out to many, many communities, those in TMR and Côte des Neiges, as well as Côte St. Luc and Hampstead.

"Having entered a little late, I have had to work hard to catch up... but I'm pretty confident about the nomination."

Asked if it's fair to describe her as the party favourite, Déry said that, "at the end of the day, this is a mathematical process – it's about the number of members you sign and get out to the meeting."

Libman is touting the approximately 40 public endorsements he's received from prominent people in the riding, while Déry, who left a 15-year career in TV journalism, said that experience made her aware of the key issues and has given her the skills and contacts that would be assets as an MP. ■

SAVE THE DATE
6.1.2015



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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 16, 2015

Leon Katz: biomedical technology innovator

FLORALOVE KATZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Leon and Ruth Katz, left, with Aline and former prime minister Jean Chretien at Leon Katz's Order of Canada investiture in 2008

The Ten Commandments appear twice in the Bible – in Exodus and Deuteronomy – and the sixth commandment is "Honour thy father and mother."

Accordingly, I offer this tribute to my beloved father, Leon Katz, a friend and mentor to many. He was born Dec. 24, 1924 in Montreal and died on Jan. 9 in Ottawa of mesothelioma and lung cancer.

Throughout my parents' lives, they never sought the limelight, but rather preferred obscurity and utter modesty. But my father received both the Order of Ontario and the officer level of the Order of Canada, and he received the Living Legend Award from the World Society of Cardio-Thoracic Surgeons. He received member emeritus status from the Canadian Medical and Biological Engineering Society, which gave him particular pleasure, because it represented recognition by a college of his peers. And my dad – a founder of the Engineering Institute of Canada – was named a fellow at last year's awards ceremony.

It was only after these recognitions that even our closest family members first learned of his cutting edge pioneering biomedical engineering work. Some of them actually thought my dad was a roofer!

My dad's professional biography from 1950 onward parallels, in a real sense, the arrival, development, and growth of biomedical technology and engineering in the medical world. A fortuitous historical congruence of circumstances shaped his career. The end of World War II released new technologies and scientists for civilian use: everything from transistors and other solid-state devices to radioactive isotopes for medical purposes became available.

Into this confluence of explosive developments stepped Leon Katz, academically trained as an electronics engineer and then as a student of human physiology. It was Katz's fortuitous pairing of academic subjects that enabled him to marry the new world of technology with the world of medicine. His innovative mind, his willingness to go where no one before had tried, his excellence in both creating original medical devices and using them in clinical practice, and his in-depth knowledge of both the industrial and health-care worlds all led to his important original contributions in an astonishing array of medical specialties.

My dad conceived, designed, hand-crafted, and trained hundreds of people in the operation of

- Canada's first heart-lung pump for open-heart surgery
- Canada's first fetal heart monitor
- Infant incubators (of which three tiny users, many decades later, were his own grandsons!)
- A high-speed contrast injector for angiography.

Dad frequently operated these new devices during literally hundreds of clinical procedures, in part because he was the only person who knew how to do so. For example, operating his own original heart-lung bypass machine, he was the perfusionist for Canada's first successful open-heart surgery (on a small boy) and for thousands of subsequent surgeries.

My dad particularly delighted in eager, young minds. Among hundreds of his students were cohorts of nurses – including Les Soeurs Grises, for whom he had inordinate respect. To the end of the 1950s, those remarkable nuns managed the complex administration of – and gowned up for surgeries in – hospitals across the province of Quebec. My dad trained them all to gauge the sensitivity with their fingers of the most finely calibrated devices. He trained respirologists and worked with many dozens of anesthesiologists.

At the beginning of January, my father used some of his last gasps of breath – before mesothelioma and lung cancer, diagnosed only in mid-December, choked the very life out of him – to describe how remarkable it was that back then, an engineer could actually place his hands on the patient during hundreds of surgical procedures – a phenomenon totally unheard of today.

In the early 1950s, my dad was one of two biomedical engineers at the Montreal Neurological Institute, providing renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Wilder Penfield with the instruments, tools, and services he used to treat brain-related diseases and make his dramatic discoveries of the human brain.

In 1953, two visionary staff members of the Montreal Jewish General Hospital decided to explore the possible medical applications of I131, the radioactive isotope of iodine that had recently become available from Atomic Energy of Canada's Chalk River reactor. They discovered my dad's unique talents and hired him as a physicist.

Undaunted by the new challenges of radiation physics (a complete departure from his work in electrical engineering and neurophysiology), my dad organized the first clinical radio-isotope laboratory in Quebec (and possibly in Canada) that became the first hospital customer for I131 from Atomic Energy of Canada.

From 1955 to 1960, my dad served as founder and director, department of bio-medical engineering, chef, service de biophysique; and first cardio-pulmonary bypass perfusionist, at the Institut de Cardiologie, Montréal, working with Senator, Dr. Paul David.

At Health and Welfare Canada in the 1970s and '80s, dad transitioned from clinical work to legislative. Moving to Ottawa, he became the first chief, diagnostic devices division, and evaluation and standards division, bureau of medical devices, in the health protection branch. Among his many contributions that likely affected millions worldwide was his team's discovery and correction of the backflow hazard from contaminated evacuated blood collection tubes used to gather blood samples. His article published in the *Lancet* garnered international attention and led to recalls of tainted tubes across Britain and the United States, before they followed Canada's lead in amending their own legislation requiring sterilization.

Notwithstanding the grinding poverty of my father's early years, born and raised in Montreal through the Depression, his parents taught him and his siblings to cherish the value of education and music. My dad's love of opera and the great symphonic works was inculcated from a poor little radio played continuously by my grandmother as she earned her few weekly pennies on the Singer sewing machine at which she worked day and night.

At 17, my dad volunteered for the Canadian Army, ultimately serving in the latter years of World War II as an officer in the British Army, in the American Zone, in the Rhine with 400 Welsh and Scots under his command, implementing the MilGov (Military Government) laws.

At a time when anti-Semitic quotas limited the number of Jews allowed into Canadian universities, my father's brilliant mind served as his ticket to enter. His graduation as an electrical engineer, followed by his further pairing of physiology, biology, physics, chemistry courses, charted breakthroughs that garnered Canada international recognition. Dad was too busy conceiving, testing, inventing, hand crafting, training, and rushing from hospital to emergency room setting, from clinic to lab to ever pause to patent anything. His primary focus was on patient care and delivery of safe and effective devices.

I believe that my father's desperation and need, and that of his impoverished parents, bred his ingenuity, mental dexterity, innovation and skills that enabled him to conceive entire solutions out of bits and pieces of randomly found items.

My dad was an outstanding father who challenged our brains in unusual ways and stretched our belief in our own capacities. He fashioned the stuff of dreams out of hard economic reality. He and our mother taught us that nothing comes without hard work and dedication to academia and career. This commitment extended to our musical endeavours, athletic undertakings, family, community, Canada and a safe, secure, mutually supportive international community.

He is survived by his devoted and remarkable wife of 65 years, Ruth Gottlieb Katz, his offspring Michael (Cynthia), Geoffrey, Floralove, Shelley (Diana), and his four outstanding grandsons, David, Nathan, Aidan and Benjamin.

My dad's was a life of dedication, purpose and service, a life of love of family, of the essential values and ethics of Judaism, like his parents before him, of guidance to, and assistance for the betterment of the lives of others. My father embodied tikkun olam – healing the world – and my life will be in permanent deficit by virtue of his absence every day. Canada is blessed to have had him as our citizen. And I am blessed to have had him as my father. ■

Floralove Katz is Leon Katz's daughter. This article first appeared in the Ottawa Citizen.

Artist pays tribute to Holocaust survivors' resilience

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

Abe Pinchuk's striking painting is inspired by a friend's incredible story. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Abe Pinchuk swam almost every day in his condo pool with another resident, also a retired businessman of about his age. They became friendly, but it was a few years before Pinchuk learned that his companion was a Holocaust survivor.

Little by little, Pinchuk found out that this Hungarian native had, from the age of 15 in 1944, survived five concentration camps including Auschwitz, and the death marches.

He lost his mother and several siblings. He himself barely lived, and was almost left for dead by the liberating U.S. army. He came to Montreal as a war orphan. Yet, the man seemed quite content, had enjoyed a degree of prosperity and he and his wife, whom he married here, had two sons and a growing number of grandchildren.

Although Pinchuk had made most of his living in the textile trade, he was always an artist, and an accomplished one at that, best known for his landscapes.

"There was something about his story, which I gathered piecemeal, that moved me, that convinced me I had to create something that would tell the story of how he – and many other survivors – despite what they went through, not only survived but rebuilt their lives, were fruitful as the Bible says, and that their children and grandchildren are carrying that on.

"And these survivors did so with courage, dignity and determination."

But there was one obstacle for Pinchuk, now 85. "I would never have touched the Holocaust with a 10-foot pole. I felt I did not have the right to. I'm not a survivor. I was born in Montreal. My parents came here in 1905 fleeing the pogroms after the Russian Revolution," said Pinchuk, who grew up the son of a poor shoemaker. He was able to study for three years at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts thanks to a scholarship recognizing his precocious talent.

Pinchuk's hesitation proved to be unwarranted. His pool pal liked the idea and so began Pinchuk's months-long work on a painting entitled *How 77835 Defied the Nazi Final Solution* that included reading up on the history of the Holocaust, as well as many hours at the easel.

His subject had one caveat: that the identity of 77835 – the number the Nazis assigned to him, which he wore on an ankle shackle – not be revealed.

The painting, an 8-foot by 4-foot triptych in oil, is having its first public exhibition in the Federation CJA Cummings House lobby until April 28, sponsored by the Jewish Public Library and Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. The exhibition is part of the annual Yom Hashoah commemoration.

The three panels follow the journey of 77835. The first depicts a group of bewildered inmates in striped uniforms as they emerge from the camp after liberation. In the front row on the left is 77835. He's the only one with blues stripes instead of black.

In the second scene is a happy young couple under the chupah – 77835 and his bride, painted from their actual wedding photo. He is in a blue suit. Behind them are many of the former inmates, looking healthier and well dressed.

In the final panel, two other young couples marry – his sons and daughters-in-law (also accurate portraits) – and children frolic. 77835 can be seen walking off in the distance with his grandchildren (he now has five and two great-grandchildren). He's wearing a blue windbreaker with a Star of David on the back. It echoes the symbol he was forced to wear in the first scene; this time he wears it with pride, Pinchuk said.

Blue, of course, is the colour associated with the State of Israel.

The work is also divided into three horizontally. The lowest stratum is the life story. Above that are disturbing scenes of the death camps, their oven doors open, the train tracks and barbed wire.

The camp buildings are all ablaze. "Let them burn in hell forever," Pinchuk said.

By the third panel the smoke has cleared, and the tracks no longer seem menacing.

The uppermost layer of sky repeats this progression from darkness to light, as the storm clouds give way to sunshine.

"The first time he and his wife [who is European-born but not a survivor] saw the painting, they both cried," said Pinchuk. "It's a legacy for them and their family."

77835 told *The CJN* matter-of-factly, "That's the story of my life after the war. I had some success and a nice family."

As someone who has spoken to students about the Holocaust, he recognizes the painting's educational value. "Everybody has to know these things," he said. "We have to talk about it."

Pinchuk is now seeking a permanent home for the painting, preferably on this continent, where the story can continue. ■

Charges a result of shift in German law

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

"He explained that his hope is to have a precedent set and perhaps a new law for the future, where no terrorists [can] claim they are innocent because they didn't actually cut someone's head off or pull the trigger," Bohm said. "He hoped to have a new law for aiding and abetting to be used against anyone, no exception."

Groening, 93, was charged under that legal definition. Walther has conceded that inmates would not have seen the Nazi guard at Auschwitz because he worked behind the scenes. It was his job to oversee the theft of all cash, jewelry and valuables of arrivals as they were herded off the trains, earning him the moniker "the Bookkeeper of Auschwitz."

The charges against him are the result of a recent shift in German law, credited to Walther, under which those who did not directly commit atrocities may still be prosecuted as "cogs" in the Nazi death machine.

Testifying against and seeing Groening are "not something I look forward to," Bohm said. "But it's something exceptional that I never thought I would have in my life. [It] seems like fate, and I have to be there."

But, she added, "vengeance is not mine. It's not my makeup."

Max Eisen, a local Shoah educator and speaker, also in Toronto, will be cutting short his March of the Living trip to Poland and Israel to testify at Groening's trial.

Eisen, 85, said he has unique insight into theft at Auschwitz, where he worked in a hospital and operating theatre. Guards would take patients from the wards to the gas chambers, "and [they] came back with bloody rags containing molars filled with gold crowns. I had to remove the gold crowns. I had to do this dirty work for them. They were stealing and [Groening] was the bookkeeper. He was collecting all the loot and they were looting."

Eisen said he'd like to see Groening get a life sentence, but instead of jail, spend the rest of his life telling students about racism and anti-Semitism. "At least he would do something productive. Would it help? I don't know. But it's important that he's brought to court. At least there is a record that you pay for your bad deeds sooner or later."

Asked what he would say to Groening, Eisen replied: "How could you as a person be in a place like that, where all this killing and gassing was going on, and collect gold when you knew what was happening to these people? Did you have a conscience? Did you feel that you were hiding behind [the] 'I was following orders' [defence]?"

Local Auschwitz survivor Katherine Zahavi, who turns 86 this month and lost more than 40 family members in the Holocaust, told *The CJN* "there's not a day" she doesn't have memories of the camp. "You never forget that, not for a minute."

She said her decision to testify at Groening's trial caused friction with her only surviving relative, a sister, who lives in Israel. "She said, 'How could you go there? How could you step foot in Germany?' I said, 'you know what? This is my revenge for my parents, for my sisters, for my whole family. It is the last thing that I can do.'"

Zahavi said she doesn't feel brave about testifying. "I know it will be very difficult."

Hedy Bohm

For the Canadian co-plaintiffs, at least, the case has a tinge of irony. Inmates' valuables were taken to a warehouse at Auschwitz dubbed "Kanada" by prisoners, who were known as the "Kanada Kommando." To prisoners, Canada symbolized wealth.

As for Groening, he told the German daily *Bild* in 2005 that he regretted working at Auschwitz, saying he was haunted by the sound of screams from the gas chamber.

"I was ashamed for decades and I am still ashamed today," he said. "Not of my acts, because I never killed anyone. But I offered my aid. I was a cog in the killing machine that eliminated millions of innocent people."

His trial begins April 21. ■

INTERNATIONAL

Competing views of Iran deal highlight challenges ahead

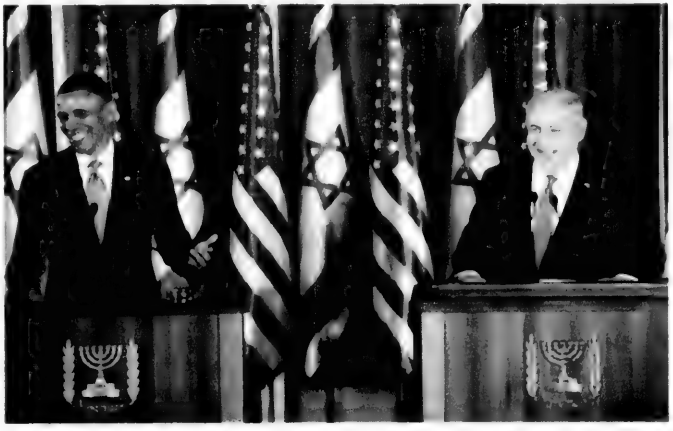
RON KAMPEAS
JTA WASHINGTON

Now that the outline for an Iran nuclear agreement has been released – or, more precisely, two outlines, one by Iran, the other by the Obama administration – major gaps have emerged that will need to be resolved ahead of a June 30 deadline for a final deal, including when sanctions on Iran are lifted.

U.S. President Barack Obama and Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, issued conflicting statements on the sanctions issue, with Obama suggesting sanctions would be relaxed only once Iran begins to implement its obligations and Khamenei demanding that all sanctions be suspended upon signing an agreement. Khamenei also vowed that military sites would not be open to nuclear inspectors, which clashes with the American text, which says inspectors have the right to visit suspicious sites "anywhere in the country."

The next round of talks is likely to be held within a few weeks in New York City, and both Obama and Khamenei have said that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

In the coming weeks, both sides will endeavour to sell the deal to their various constituencies: Iran to its domestic hardliners, and the Obama administration to Congress, Jewish groups and skeptical allies, Israel chief among them.



Happier times: U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2013. FILE PHOTO

What the Obama administration wants to see:

In its outline of a framework accord reached earlier this month in Switzerland, and in subsequent statements and interviews, the Obama administration has focused pre-eminently on the strict limits it is seeking on Iran's capacity to enrich uranium.

These include limiting Iran's advanced centrifuges to scientific research and reducing the number of active first-generation centrifuges, from 19,000 to 5,060, for 10 years. Enrichment would be limited to 3.67 per cent, the level required for medical research and well short of weaponization levels. Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium would be limited to 300 kilograms for 15 years. The deal would also provide for a regimen of intrusive inspections at all Iranian facilities.

"You have assurances that their stockpile of highly enriched uranium remains in a place where they cannot create a nuclear weapon," Obama told National Public Radio last week.

According to the administration's outline, sanctions relief is conditioned on Iran abiding by its commitments. The sanctions architecture will remain in place so they can be quickly reimposed if Iran defaults.

Additionally, Obama administration officials have emphasized that Iran's breakout time will be extended from the current two to three months to a year, although how this will be quantified is not yet clear.

What Iran wants to see:

In contrast with the phased relief outlined in the U.S. document, a "fact sheet" published by the Iranian Foreign Ministry posits an immediate lifting of sanctions after a deal is reached. On April 9, in a speech broadcast live on Iranian television, Khamenei said there would be no point to the negotiations if they did not yield immediate sanctions relief.

"All sanctions should be removed when the deal is signed," *Reuters* quoted Khamenei as saying. "If the sanctions removal depends on other processes, then why did we start the negotiations?"

On Twitter, Khamenei went further, accusing the United States of overall bad faith.

"Hours after the #talks, Americans offered a fact sheet that most of it was contrary to what was agreed," said a tweet posted on his feed April 9. "They always deceive and breach promises."

On the enrichment question, the Iranian and American outlines are not mutually exclusive.

"None of the nuclear facilities or related activities will be stopped, shut down, or suspended, and Iran's nuclear activities in all of its facilities including Natanz, Fordow, Isfahan, and Arak will continue," said the Iranian document, which goes on to name only Natanz as a site for 3.67 per cent uranium enrichment, which comports with the U.S. document. The other sites are deemed acceptable for scientific research in the American version, a status that conceivably comports with "related activities" in the Iranian document.

What Israel wants to see

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in the immediate wake of the agreement that the framework deal would threaten Israel's survival. He counseled "standing firm and increasing the pressure on Iran until a better deal is achieved."

Netanyahu did not provide details, but in interviews he has said that Israel could tolerate a deal that left "hundreds" of centrifuges in place, as opposed to the 5,060 the U.S. outline anticipates – itself a significant concession for Netanyahu, who had previously said that Israel would tolerate no more than a zero capacity for uranium enrichment.

Yuval Steinitz, Israel's minister of intelligence, also provided more details of Israel's desires for a final deal in a briefing for reporters in Jerusalem, demanding a complete end to research and development of advanced centrifuges, the shuttering of the underground Fordo facility and freedom for inspectors to go "any time, anywhere."

In an op-ed published April 8 in the *Washington Post*, Moshe Yaalon, the Israeli defense minister, called for dismantling much of Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

"Intelligence and inspections are simply no substitute for dismantling the parts of Iran's program that can be used to produce atomic bombs," Yaalon wrote.

Israel also has an eye on Iran's destabilizing activities elsewhere in the region. The Obama administration and its five negotiating partners – China, Russia, France, Germany and Great Britain – see the nuclear deal as discrete from other Iranian actions.

"Restrictions imposed on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program will expire in about a decade, regardless of Iran's campaign of murderous aggression in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere across the Middle East; its arming, funding, training and dispatching of terrorists around the world; and its threats and violent efforts to destroy Israel, the region's only democracy," Yaalon wrote.

Netanyahu recently also demanded Iran's recognition of Israel as a component of a final deal, a requirement that Obama has said is unrealistic.

What Congress wants to see

Two bills under consideration in Congress, both backed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, could affect the outcome of an Iran deal.

One sponsored by senators Mark Kirk and Robert Menendez, a Republican and Democrat respectively, would mandate new sanctions should Iran default on a deal or walk away from the talks. Obama has said such a bill would scuttle the talks and has pledged to veto it. The bill was approved in January by the Senate Banking Committee. Now its fate is in the hands of Republican Senator Mitch McConnell, the majority leader, who must decide whether it advances to the full body.

The other bill, backed by Republican Senator Bob Corker, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, would require congressional review of an Iran deal. That bill stands a better chance of passage.

Obama, who had previously said he would veto the Corker bill, indicated that he could work with a modified version. ■

Netanyahu offers alternatives to Iran deal

JTA
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has offered alternatives on the nuclear framework agreement with Iran.

Netanyahu released a statement April 12 with the changes to the deal signed earlier this month, a day after U.S. President Barack Obama told reporters that Netanyahu had not provided any alternatives.

The Israeli leader called on the international community to negotiate a better agreement.

In his statement, Netanyahu criticized Iran for insisting in the wake of the agreement on maintaining its nuclear capabilities and refusing to allow nuclear inspections, as well as its continuing aggression in the region.

"Let me reiterate again the two main components of the alternative to this bad deal: first, instead of allowing Iran to preserve and develop its nuclear capabilities, a better deal would significantly roll back these capabilities – for example, by shutting down the illicit underground facilities that Iran concealed for years from the international community," he said.

"Second, instead of lifting the restrictions on Iran's nuclear facilities and program at a fixed date, a better deal would link the lifting of these restrictions to an end of Iran's aggression in the region, its worldwide terrorism and its threats to annihilate Israel."

On April 11, Obama spoke at a news conference at the Americas Summit in Panama City on Netanyahu's failure to come up with alternatives.

"The prime minister of Israel is deeply opposed to it. I think he's made that very clear," Obama said. "I have repeatedly asked: what is the alternative that you present that you think makes it less likely for Iran to get a nuclear weapon? And I have yet to obtain a good answer on that."

The Netanyahu statement came the same day *Ha'aretz* reported, citing two unnamed Israeli officials, that Netanyahu said at an April 3 meeting of the security cabinet that if a final agreement is signed between Iran and the world powers, the greatest concern is that Tehran will fully implement it without violations.

Netanyahu reportedly said at the meeting – hours before the start of the Passover seder and a day after the framework agreement was signed – that he was concerned that Iran will not break the agreement, waiting until it expires in 10 to 15 years and the country is not considered a threat to restart its nuclear program without the threat of international monitors or sanctions.

The security cabinet decided at the meeting to try to persuade the Obama administration to improve the agreement. Most ministers, however, reportedly believe the best way to halt or alter the agreement is through the U.S. Congress, which is where the most effort will be spent. ■

KOBI GIDEON/GPO PHOTO

Celebrating Mimouna

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara attend an event for Mimouna, the Moroccan Jewish celebration marking the end of Passover. He said the government's first task will be to tackle the cost of living and housing issues.

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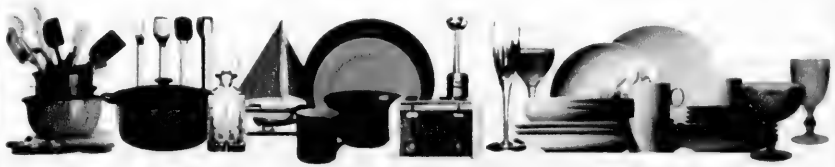

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France set to propose new Palestinian state resolution

RAFA MISMAR
THE MEDIA LINE

The French government has seen a window of opportunity, following recent elections in Israel, to get the United States on board for a renewed effort toward an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, and is preparing a draft UN Security Council resolution.

The draft would define the pre-1967 borders as a reference point for talks, but allow room for exchanges of territory, designate Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and a Palestinian state, and call for a fair solution for Palestinian refugees. The French proposal also includes a requirement for Palestinian recognition of Israel as a "Jewish state," Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas informed the executive committee of the PLO. That recognition is an Israeli demand that Abbas has rejected in the past.

The French effort will be based on three steps: first French diplomats will present a draft resolution to the UN Security Council, a step which requires U.S. acquiescence that it will not exercise its veto; second an international peace conference will be held; and the third step will be for France, along with other European allies, to recognize an independent Palestinian state built on the 1967 borders.

Abbas said at the PLO meeting: "We do not need more decisions that then fail to be implemented. It is known that we have 12 resolutions passed by the Security Council (UNSC), including resolutions endorsed by America, but despite these calls for de-colonization, no progress has been made." He went on to reiterate his refusal to recognize Israel as a "Jewish state."

Paris is working with Washington in order to provide cover for new efforts to reach a peace agreement. The French are also seeking to raise support from their European neighbours and from Arab countries.

"While the substance of the French draft may not differ much from past failed efforts to revive Mideast peace talks, France is hoping this time to avoid a U.S. veto at the UNSC because of increasing American frustration with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu," Nabil Shaath, a senior official of the Fatah Central Committee, told the *Media Line*. Fatah is the Palestinian faction that controls the Palestinian Authority.

Shaath described a possible "back door" for negotiations and said "all actors, including the Americans, now realize that all other ways have been explored, without success."

> *The weight of a Security Council resolution would add to international pressure on Israel*

After Netanyahu's election win and tough campaign comments against Palestinian statehood, the White House said it would re-evaluate its approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The French official praised the "pretty clear message sent by the Americans." The resolution would aim at presenting a framework for negotiations toward resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"France is working with the U.S. to gain backing for the new peace effort," Shaath said. "France is also seeking support from European and Arab partners." He declined to provide more details on the possible sticking points in the negotiations. The weight of a Security Council resolution, which is legally binding, would add to international pressure on Israel."

Even if a new resolution were to avoid a U.S. veto and win UN backing, its prospects are unclear. Israel remains opposed to returning to the pre-1967 borders and insists that any peace process should include recognition of a Jewish state.

"If we want to have a two-state solution, and if we want to avoid a complete crash, we must go in the same direction," the French foreign minister, Laurent Fabius, told reporters at the United Nations on Friday morning. "I hope the partners who were reluctant in the past will not be so in future."

Fabius declined to say how soon France would bring a draft measure before the council. "We shall work in that direction, yes – our aim is to be efficient," he said. But Fabius also said France would consult with other council members "in the coming days" over a framework for negotiations. Doing this will likely put pressure on the White House to act.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Other European nations will likely recognize a Palestinian state

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The French government circulated a draft late in 2014 that would have laid out what are known as parameters for talks between the two sides in the Middle East conflict, and would have set a deadline for completing the talks. The Barack Obama administration was reluctant to support that draft, especially with a general election in Israel approaching.

Shaath said the draft resolution will be based on previous international resolutions passed by Arab and European countries. He also said he expects that other major European powers, including Britain, Germany, Spain and Italy, will join France at the end of this diplomatic process and recognize a state of Palestine based on the 1967 borders.

The French draft decision is based on UN Resolution 181, published on Nov. 29, 1947, which provided for the establishment of two separate states, one Jewish and one Arab, often called the partition plan. Israel accepted the deal, which would have created an independent Palestinian state on 52 per cent of historic Palestine. The current proposals, which call for an independent state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, would create a Palestinian state on 22 per cent of the area.

Hale Fahoum, Palestinian ambassador to Paris, told the *Media Line* that the Palestinian Authority views the French move as positive but is waiting to see details of the final version before the Palestinians would give their full approval.

Fahoum said the French would use the pre-1967 borders as a framework to research a route for a new practical border, a border that could take into account changes for mutual land swaps. The French proposal also keeps the door open for discussions on "Jerusalem as the capital of two states," and calls for "a just solution" for Palestinian refugees.

Last year, the UN Security Council rejected a Palestinian resolution demanding an end to Israeli occupation within three years. The United States opposed that draft, saying Palestinian statehood can only be achieved through negotiations with Israel, not through an imposed timetable. ■

SeeJN | Stars Without a Heaven

YAD VASHEM/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Yad Vashem has opened a new exhibit, "Children in the Holocaust: Stars Without a Heaven," about the 1.5 million children who were murdered in the Holocaust, displaying the stories that remained of these children or the stories of the few who survived. On display are items from Yad Vashem's artifacts, art and archives collections. In addition, students from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem created works from glass, porcelain and ceramics and students from the Holon Institute of Technology-HIT created short animated clips especially for the exhibition.

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Among CJHSD's objectives are:

- To represent and speak on behalf of Jewish Holocaust survivors with a unified voice
- To increase public awareness about issues that concern survivors
- To involve children of survivors in issues of importance to the Jewish community
- To engage in activities concerning the interest and welfare of Canadian Jewish communities

political policies of the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945); or a descendant of a Jewish Holocaust survivor (child or grandchild of a Holocaust survivor); a resident of Canada and would like to be a member of the Canadian Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Descendants, please register online at www.cjhsd.ca

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Jewish Life

Jewish Film Fest heads to the Twilight Zone and beyond

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival returns this spring to project bold new works from around the world onto the big screen, yet a lot of attention will go to programs from the small screen.

The festival, which runs April 30 through May 10, will cater to audiences hoping to binge-watch some of the most exciting new television shows, as well as enjoy retrospective series about "King of Kensington" Al Waxman and Rod Serling of *The Twilight Zone* fame.

"[Serling] was one of those early TV makers that really wanted to draw attention to, in the immediate postwar years, the Holocaust," says Stuart Hands, the festival's director of programming.

"When he did *The Twilight Zone*, that was just another way to engage with issues like racism. He wasn't allowed to do it in a more realist mode, so he did it with science fiction."

The festival will screen *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* an episode of *Playhouse 90* that Serling wrote about a family living in the Warsaw Ghetto, on May 2.

The next day, Serling's Emmy-winning TV movie *A Storm in Summer*, about a friendship between a Jewish deli owner and an African-American boy, will also be screened. Serling's daughter, Anne, will introduce the screenings and speak about her father.

A series on the Jewish writer/director would not be complete without a *Twilight Zone* episode. The festival will play *Walking Distance*, considered one of the series' best hours, on May 2 as a free screening.

Among other small-screen sensations, the first three hours of the much-lauded Israeli thriller *Hostages* will be shown. That show inspired a CBS drama of the same name with Toni Collette and Dylan McDermott.

Also, fans of the Golden Globe-winning series *Transparent* should not make plans for the evening of May 9. The comedy-drama, starring Jeffrey Tambor as the patriarch of a Jewish family who comes out as transgender, will show four episodes at Canada Square that night and feature a talk from Rabbi Susan Goldberg, a consultant for the series.

"The Jewish elements of the show are quite crucial," Hands tells *The CJN*. "We're trying to show the different ways that Jewish identity and Jewish self-expression can take form."

This 23rd edition of the festival will spotlight Al Waxman, the Canadian film and television titan who died in 2001.

Fans of *King of Kensington*, which starred Waxman as convenience store owner Larry King, will want to be at the Royal Ontario Museum on May 2. After showing three of the comedy's best episodes, series creator Perry Rosemond and stars Rosemary Radcliffe and Jayne Eastwood will lead a discussion with the audience.

On May 9, Waxman fans may also want to check out *Sun in My Eyes*, a little-seen 1960 drama that aired on the CBC. In his acting debut, Waxman played a Jewish man confronting the horrors of life in Nazi-occupied Poland.

"It must be the first Canadian TV attempt to deal with the persecution of Jews by the Nazis," Hands says of that drama.

Of course, there are still films at this festival, which has a lineup of 110 titles from 18 countries.

The festival opens April 30 with the premiere of *Dancing Arabs*, a new drama from Israeli director Eran Riklis (*Lemon Tree*). Riklis will be in attendance at the Varsity that evening. The film is based on a semi-autobiographical novel from Sayed Kashua, about an Arab-Israeli's experience at a Jewish boarding school.

The closing night title, *Mr. Kaplan*, has already premiered to critical and audience adoration around the world. The comedy is about a 76-year-old man trying to capture a German man he believes is a runaway Nazi.

"We don't get many films from Uruguay," Hands says of *Mr. Kaplan*. "It's a strong and very funny film."

Meanwhile, documentary titles will focus on subjects as wide-ranging as Israeli action movie producers Menachem Golan and Yoram Globus, iconoclastic American comic Irwin Corey and author Isaac Bashevis Singer. The non-fiction film about Singer is told from the perspective of his team of more than 40 female translators – none of whom spoke Yiddish.

Other non-fiction titles will explore the history of Israeli comic books, as well as banned Nazi propaganda reels. The 1984 documentary *Spadina*, which played to a full house at last year's festival, will screen again on May 2 due to popular demand.

"This year, we have a lot of films dealing with black-Jewish relations," Hands tells *The CJN*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

***Deli Man* is a crowd-pleasing documentary, above, and *Orange People* is a moving film about three generations of Moroccans, top.**

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

JEWISH MUSIC WEEK 2015 FEATURES FULL ROSTER OF CONCERTS

This year's Jewish Music Week (May 10 to May 17) features a tribute to composer **Milton Barnes**, a presentation of **Shimen Nepom's** *Streetcar Songs*, Sephardi music, Yiddish theatre music, klezmer, a Yiddish barbershop quartet and much more.

Performers and presenters include **Erica Goodman**, **Charles Heller**, **Deborah Staiman**, **Simon Spiro**, **Aviva Chernick**, the **Klezmer Conservatory Band**, **Beny Maissner**, **Adam Sherkin**, **Tom Sandler**, and many others. Some of the programs are free. For full details and schedule, please visit the website www.jewishmusicweek.com.

• • •

Dancing Arabs: The film *Dancing Arabs*, which opens the Toronto Jewish Film Festival on April 30, is a coming-of-age story about the complex relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel. It's directed by **Eran Riklis**, an Israeli Jew, and based on a semi-autobiographical novel by **Sayed Kashua**, a Palestinian Israeli who wrote the script. The protagonist, Eyad, becomes friends with a Jewish boy and more than friends with a Jewish girl, but has to keep the relationship a secret. The film, in Arabic and Hebrew with subtitles, goes into theatrical release on May 15.

• • •

Spotlight on Al Waxman: The Toronto Jewish Film Festival (April 30 to May 10) is spotlighting the work of the late Canadian actor **Al Waxman**, who would have turned 80 in March. The Festival is offering screenings of three *King of Kensington* episodes (free) as well as three other rarely-screened Canadian film and TV productions in which he performed. The series "Al Waxman: A Jewish Everyman" is co-presented with the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. Full festival details are available online at tjff.com.

Al Waxman

Names in the News

Award-winning Russian-Jewish choreographer **Boris Eifman** is in town next week as his company, The Eifman St. Petersburg Ballet, presents **Leo Tolstoy's** tragic love story *Anna Karenina*. Eifman focuses on the famous love triangle of Anna, Karenin and Vronsky, infusing it with both contemporary and classical ballet in a work that has already toured and received wide praise in the United States. Produced by Show One Productions. Sony Centre, April 23 to 25.

• • •

Theatre Events

• *Therefore Choose Life*, written by **Kathy Kacer** and her son **Jake Epstein**, runs at Toronto Centre Greenwin Theatre, April 18 to May 10.

• Merle Garbe's Encore Entertainment presents *The Love List*, **Norm Foster's** witty adult comedy about aging singles back in the dating world. Toronto Centre for the Arts, April 23 to May 3. Also *Hey Old Friend*, a one-night musical celebration starring **Mark Cassius** and friends. $25. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Saturday April 18, 8 p.m. Ticketmaster, 1-855-985-2787.

• Actor-playwright **Julie Tepperman** leads Playwriting for Beginners, a six-session course. $150. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursdays May 7 to June 11, 7 to 9 p.m. Pre-registration required, 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

Arts in Brief

• "We Remember Together", Yom HaShoah commemoration with local survivor **Claire Baum**, author of *The Hidden Package*. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday April 16, 2 to 3 p.m. Please RSVP to 416-924-6211, ext. 388.

• Performer **Psoy Korolenko** and Prof. **Anna Shternshis** bring lost Yiddish songs to life in "Defending the Homeland: Rare Yiddish Songs of WWII," a concert and lecture. $10; students free. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday April 19, 8 p.m. 416-979-8282, www.ashkenaz.ca.

• Art history teacher **Osnat Lippa** addresses "Emotion & Primitivism in the Landscape Paintings of **Emily Carr** and **Vincent Van Gogh.**". $14 drop-in per session, $25 for both. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays April 27 & May 4, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Registration, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• **The Jack Gelbloom Quartet** performs hilarious songs by **Mickey Katz**, **Allan Sherman** and others in *Something Familiar ... A Musical Comedy Show*. $4 at the door. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday April 30, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

• • •

At the Galleries: *Romarising*, an exhibit of photographs by **Chad Evan Wyatt**, features black and white portraits of successful Canadian Roma, in an attempt to challenge stereotypes. Presented in partnership with the Roma Community Centre. Miles Nadal JCC Gallery, April 15 to May 2. ■

Over 30 films are directed by women, a festival record

> *This year we have six narrative features directed by Israeli women*

Stuart Hands
TJFF DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING

***Storm in Summer* is an Emmy-winning TV movie from Rod Serling, left, and *Dancing Arabs* opens the festival on April 30.**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

Among those titles is *Rosenwald*, a documentary about early 20th-century philanthropist Julian Rosenwald and his efforts to build schools for African-American communities in the southern United States. The film comes from director Aviva Kempner (*The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*).

Rosenwald is one of 31 festival titles directed by women, which Hands says is a record.

"For years, you've had women documentary filmmakers but rarely have you had a lot make narrative features," he says. "This year, we have six narrative features directed by Israeli women."

Some of those female-led titles include *Once in a Lifetime*, an inspirational French film about inner-city kids doing a project on Nazi concentration camps. That film, from director Marie Castille Mention-Schaar, will receive the Micki Moore prize, for best narrative feature from a woman director.

Director Veronique Lagoade-Segot, meanwhile, will pick up the David A. Stein award for best documentary. Her film, *Shoah: The Forgotten Souls of History*, is comprised of newsreel footage and looks at how Soviet cameramen who shot this material deleted the mention of Jewish victims.

Other hot titles Hands recommends include *Orange People*, a drama that deals with Israel's Moroccan community, and *The Price of Sugar*, a melodrama about Jewish slave owners in 18th century Suriname.

American indie hit *Deli Man*, which features appearances from Toronto's Zane Caplansky and Cheryl Morantz, will also screen on May 10. ■

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Father-son duo team up in comedy series

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Schitt's Creek, the single-camera, character-driven comedy, has redefined the meaning of family.

The hit CBC TV series was created by Toronto Jewish comedy duo, father and son Eugene and Daniel (Dan) Levy.

Dan Levy is former co-host of *MTV Live*. He co-wrote, co-hosted and co-produced *The After Show* and is co-creator, co-executive producer, actor and writer on *Schitt's Creek*.

Eugene Levy is an alumnus of *SCTV* in its golden age, often partnering with the legendary John Candy. He has appeared in more than 60 films, earning critical acclaim for co-writing and co-starring in *Best In Show*, *Waiting for Guffman*, *For Your Consideration* and *A Mighty Wind*.

"I grew up watching the best comedians in the business, the Shecky Greenes, Milton Berles and George Burns. In those days, comedy and Judaism kind of went hand in hand," Eugene said.

In the *Schitt's Creek* world, Johnny Rose (Eugene Levy) is Jewish. His wife, former soap-star Moira (Catherine O'Hara, also formerly of *SCTV*) is not. Their young adult kids, hipster David (Dan Levy), and socialite Alexis (Annie Murphy), are a bit of a mix, and family means everything to them.

The idea of a town called Schitt's Creek was born over a few drinks at a dinner party.

"This little dinner table conversation joke actually seemed to fit very nicely because it so accurately described the situation that this family finds themselves in," Eugene said.

"This is a very pampered, spoiled, wealthy family. The cast that we have has really done such a great job getting inside these characters and finding that kind of vulnerable spot that the TV audience can latch onto," he said.

The Rose family were millionaires, but have lost their fortune. Forced to give up their mansion, they must relocate to their last remaining asset: a small, dreary town called Schitt's Creek, which Johnny once bought as a joke. Stuck living in a rundown motel in that town, the family must now discover what it means to be poor and still be a family.

"We have seen the riches-to-rags premise played out on mainstream network television, but never through a more specific comedic lens," Dan said.

"The challenge was to create these blindly unaware people who are not like any wealthy caricatures we have seen before on television. When Catherine [O'Hara] came on board, she brought such a unique voice to her character. We cast Annie Murphy in the character of Alexis – we have seen the spoiled socialite so many times – but what Annie brought to that character was such a lovability that you feel for her despite everything," Dan said.

Dan Levy and Eugene Levy

The first season of *Schitt's Creek* premiered in January attracting an impressive 1.36 million viewers. The season finale aired on March 31.

"When we were writing Season 1, we would talk about family – family dynamics and family relationships, and how a family acts with each other behind closed doors versus out in public," Dan said. "They can banter and bicker without putting on the niceties of being in public, and we just started sharing stories.

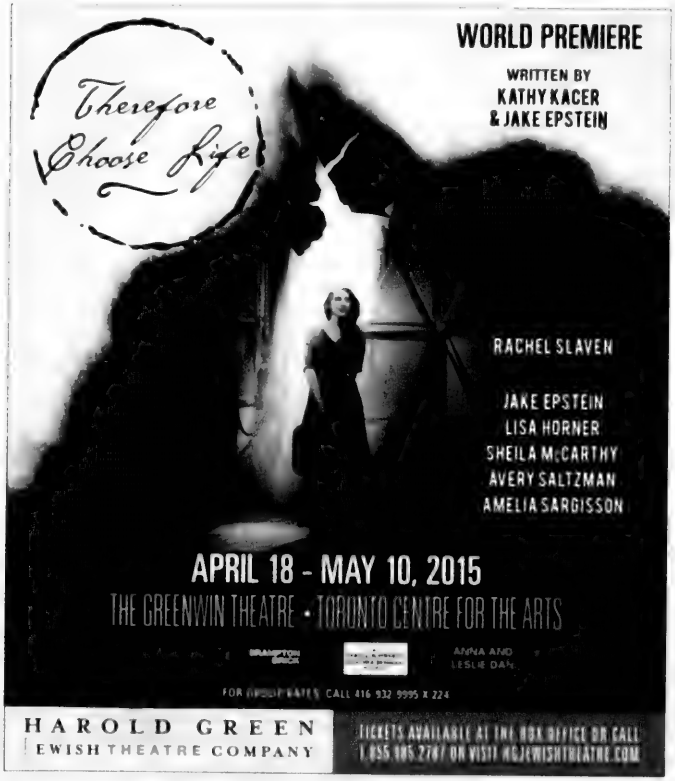
"Me, my dad and all of our writers started to share funny stories that have happened to us as family members. I think that has really helped authenticate the family dynamic in the show, because you immediately get the sense that these people are family. We were able to capture that intimacy."

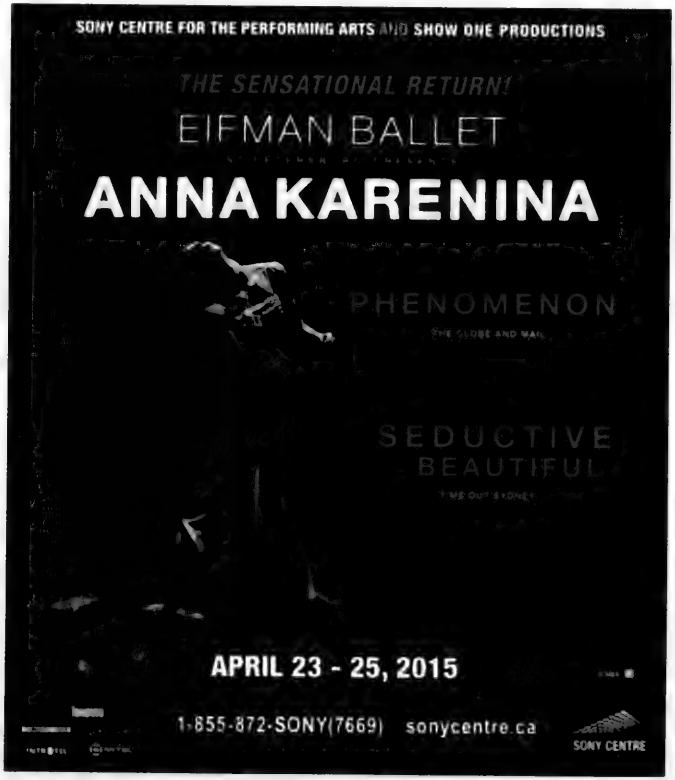
What was it like working alongside comedy gold?

"You always hope that the interpersonal relationships only help enhance professionally, and I think what we've done is really found a sweet spot where we can benefit from each other's different ideas, and – obviously in my case – from my dad's experience. It's been lovely," Dan said.

Schitt's Creek has been renewed for a second season and starts shooting again on April 14. Dan said viewers should expect some differences.

"Relationships have shifted a little. The family dynamic is slightly different now that they know they are going to be in the town for a little longer than they had hoped. I think you start to see the Roses beginning to live a day-to-day life in the town, which is a hilarious thing to watch." ■





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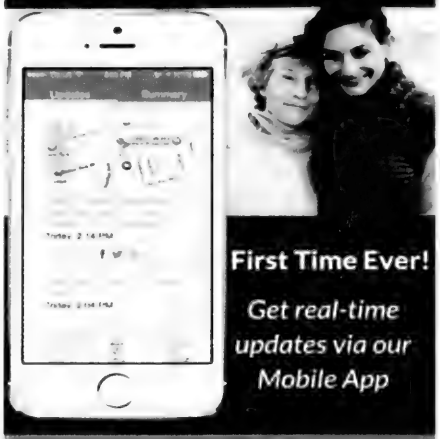
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Award-winning Israeli Holocaust book now in English

Escape in Time
Ronit Lowenstein-Malz
MB Publishing

Guelph artist Laurie McGaw poses at her studio with Elliana Kleiner, 14, who modelled for young Miri, the main character in the book *Escape in Time*.

FRANCES KRAFT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A Hebrew-language book that won Yad Vashem's prize for outstanding children's Holocaust literature in 2008 is being published in English this month, in conjunction with Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day).

Escape in Time – known in Hebrew as *Nes Shel Ahava* (*A Miracle of Love*) is Ronit Lowenstein-Malz's moving young adult novel based on her late mother's story of survival in Hungary during the Holocaust. The book is based on written memoirs.

Lowenstein-Malz, who has written nine books, worked as an educator for more than 20 years.

The author's mother, Miri, the main character in the novel, was a young girl when she and her parents, Naftuli and Hendi Eneman, and Miri's three older sisters left their hometown of Munkács within a short time of each other, and survived much of the war in Budapest. Naftuli's prescience, combined with repeated cases of luck, instinct, courage and resourcefulness, helped them to narrowly escape a dire fate.

In the book, Miri's story alternates with that of her granddaughter Nessya, a girl consumed with curiosity about the past when she learns that her grandmother is a survivor.

The book's American publisher Bethesda-based Margie Blumberg of MB Publishing – fell in love with the book when Ruth Lieberman, the author's cousin, sent her an unsolicited synopsis.

To illustrate the English version, Blumberg turned to award-winning Guelph, Ont., artist Laurie McGaw, who had illustrated Blumberg's 2003 children's book *Avram's Gift*. Blumberg, who founded her company 12 years ago, has published both fiction and non-fiction for children and young adults.

McGaw found models for her illustrations through Guelph's Beth Isaiah Synagogue and friends in the Guelph Jewish community, as well as Torontonians who had modelled for characters in *Avram's Gift*. On April 17, at 3:30 p.m., McGaw will speak at the Guelph Public Library about how she illustrated *Escape in Time*, and will also touch on information about Munkács and World War II.

Working on the "very meaningful manuscript" was a fantastic experience, she said at a launch party she hosted for the models and their families.

Blumberg said *Escape in Time* is "an important story that we felt we needed to be a part of, and we're honoured to be a part of."

Lieberman, whose mother was a sister to Miri, was taken with "the quality of the writing and compellingness of the story" when she read it in the original Hebrew. She felt strongly that the book would have international appeal.

A research scientist who lives in Boulder, Colo., Lieberman enlisted help from translator Leora Frankel, and "lucked into" an agent who sent the English version to more than 20 publishers. They all "seemed to absolutely love it," but declined to publish it, Lieberman said. Undeterred, she continued the search on her own, contacting 10 more companies.

After championing the book for years, Lieberman said, "I'm really thrilled that my mother's family story is hopefully going to be part of the middle school Holocaust education or reading canon. I think it's very inspiring. I think that they were amazing people who just had to make really tough decisions, and I think that they were really brave."

As of early April, Lieberman had two events scheduled for this month, a reading at a local middle school, and a discussion with bar and bat mitzvah students.

Miri's real-life close friend, Malka Marom – part of the singing duo Malka and Joso in the 1960s – remembers Miri and her family as very brave, very wise, and good storytellers. Lowenstein-Malz, who uses Marom's name in one scene in the English version, inherited their storytelling ability, Marom said.

Lowenstein-Malz told *The CJN* in an email that as a child, she felt embarrassed by her mother, a Holocaust survivor with no number on her arm, who hadn't been in a concentration camp, and was "even beautiful and radiant.

"But she always managed to survive the horrors of the Holocaust, to escape in time. I then understood that this story that I was so ashamed of during my childhood, is a story I want to tell to the generations to come. Through this story, one can understand what happened in the Holocaust without being too scared." ■

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Orphan Black villain excited about Season 3

SHERI SHEFA
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In his most challenging and rewarding role to date, *Orphan Black*'s Ari Millen said the next season of the Canadian science fiction show will keep viewers guessing.

Having played the role of Mark Rollins, a religious assassin who was tasked with murdering female clones of Project Leda, the second season finale revealed that his character is a male clone, created as part of Project Castor.

"Moving forward, I think the season premier picks up minutes later from that, and we will continue to explore the plotline of what is Project Castor, how are they involved in the overall mystery with Project Leda and the rest of the conspiracy," said Millen, a 33-year-old Kingston native.

Orphan Black, which stars Tatiana Maslany as Sarah Manning, is about a woman who assumes the identity of one of her clones after witnessing the suicide of one of them.

She learns that she is a clone, one of many living throughout North America and Europe, and that someone is plotting to kill her and the others.

The series, which will begin airing its third season on April 18, raises issues about the moral and ethical implications of human cloning.

"I guess the biggest thing is the theme of family and the importance of family, and in this season more than ever, it will become more important," said Millen, who now plays four roles as Project Castor clones Mark, Rudy, Seth and Miller.

"The Castor boys are going to be gunning hard for Sarah and the Leda family and making life difficult for them."

In an interview with *The CJN*, Millen, who grew up as a member of Kingston's Jewish community, said landing a regular gig on an award-winning Toronto-based TV show is a dream – one he's been working toward since he was a teenager.

"Like a lot of kids in Canada, I grew up being athletic, and hockey was a big part of my life and I wanted to be in the NHL. But if you're not in the junior system by 15 or 16, it's probably not going to happen for you. That's when I started shifting gears and tried to figure out what I wanted to do," he said.

"Acting was something I had always kind of done. Fooling around with my friends' video camera or school plays, but I guess when it came to the time to go to university, I thought, what am I going to do?"

He applied to the theatre acting program at Ryerson University, and has been landing roles since he graduated from the program in 2007.

Ari Millen plays a clone in *Orphan Black*

One of his first roles was a part in an episode of the television series *ReGenesis*, and he later won small roles in other TV shows including *Nikita* and *Rookie Blue*.

But his role on *Orphan Black*, which airs on Space in Canada and BBC America in the United States, has been the most challenging.

"This has probably been the most difficult thing I've ever done and the most rewarding, and certainly, going to set every day is always exciting. It was a great season and I'm very excited for everyone to see it," he said.

He said he's grateful he's able to "tell stories I'm proud of and to be able to provide for my family while doing what I want to be doing. That is the ultimate success as far as I'm concerned," said Millen, who is expecting his first child with his fiancée later this year.

"But it's a tough business, and it's hard to make a living. It wasn't until this year, this season specifically, that I was able to only do acting to pay my bills."

As for other roles, Millen can also be seen in a Canadian independent film called *Hunter's Moon*, which he described as "a werewolf movie meets Scooby Doo." ■

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Taxing Times | Filing Deadlines

Avoid Penalties. Canadian returns are due April 30.
If you are a snowbird you may have US filing obligations. US citizens must file US tax returns even if they live in Canada. The filing deadline is June 15.

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NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE C.IN

The "friend of the Jews" is a familiar figure in popular Jewish commentary on mainstream culture. Non-Jewish friends are presented as models, both for their own sake and in contrast with those who oppose Jewish attainment or influence. American presidents are singled out for special status (in some cases without warrant) based upon the dramatic influence they wield in relation to events that either threaten or favour Jews.

Harry Truman's "friend" status was cemented by his early willingness to support the declaration of the State of Israel. Franklin Delano Roosevelt – beloved by Jews in the 1930s for his social policies and personal polish – proved, with scrutiny, to have failed in his wartime efforts to respond to the German onslaught on European Jews.

Abraham Lincoln is treated within this context in *Lincoln and the Jews: A History*, which is largely the work of Benjamin Shapell, founder of the California-based Shapell Manuscript archives, whose strengths are Americana and documents associated with 19th- and 20th-century Jewish history.

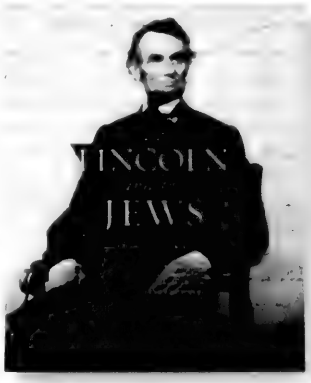
The 150th anniversary of Lincoln's assassination is in the wings, and this milestone has motivated a variety of Lincoln-related projects, including an exhibition mounted at the New-York Historical Society, set to travel to Lincoln's home in Springfield, Ill., and then to California.

The narrative offered in *Lincoln and the Jews* includes the broader movements of mid-19th-century America, a crucial time in the nation's history, encompassing civil war and the abolition of slavery. The Jewish story in America at this time is by no means momentous, but it is in itself of interest.

Lincoln's upbringing in Illinois and his rise to the presidency placed him in the vicinity – both intimate and casual – of Jews of varied stripes. Among these were clothiers in small Illinois towns, masons, resourceful retailers who became sutlers supplying Union soldiers, and substantial political figures like the first Jewish congressman and governor from Pennsylvania and Louisiana. Some of these men were pro-abolition, while others were pro-slavery (certain influential rabbis also spoke out in favour of slavery).

The relationship that proves most mysterious – presented in the weakest chapter of the book – is Lincoln's friendship with a Washington-based Jewish chiropodist named Issachar Zacharie. Known otherwise as Isachar, Issacher, Issachor, Zacharie, Zacharia and Zachariah, the foot doctor may have been a quack, and he may have served as a Union agitator in the south, but according to Lincoln, he treated the president's foot and back ailments "with[out] producing the slightest pain."

The value of *Lincoln and the Jews* lies in its reproduction of Lincolniana of every imaginable kind. The documents reproduced in lavish colour convey America in the mid-19th century; Lincoln's career; the lives of Jews in American towns and cities as well as in the military; and modes of correspondence, business transaction and portraiture of the era. The Shapell Lincoln collection includes many handwritten letters headed "Executive Mansion" – calling cards, texts of speeches and government proclamations.



Lincoln and the Jews: A History
by Jonathan Sarna and Benjamin Shapell
St. Martin's Press

> *The value of Lincoln and the Jews lies in its reproduction of Lincolniana of every imaginable kind.*

The notable fact regarding Jews depicted in these documents – beyond their social and economic status in America – is their German background. Their European upbringing often included substantial education and sophistication developed in Prussia's economic and cultural mainstream.

Jews in Lincoln's America were part of an early wave of European immigration to North America, which would be swamped in four decades by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of eastern European Jews leaving the collapsing Russian Empire.

One senses an element of earnest overreach in the repeated lesson offered by *Lincoln and the Jews*, as it stresses presidential interaction and favour for Lincoln's Jewish constituents. In its epilogue, we are reminded that he "interacted with Jews, represented Jews, befriended Jews, admired Jews, commissioned Jews, trusted Jews, defended Jews."

But one can't argue with the proposition that Lincoln's idiosyncratic relationship with Christianity, his numerous opportunities to meet and know Jews, and his major project – the emancipation of the American slaves – predisposed him to thoughtful attitude and action with regard to a major European-born minority whose history was rooted in the Bible.

At Lincoln's death, Jews numbered about 150,000 in America. He could not have imagined how this ethnic group would be transformed in number and status by the early years of the next century. ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and teacher in Montreal.

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THOMAS (MINUK) ALI

Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto
A Great SCHOOL

NOMINATION NOTICE

The Nominating Committee of Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto has prepared a list of ten (10) candidates for election to the Board of Directors for the ensuing term.

Shimmy Brandes
Sheldon Carr
Shawn Goldberg
Heather Goldenberg
Heather Ringel
Barry Sacks
Mitch Vininsky
Gabi Weisfeld
Mark Zigler
Sally Zigler

Additional nominees will be accepted if properly received no later than 5:00 p.m. April 29, 2015. For further information please contact Elliott Brodkin, Executive Director/CFO, at (416) 494-7666, Ext. 200.

DATED April 15, 2015
TORONTO, Ontario

Sally Zigler
Nominating Committee

Jazz singer debuts her second album, *P.S. I Love You*

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Though she had been performing for many years, Monica Chapman came to jazz later in life, making it something of a second career for the Romanian-born, Toronto- and Guelph-based jazz vocalist.

This month, Chapman released her second jazz album, *P.S. I Love You*, a compilation of jazz and show tune standards by greats like Irving Berlin, Oscar Hammerstein and Lionel Bart that she's infused with a distinctly bluesy, New Orleans style.

Chapman's Toronto CD release show, in which she will be accompanied by full band, will be held April 24 at the downtown club Lula Lounge.

Produced and arranged by jazz musician and agent Bill King, *P.S. I Love You* features trumpet player William Sperandei, bassist Dave Young, Juno Award-winning jazz guitarist Nathan Hiltz and drummer Mark Kelso, as well as King himself on piano.

Having already had air time on CBC radio and Jazz FM, *P.S. I Love You* is more varied than Chapman's debut jazz album, *But Beautiful*, released on iTunes in 2013, which, also featuring covers, is more grounded in bluesy ballads from singers including Lena Horne and Billie Holiday.

Chapman, who moved with her family from Romania to Israel at the age of three and to Canada at nine, took voice lessons at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto as a teenager, as well as studying piano and clarinet.

Initially drawn to classical music and musical theatre, she played clarinet in the Scarborough Youth Symphony while in high school, majored in piano and voice at the University of Western Ontario and obtained an Associate of The Royal Conservatory (ARCT) diploma.

In her 20s, Chapman got involved in musical theatre and, after marrying and becoming the mother of two, she was accepted as a singer in the Toronto Operetta Theatre.

Only in the past decade, Chapman said, with the encouragement of her husband, who felt her voice was "well-suited to jazz," did she begin to make the transition from classical and musical theatre to jazz.

"I'm versatile and I love to combine different styles," she said. "It can be difficult to make the transition from classical into jazz, but it wasn't a problem for me. I'm very grateful to people like Bill King, who helped me along the way to find my jazz voice and further my jazz education, introducing me to singers like Billie Holiday, etc. I really just got hooked."

Among her key musical influences, she listed Judy Garland, Doris Day, Nina Simone and Frank Sinatra.

Splitting her time between Guelph, where she lives with her husband, and Toronto, Chapman teaches piano and singing to adults and kids from her private home studio and, in addition to recording, loves singing at jazz clubs.

She described singing at the New York City jazz club Birdland as "the highlight of my career." She has also sung at New York's The Salon and Toronto clubs The Reservoir Lounge and Lula Lounge.

"I love the intimacy of singing in clubs," she said. "I'm always looking for new places to sing and am looking into breaking into Montreal's jazz club scene."

This July, Chapman will perform at Toronto's East end Relish Bar & Grill as part of a jazz trio in the TD Toronto Jazz Festival.

Monica Chapman BILL KING PHOTO

P.S. I Love You is available for purchase on iTunes and at CD Baby, Amazon and various music stores around Toronto. ■

Doors for the April 24 CD release show open at 6:30 p.m., show starts at 7:30 p.m. No cover charge before 8 p.m. Reservations recommended.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 16, 2015

San Francisco has heart

Hardly Strictly Warren Hellman runs until October, 2016. (pictured above and right with EmmyLou Harris).

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE PHOTO BY NANCY WIGSTON

NANCY WIGSTON
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

On a sunny morning in Union Square, tourists are posing for selfies in front of a heart-shaped sculpture, in homage to singer Tony Bennett's 1962 mega-hit about leaving his heart in "my city by the bay." Surprisingly, Bennett himself painted this example – one of many dotting the city. Who knew he painted? Still, there's so much to discover in this city of hills, bridges and spectacular views that Bennett's artistic talent may be the least of it.

Just getting to our hotel from the airport was an adventure. "You live up there?" asked our disbelieving cabbie. The young couple in our shared taxi-van affirmed that yes, they did. We peered out: the incline was about 75 degrees. Plunging the vehicle into reverse, the driver performed a sort of running jump that landed us quite near their door. Eventually we would see the world's most crooked street (Lombard) and the much-photographed Victorian "painted ladies" of Alamo Square, but nothing topped this introduction to the vertical city.

At Union Square, we join the queue for a Green Line Hop-On-Hop-Off Bus to far-flung Golden Gate Park and all points in between. Braving top-deck breezes with fellow travellers from Holland, England and assorted American states, we're entertained for the next 90 minutes by our amiable driver's spiel, punctuated with tapes of city-connected hit songs, like the crowd-pleasing, *Dock of the Bay*.

Driving through the Tenderloin District, we learn that these streets, once famous for speakeasies, crime and "houses of negotiated affection," only attracted policemen to keep things under control when the cops were bribed with gifts from local butchers – expensive "tenderloin" cuts of meat – in return for their presence.

We pass Glide Memorial Church, since the 1960s, a generous provider of dinner meals to thousands of needy citizens. Actor Will Smith, playing a homeless man, lined up with the rest in 2006's *The Pursuit of Happyness*. We remember that Canada's own Rabbi Abraham Fineberg worked with Glide in his later years – after he'd sung along with John Lennon in Montreal, recording *Give Peace a Chance*.

Next stop – for a photo-op – is the city's gorgeously domed City Hall, built for the 1915 Pacific Exposition. Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe tied the knot here in 1954, later posing for wedding photos in his North Beach neighbourhood, renowned for Italian restaurants, espresso cafés and City Lights Bookstore, home of the Beat Poets.

San Francisco often seems familiar: we recognize the house where the movie *Mrs. Doubtfire* was filmed, drive by more lovely "painted ladies," as well as a music auditorium named for rock impresario Bill Graham. Soon, the urban landscape gives way to trees and parks, until we stop for a break at Land's End, to stretch our wings, so to speak.

Our spirits are lifted by the immensity of the scene before us: the Pacific Ocean's rolling blue-and-white surf, the vast skies and unseen but powerful rip tides ("They'll take you to Japan") and the great white sharks circling beneath the waves.

On board once more, we head north to our final destination: Golden Gate Park.

> *There's so much to discover in this city of hills, bridges, and spectacular views*

An astonishing 412 hectares, the park was created under the supervision of Scotsman John McLaren, Central Park designer Frederick Law Olmstead having quit the project, fearing failure. McLaren's 53 years of devotion made Golden Gate into one of the most popular parks in the United States.

Here we discover America's oldest Japanese tea garden, a flower conservatory, an aquarium, lakes, polo fields, a windmill – even a bison paddock. Golden Gate also boasts two museums, the De Young (Fine Arts) and the California Academy of Science, the world's "greenest museum." Some among us disembark to explore further; the bus will return in two hours.

Seeing the park, even by bus, is a revelation. In the words of our driver/guide: "You will leave even more beautiful than when you came in – trust me, I come here on my days off and work on my self-esteem issues."

We laugh, but Golden Gate Park, together with Land's End, epitomizes all things Californian: surfers, hikers, cyclists, art, science – and a world of natural wonders.

The drive back takes us through now-touristy Haight-Ashbury. Noting the white-pillared mansion where Bill Graham housed The Jefferson Airplane and Jimi Hendrix's former digs, we regard these testaments to the Summer of Love somewhat coolly – the fact is, our top-tier bus seats have grown chilly.

"New Jersey's leaving the building!" sings out a departing group from the Garden State, and soon, so are we.

Back downtown, we pass cable cars and long queues of tourists as we head toward the grand sweep of San Francisco Bay and the other Golden Gate, the bridge. On the way, another surprise: at 736 Mission St., we find The Contemporary Jewish Museum, its spiky modern wing instantly recognizable as the work of Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum "crystal" architect Daniel Liebeskind.

Featuring a grand atrium, an education centre, a terrific café and a shop, the museum is not a permanent-collection kind of place. Featuring travelling exhibits, it shimmers with light and life, from its 32 diamond-like windows to its exterior blue steel shell with luminous panels that change colour, according to time of day, season or perspective.

Inspired by the site – it's attached to the red-brick Pacific Gas & Electric Power Substation, where energy was first restored to the earthquake-devastated city in 1906 – Liebeskind designed a building that sparkles with energy. Its sole long-term exhibit, *Hardly Strictly Warren Hellman* (until October 2016) focuses on the life and legacy of financier, philanthropist and banjo player Warren Hellman, a uniquely Jewish, uniquely San Francisco figure.

Described by a city newspaper as "a Republican who supported labour unions, an investment banker whose greatest joy was playing songs of the working class in a bluegrass band," in 2001, Hellman founded the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Festival, a free event held in Golden Gate Park's Speedway Meadows (now Hellman Hollow). The festival draws 700,000 fans to his beloved park each October.

This quirky musical exhibit features a small stage, videos of Hellman playing with fellow musicians (check the museum website, www.theCJM.org, for performances), scrapbooks, Hellman's Star of David rhinestone jacket and his banjo, among other ephemera. We leave this airy museum feeling that we've known, even briefly, a man who embodied the spirit of his city, a man with a heart. ■

For more information: www.sanfrancisco.travel; www.thecjm.org. Our City Pass (CityPass.com) made sightseeing a breeze.

Eclectic lineup in store at Segal next season

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca MONTREAL

Montreal's Segal Centre for Performing Arts has again chosen a big, splashy musical to open its main-stage theatre season.

An all-new production of *Funny Girl*, with Gabi Epstein of Toronto in the role of the sassy Fanny Brice, debuts Oct. 11-Nov. 1 under the direction of Shaw Festival veteran Peter Hinton.

Heading the cast of 18 in this revival and playing at the Segal for the first time is a thrill, Epstein said in a videotaped message from Toronto where she is performing in the musical *Once* at the Ed Mirvish Theatre.

All seven of the plays in 2015-2016 are Montreal premieres, Segal executive and artistic director Lisa Rubin announced at the season's unveiling.

The witty *Tribes* (Nov. 29-Dec. 20) by the British Nina Raine, described by Rubin as "one of the most talked about new plays in North America" is about a young man who is the only deaf member of his intellectual family. Montreal actor Jack Volpe, who has been hearing impaired since birth, will make his professional stage debut as the lead character, who learns how to find his own way in the world.

The press conference for the season launch was signed throughout, and during the play's run, related activities like the Sunday-@-the-Segal talk will be interpreted in American Sign Language and Langue des signes québécoises.

Jack Volpe makes his professional stage debut as a young deaf man in the Segal Centre's production of *Tribes* this coming season. LESLIE SCHACHTER PHOTO

To begin 2016 is *The Secret Annex* (Jan. 31-Feb. 21) by Winnipeger Alix Sobler, which imagines an Anne Frank who survived the Holocaust and is now 25 and living in New York. Still idealistic, she is trying to get her diary published and also dealing with family and romantic entanglements. It's presented in partnership with the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

Another young Canadian actress, Sara Farb, plays the lead role. Farb is now rehearsing the role of the traditional Anne Frank in the Stratford Festival's *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The next two mainstage plays are produced with Copa de Oro Productions, with whom the Segal has collaborated successfully in such musicals as *Belles Soeurs* and *Forever Plaid*.

The solo *Boom: The Music, Culture and Events that Shaped a Generation*, written, directed and performed by Gemini-and Dora awards-winner Rick Miller is a paean to the music of the baby boomers (March 20-April 10, 2016), while the off-Broadway *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* is a musical comedy, a Tony Award winner for Joe DiPietro about the ups and downs of romantic relationships at any age (May 8-29, 2016). It will be directed by Wade Lynch, who is directing *Anne of Green Gables* at the Charlottetown Festival this summer. He recently moved to Montreal.

In between, on the Segal second stage, the Studio, is Joshua Harmon's *Bad Jews* (May 1-22, 2016) which will see Lisa Rubin make her directorial debut.

"This is about family, faith and legacy; it's thought-provoking, poignant and funny," she said, "and raises questions I have asked myself many times."

Three cousins gather to mourn the death of their beloved grandfather, and then fight over a precious family heirloom, revealing cracks in their family ties.

The Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre (DWYT) play (June 19-July 10, 2016) is a world premiere, based on another classic: an adaptation of the Mel Brooks musical *The Producers*.

For the first time, the DWYT is working in association with the talented amateur Côte St. Luc Dramatic Society and the show will be directed by its founding artistic director Anisa Cameron, who also heads Bialik High School's theatre program.

Former DWYT director Bryna Wasserman, now executive director of New York's Folksbiene Yiddish theatre, is artistic consultant.

Rubin said the Segal is trying to get Brooks to attend this production rendered in the language in which he grew up.

The Segal also views as an important part of its mission the nurturing of local small theatrical companies. Through 2015-2016, its Studio will be the scene of productions by Teesri Duniya, Tableau d'Hôte Theatre, Youtheatre, and the French-language Les Productions Pas de Panique.

The Segal also unveiled a six-concert jazz series opening in October with the six-time Grammy-nominated singer Tierney Sutton. This will be the eighth season of jazz at the centre.

New this season are screenings of Shakespearean plays from London's Globe Theatre in its 77-seat CinemaSpace, with pre-show discussions hosted by Repercussion Theatre, which performs Shakespeare outdoors in the summer. ■

Roy Salomon first Canadian honoured by Maccabi USA

MARVIN GLASSMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, BOCA RATON

Although former Maccabi Canada president Roy Salomon has been recognized numerous times in his own country, he became the first Canadian citizen to be honoured by Maccabi USA in a recent ceremony here for his 46-year involvement with Maccabi Canada and the World Maccabi Union.

Salomon was cited along with 14 other outstanding Jewish athletes, organizers and volunteers at the Legends of the Maccabiah Gala Brunch.

Salomon represents part of the rich history and tradition of excellence of Canadian Jewish athletes and organizers at the Maccabiah Games in Israel.

Held every four years following an Olympics year, the Maccabiah Games is considered the third largest sports movement in the world, behind only the Olympics and Pan American Games.

Maccabi USA presented Salomon with the Maccabi Spirit Award for being one of the few people in Canada to have contributed to the Maccabi organization on the local, national and international levels.

"From the moment I represented Canada in basketball at the 1969 Maccabiah Games, I felt moved to be with the Maccabiah Games for a lifetime. The thrill of hearing and seeing 60,000 spectators cheer all the athletes at the opening ceremonies is a thrill I will never forget," said Salomon, 78, at the tribute where the other honorees were Americans.

Salomon moved to Montreal from Brooklyn in 1960 to form a real estate development company that established the Cavendish Mall in Côte St. Luc, among other commercial properties.

A past president of Maccabi Canada for eight terms from 1993-2001, Salomon always was close to the many athletes he recruited to the Maccabiah Games for decades.

He is credited with pushing for the addition of junior athletes (14 and under) with athletic competitions in separate categories. The first juniors competed at the Maccabiah Games in 1985.

"The popularity of junior athletes has grown so much that they represent close to a third of the athletes that go to the Maccabiah Games," he said. "Many of the junior athletes, moved by the trip and competition in Israel, often return to the Games in the open category and fare well because of their experiences at the junior level."

Roy Salomon

Salomon was a key player on the international level at the Maccabi World Union for mediating relations between Australia, four of whose Maccabiah team members were killed as a result of the 1997 bridge collapse at the Games' opening, and Israel.

"Australia continued to fund teams for the Games and we have paid tribute to their athletes since the accident," he said.

Salomon also is credited with raising the profile of Maccabi Canada by inviting hockey great Jean Béliveau to serve as the Canadian team's chef de mission at the 1985 and 1997 Games.

The 1997 Games was another milestone for Salomon as the Canadian hockey team won gold under the tutelage of coach Jacques Demers.

"It really was the Maccabi Canada organization and not me that was responsible for both Jacques [Demers] and Jean [Béliveau] being involved with the Maccabiah Games," he said with characteristic modesty.

Along with Maccabi USA president Bob Spivack, Salomon was the honorary co-chair at the last Maccabiah Games in 2013.

He also founded the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame originally at the Davis YM-YWHA in 1979 and was honoured at the 2013 Sports Celebrity Breakfast, benefiting the Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors Foundation.

Among the others feted at the brunch were: former 1956 Wimbledon doubles tennis champion Angela Buxton, former professional golfer Bruce Fleisher, (who competed at the Canadian Open golf championship many times), and former National Basketball Association player Danny Schayes, who played against the Toronto Raptors before his retirement in 1999. ■

What's New

APRIL 16 - APRIL 23

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, April 16

CANADIAN AND ISRAELI ART
Experts from Sotheby's discuss "Canadian and Israeli art," 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $20.

ADULT EDUCATION
Bracha Feder presents 3 sessions for Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, tonight, April 21, April 29, 7:30 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Free for members, $10 non-members.

YOM HASHOAH
A commemorative service will be held at Temple Har Zion, 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 18

CHAI TEA
Bernie Farber discusses "Remembering our past to change our future," 12:30 p.m. at "Chai Tea," Am Shalom Congregation, 767 Huronia Rd., Barrie. RSVP 705-792-3949.

YOM HASHOAH
Beth Tikvah Synagogue commemorates Yom Hashoah, 7:30 p.m.

TORAH STUDY
Lou VanDelman discusses the Torah portion at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

Sunday, April 19

A SIMPLE TWIST OF FAITH
A Simple Twist of Faith, will be performed at Beth Sholom Synagogue, 10 a.m. $5/$10. RSVP Karen@bethsholom.net

JEWS IN HOCKEY
David Grossman discusses "Jews in hockey," 1:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $10/$15.

YIDDISH AND HEBREW SONGS
Faye Kellerstein, accompanied by **Jordan Klapman** and **Arnie Rose**, performs Yiddish and Hebrew folksongs, 7:30 p.m., Lodzer Synagogue. Members free/$5. RSVP 416-636-6665.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of April 30 is April 20. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Flying the flag

Finance Minister Joe Oliver presents longtime UJA Federation leader Julia Koschitzky with a Canadian flag. To mark the 50th anniversary of the national flag, the Canadian government last month presented 50 citizens and groups who have contributed to the country with a flag. JEFF SPRINGER PHOTO

YIDDISH CLASSES
Intermediate-level, 10-week Yiddish class starts today, 10 a.m.-noon, Beth David Synagogue. $150. 416-635-2883, ext. 5189.

SHAAR SHALOM SINGLES
Historian **Ken Weber** discusses the world of inventions with the Shaar Shalom Singles, 7:30 p.m. $10. 905-889-4975, ext. 72.

KENSINGTON MARKET SPEAKS
The opening event for the new online exhibit of oral history collected by the Kensington Market Historical Society will be held 2-4:30 p.m., Lillian H. Smith Library, 239 College St.

WARSAW GHETTO MEMORIAL
Samuel Kassow is the guest speaker at a commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 3 p.m., Workmen's Circle Centre, 471 Lawrence Ave. W.

CITY SHUL CONCERT
Neshama Carlebach and **Josh Nelson** perform in a benefit concert for the City Shul, 8 p.m., George Ingnatieff Theatre. Tickets, 647-799-3557 or carlebachnelsonconcert.eventbrite.ca

Monday, April 20

SPRING LECTURE SERIES
Rick Phillips discusses "The wonderful music of the Tchaikovsky ballets," 2 p.m., as part of Temple Emanu-El's lecture series. $45/series; $12/lecture. 416-449-3880.

CLEAN COMMUTE
The Greening Committee and Shinshinit discuss commuting, 8 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. $3/$5.

VOLUNTEERING IN ISRAEL
Skilled Volunteers for Israel holds an information meeting, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. RSVP: rsvp@skillvolunteerisrael.org

YOM HASHOAH
Author **Kathy Kacer** is the guest speaker for Yom Hashoah, 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

BOOK REVIEW
The Golem and the Jinni is reviewed by **Cathy Tile**, Beth Tzedec Congregation. Lunch at 1 p.m., review at 1:30 p.m. $20.

CHUG HA-TANACH
Rabbi Tina Grimberg teaches a chapter from Psalms, 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Tuesday, April 21

YOM HAZIKARON
The Consulate of Israel hosts the official Yom Hazikaron memorial ceremony, Beth Tzedec Congregation. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., program starts at 7:30 p.m.

LUNCH & LEARN
Steve Paikin discusses "Paikin and the Premiers," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15 p.m. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

TORAH THROUGH FEMALE EYES
Loretta Tanenbaum teaches "Torah through female eyes," 10-11:15 a.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation to May 26. $55/$65.

Wednesday, April 22

CURRENT EVENTS
Murray Armel leads a discussion on current events, April 22-May 27, 10 a.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

ABOVE AND BEYOND
Westmount Shul screens the film *Above and Beyond*, $15. RSVP office@westmountshul.com

BIBLICAL REBELS
Hana Werner discusses "Rebels in the Bible," Beth Tzedec Congregation. Dessert at 1:30 p.m., lecture at 2 p.m. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Thursday, April 23

YOM HA'ATZMAUT
Celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, 7:30 p.m., at Shaar Shalom Synagogue. $10/$20.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS
Adath Israel Congregation offers bereavement support groups: for widows, April 23-May 28, 12:30 p.m., for men and women, April 23-May 28, 7:30 p.m. Members no charge, non-members $180. RSVP 416-635-5340.

Coming Events

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
Reena needs teenagers and young adults to volunteer as "rec buddies" at Camp Reena this summer. Call **Millie Chadwick** 905-889-2690, ext. 2112.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

WOMEN'S DAY OF LEARNING
Kehillat Shaarei Torah holds a women's day of learning, April 26 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. with guest speakers **Ilana Rubenstein** and **Rifka Sonenberg.** RSVP 416-229-2600.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com

- Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children aged 2-10. Starts April 21, 1 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave. (downtown), or April 23, 7 p.m. at Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St., or April 30, 7 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 2-session group for couples who are going to be married next year. April 26, May 3, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.
- Bullying and learning disabilities: A one-session workshop for parents and professionals. Topics include prevention and intervention strategies for children who are bullied as well as those who bully. April 28, 7 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St.
- Mind, body connection for women: An 8-session group for women to learn meditation and mindfulness. Starts April 29, 2-3:30 p.m., 35 Madison Ave. or April 30, 7-8:30 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS
Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Israeli folk dancing workshop, April 23, 1-2:30 p.m. **Jack Gelbloom Quartet** performs *Something Familiar – A Musical Comedy Show*, April 30, 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; High tea with live music, April 29, 1:30 p.m.; Spa day April 23.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112 April 21 "The rise and influence of Yiddish in American mass culture," 10 a.m.; April 23, Lecture on "Diabetes and your health," 1:30 p.m.
- **Baycrest Learning Academy. Kevin Courrier** teaches a course at the Wagman Centre on "The neglected art of film music," Thursdays, 2-3:30 p.m., April 16-June 4. 416-785-2500, ext. 2267. $40.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com
- PJ Plus is an active Jewish learning program for children with a parent, April 17-June 19, 9:30 a.m. or April 12-June 28, 10 a.m.
- **Kitty Wintrob** discusses her memoir *I'm Not Going Back*, May 7, 7 p.m.
- Join the Shalom Singers, a seniors choir that entertains throughout the GTA.
- Pastel painting, starts April 21, 9:30 a.m.
- **Bill Gladstone** presents, "Basics of Jewish Genealogy," May 14, 21, 7 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Jewish Sensibility in Hollywood Films – Part II," May 6-27, 1 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Romarising*, photos of Canadian Roma, is in the gallery, April 15-May 2.
- Yom Hashoah memorial service, April 16, 2-3 p.m. with **Claire Baum**, author of *The Hidden Package*.
- Shabbat family party for children and an adult, April 17-June 19, 10 a.m. or 11:15 a.m. Ext. 388.
- Playwriting for beginners with **Julie Tepperman,** May 7-June 11, 7 p.m. Must pre-register , ext. 0.
- Discuss Israeli and Diaspora identities with the Shinshinim, April 19, 9:30 a.m.
- Rare Yiddish songs from World War II presented by performer **Psoy Korolenko** and lecturer **Anna Shternshis**, April 19, 8 p.m.
- **Maj.-Gen. Orna Barbivay. Rephael Hofstein. Yaniv Weisman** are the guests at Israeli Speakers Night, April 22, 7 p.m.
- Yom Ha'atzmaut community celebration, April 26, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.
- **Lesley Sachs**, executive director of Women of the Wall, speaks April 27, 7:30 p.m.
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Emily Carr and Vincent Van Gogh, April 27, May 4, 1:30 p.m.
- *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, presented by the Alexander Showcase Theatre April 30-May 3, Al Green Theatre. For tickets, www.alexandershowcasetheatre.com
- **Adam Nayman** looks at the films of Joel and Ethan Coen, May 4-July 6, 7 p.m.
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, May 10, 1 p.m. Ext. 521.
- Inclusive ballroom and Latin dance workshop, May 10, 2:15 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk**, Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- The JCCs go to Stratford to see *The Diary of Anne Frank*, May 20.
- Beginner bridge starts April 30, 7 p.m.
- JCC Book Club discusses *The Children Act*, April 28, 7 p.m.
- **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m.
- Silk painting on scarves, April 24, May 1, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Social club for singles over 50, April 26, 7 p.m. ■

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Happy to skip the Eshet Chayil

Lauren Kramer

At my friend's Shabbat dinner table a few weeks ago, her husband broke into a solo version of *Eshet Chayil* (*Woman of Valour*, Proverbs, Chapter 31). Not sure where to look, I kept my eyes downcast, sharing a conspiratorial smile with my spouse.

I don't recall ever having been serenaded, but were I able to choose, *Eshet Chayil* wouldn't be my first choice of song. This is a proverb that gets my back up each time I hear it. It's the nuances of the song that bother me, or rather, its direct translation. *Eshet Chayil* just makes no sense to me. It paints the portrait of a woman who does not exist, who possibly never has. The woman described in *Eshet Chayil* is a selfless slave. One hand on the distaff, the other on the spindle, the tasks she performs are utterly outdated and have no meaning in the context of our present day reality.

What's more, they border on the ridiculous. Our *Eshet Chayil* plants a vineyard and rations her maids. Since when is maid rationing an action to be lauded? She buys a field, makes and sells her own clothes and "girds her loins," roughly translated as preparing herself for a task requiring endurance. That task can only be the lifestyle described in the song.

Our *Eshet Chayil* is never allowed to rest. Instead she must make her own bedspreads, deliver a belt to the pedlar and clothe her family. While her husband can sit with the elders (the emphatic word here being "*sit*"), the woman this proverb describes may never "eat the bread of idleness" or spend time and effort on making herself feel beautiful. Nope, that would be vain, and anyway, she has too much to do between anticipating household needs, decking herself out in purple wool and linen, helping the poor and destitute and burning the midnight oil. Even sleep she denies herself.

> *Eshet Chayil feels prehistoric and by today's standards, simply absurd*

So here are my questions – Why do we sing about this phantom woman? How does this song celebrate modern couples today and their distribution of labour, and if it doesn't, why are folks still singing it?

Rabbinical scholars argue that it's not to be taken literally, that the *Eshet Chayil* represents the feminine presence of God. Others argue that its meaning must be taken in context of the Masoretic text, the traditional Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible, preceded by instructions the mother of King Lemuel gives to her son. Maybe the proverb was Lemuel's eulogy to his mother. Still, that doesn't help me understand why it's sung at contemporary Shabbat tables and what meaning it holds for today's Jewish women.

Praise I'm okay with. I think women get way less of that than they deserve. And particularly on a Friday night, before the family feasts on a three-course dinner, a little praise is a good thing. But the words of praise are just as important as the praise itself and *Eshet Chayil* feels prehistoric and by today's standards, simply absurd.

So there'll be no renditions of *Eshet Chayil* at my table. You'll say I'm too literal, but I believe the woman of valour described in this proverb doesn't describe me or anyone else I know, nor does it present a realistic set of goals for anyone to aspire to. Until a more meaningful Shabbat song is composed to describe a contemporary woman of valour, I'm quite comfortable to go un-serenaded.

Even if that means forfeiting praise completely. ■

Family Moments

Mazel tov Rabbi & Mrs. Avrohom Hersh Lasry on their recent marriage. From parents Sarah Faiga & Yossi Lasry, bubby Mickey Stern and Uncle Menachem.

Mazel tov to John Franken on his 93rd birthday with much love from his children and grandchildren. Wishing you good health and happiness till 120.

Trudi Mondrow and Celia Silverman (née Schachter) celebrated their 80th birthdays on March 15. Mazel tov and happy birthday. Love, your children and grandchildren.

Fay & Harvey Blankenstein and Adina & Elias Toby are pleased to announce the engagement of their children, Adam & Simmi.

Mazel tov Jodi Rotman & Ryan Tkatch on your engagement! Thrilled parents are Patti & Sheldon Rotman and Janice & Murray Tkatch.

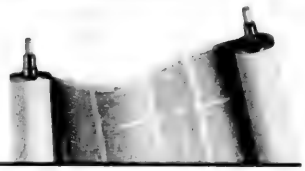
Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Shmini | Leviticus 9:1 - 11:47



Maharat Abby Brown Scheier explains why celebration and despair go hand in hand
Rabbi Denise Handlarski focuses on the distinction between sacred and secular
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen says we may not understand God's ways, but we can still be united

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

Shmini is an emotional roller-coaster, with the joyous dedication of the Tabernacle and the tragic death of Aaron's sons presented side by side. There's a powerful lesson found in the Torah's presenting of these two episodes in such close proximity to one another.

The celebration of the Tabernacle's dedication follows extensive preparation and investment of time and money. Everything unfolds according to plan: the leaders, Moses and Aaron, bless the people, and God's presence is seen in the fire. What a great feeling of satisfaction!

However, the divine fire that expresses God's presence also kills Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aaron. Personally, I'm uncomfortable justifying God's actions here or placing wrongdoing upon the boys that is worthy of death. This tragedy, though, reflects the tragic and unexplainable losses – losses that we know too well, such as those that occurred in Israel, Paris, and Brooklyn, all in the past months.

By combining these moments of great expectation and joy with the feelings of despair on the same day, the Torah is telling us that they do not conflict with each other. At great moments, such as a Jewish wedding, we celebrate by breaking a glass, symbolizing the brokenness and celebration that go hand in hand.

Finally, the last part of the parshah focuses on the details of kosher animals. At first sight, this seems like a strange place to put these details after such profound and intense feelings of joy and sadness. However, these laws present an important conclusion, teaching us to elevate the mundane and the physical.

Our lives will hopefully have many moments of satisfaction and blessing. Likely, we will unfortunately encounter setbacks along the way. Our everyday choices, like what we eat, are very much under our control. They are opportunities to elevate our daily lives and empower us to navigate the highs and lows, over which we would otherwise have little control. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

Shmini means "eighth." In this parshah, it refers to the eighth day of the Tabernacle. There were seven days of training during which the Tabernacle was erected and taken down each night. On the eighth day, the practice was to end and the Temple to stand.

Thus, in many ways, the eighth day was really the first day. In Shmini, Aaron is told that the job of the priests is to "distinguish between the sacred and the profane."

We ourselves have a weekly way of distinguishing between these if we mark Shabbat. Shabbat is a special, sacred time when we remember to rest, to breathe. At the close of Shabbat, we celebrate Havdalah, meaning separation. It is time to mark the transition between the sacred time of Shabbat and the ordinary time of the week.

Some see Havdalah as more of a joining than a separation – we bring the sacredness into the rest of the week by beginning the week with the lovely rituals of lighting interwoven candles, singing songs and smelling spices.

This week, maybe seven won't be our lucky number. Instead, let's focus on eight. On this day after the cycle of the week, we can reflect on what is extraordinary about our ordinary weeks and lives. Let's think of the eighth day as a first day, a new beginning.

There must be a division between the sacred and the everyday for us to be able to distinguish between them. But there is also room to bring a little more of what is sacred to us, and what is highest in our consciousness and heart, into our daily practices.

Shmini asks us to contemplate both the separation and the joining. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

In the period between Passover and Shavuot, a tragedy happened many years ago. Thousands of the greatest students of Rabbi Akiva died. Why? Because they did not have enough respect for each other.

These were some of the greatest rabbis who ever lived. Yet, on their level of greatness, they should have had more respect for each other.

So during this period, to mourn for them, we don't get married, we don't get haircuts and we try not to listen to entertaining music.

We all can think of ways to improve. Let's have more respect for our spouses and more tolerance for each other, even though we may have different opinions.

I enjoyed the seder we just had on Pesach, because there were so many kinds of Jews there – some less observant (for the time being) and some more observant. But we were all at the seder, respectful of each other. Surely God is joyful when he sees us in unity with each other.

This is why God gave us the Torah on Shavuot, which we're now preparing for: because he saw we were united.

The Jewish community in New York recently experienced a tragedy in which a loving father lost seven of his precious children. Who was not touched by this?

Until the Mashiach comes, we will never understand God's ways. But we do know that when we have peace in our communities, this brings blessings, as the prayer *Sim Shalom Tova Uvracha* tells us.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe told us that "One action we do is greater than a thousand sighs." We all shed a tear. But now what? Do our tears benefit anyone?

Let's resolve to be more united and do more mitzvot, and surely God will bring true peace, with Mashiach in our days. ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is at Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto. Email: yirmicohen@sympatico.ca.

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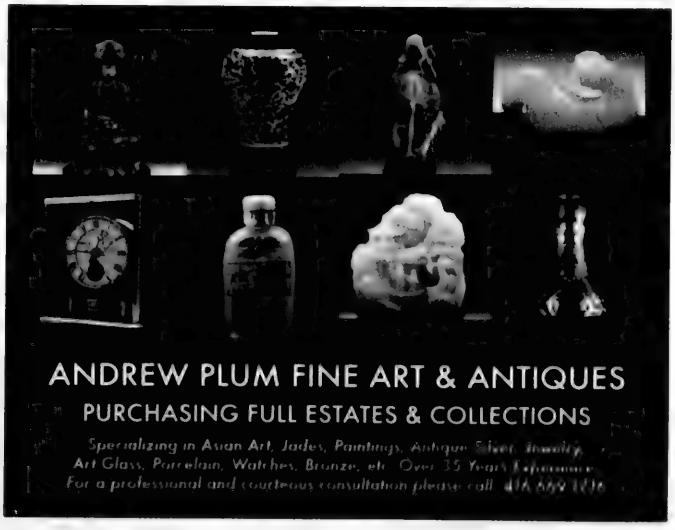
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Food processor makes homemade easier

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The word homemade can bring a great sense of pride to a baker, but lack of time or interest often makes baking from scratch out of the question.

Enter the food processor. It puts homemade into the realm of possibility for many. There are so many recipes where you simply add all the ingredients into your food processor, process for less than a minute, pour the mixture into a pan and bake. Viola! Delicious homemade cake.

One thing to remember when making cake batter in a food processor, however, is to not overdo it. Just process the batter until all the ingredients are incorporated. Overprocessing can result in dense, heavy cakes. Also cakes that rely on beaten-in air bubbles such as chiffon cake don't do well when made in a food processor. The machine cannot whip enough air into the batter.

Here are some recipes that work very well in the food processor.

Mud Cake

This is quick and simple to make, and everyone loves it. Every time it's put out, it's gone in a flash. This recipe is for a 9x9-inch pan, but I always double it and make it in a 9x13-inch pan.

- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 tbsp. cocoa
- 5 tbsp. oil
- 1 tbsp. vinegar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup water
- 1/4-1/3 cup nuts

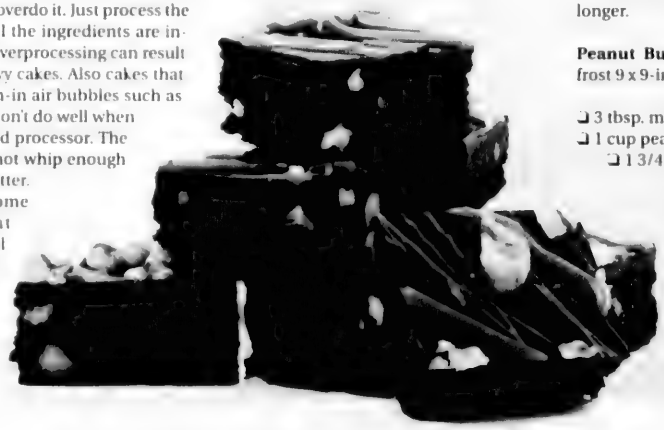
Mix all the ingredients together in food processor just until incorporated. Pour into 9 x 9-in. greased pan and bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Cool and frost with Peanut Butter Frosting. Makes 12 servings.

Note: If you double this recipe, it will need to bake for about 10 minutes longer.

Peanut Butter Frosting (enough to frost 9 x 9-in. cake)

- 3 tbsp. margarine
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 3/4 cups powdered sugar

Melt margarine in a saucepan over low heat; add peanut butter and powdered sugar. Stir until melted and spread over cake. If you accidentally overcook this frosting, it will turn to fudge.



Basic White Cake

All the variations shown below demonstrate how versatile this delicious cake is.

- 1 cup margarine, room temperature
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 1/2 cups liquid (milk, water, pine apple juice, coconut milk, etc.)
- 2 tsp. vanilla or other extract

Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour two 9-in. cake pans or one 9 x 13-in pan.

In a food processor bowl, cream margarine well. Add sugar and process well, then add eggs, one at a time, and vanilla and process until incorporated.

In a separate bowl, combine flour, salt and baking powder. Add dry ingredients to creamed mixture alternately with the liquid, processing just until ingredients are incorporated.

Pour into prepared pan and bake for 45-55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into centre comes out clean and cake begins to pull away from sides.

Variations:

Apple Cake: Peel and thinly slice 3 apples. Combine 1 tsp. cinnamon with 3 tbsp. sugar and coat apples with mixture. Pour 2/3 of batter into pan, add a layer of apples, then pour remaining batter over apples.

Blueberry cake: Sprinkle top of batter with 2 cups washed and dried blueberries – they'll blend into the batter while baking. Don't mix blueberries into batter or they'll sink to the bottom.

Chocolate chip cake: Mix 1 cup chocolate chips into batter before pouring into pan.

Chocolate Marble cake: Melt 4 ounces of semisweet chocolate together with 2 tablespoons margarine. Once mixture has melted, combine with 2 tablespoons of cake batter, then drizzle across top of batter in pan and swirl lightly into rest of batter with a knife.

Coconut cake: Mix 1 cup shredded coconut into batter and sprinkle 1/2 cup on top of batter.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 16, 2015

Genevieve Zubrzycki: Poland experiencing Jewish revival

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Genevieve Zubrzycki, associate professor of sociology, faculty associate at the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan and author of *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), is working on a new book about the ongoing revival of Jewish communities in Poland and the interest non-Jewish Poles are taking in Jewish history and culture.

Last month, Zubrzycki was in Toronto and gave a talk at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre titled "Making sense of the Jewish revival in contemporary Poland." The event was hosted by the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Association of Warsaw's Museum of The History of Polish Jews.

The CJN spoke to Zubrzycki about Jewish revival and Jewish life in today's Poland.

Genevieve Zubrzycki says Poles' persecution of Jews wasn't discussed under Communist rule.

Will you describe Poland's Jewish revival and the lead-up to it.

Many Jews emigrated immediately after World War II. Others returned to their homes and later fell victim to pogroms. Others chose to remain in Poland. That was the case for many Jews who survived the war by going east and came back to build a socialist Poland. For that category, religion and ethnicity didn't matter; they were secular, and their Jewishness was secondary to other identities.

In 1968, there was a significant purge, and many of the Jews who had remained in or returned to Poland after the war were basically expelled from the People's Republic. Throughout that period, there were also Jews who had survived the war hidden, under false papers or adopted by Christian families – who either continued to hide their Jewishness for fear of discrimination or because they didn't know they were Jewish. (Many of them are now rediscovering their Jewish roots and embracing a Jewish identity.)

In the 1980s, during Communism, a small group of people involved in opposition to the Communist regime organized underground courses where people would read all kinds of censored texts, poetry, etc., and a branch of it was created as a sort of "Jewish flying university," where a small movement of people (mostly of Jewish origin, but also some non-Jews) tried to learn about Jewish history.

After the fall of Communism in Poland in 1989, this became more serious within the mainstream Jewish community. At that time, organizations started to fund Jewish activities in Poland and rabbis from Israel and the United States started coming to Poland. Several philanthropic organizations funded the Jewish revival – these include the Jewish Joint Committee, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, the Taube Foundation and some that joined later, such as Shavei Israel.

How many Jews currently live in Poland?

According to a census taken two years ago, there are about 7,000 Jews – people who chose to identify themselves as Jewish in the census. We don't know "how Jewish" they are – for example, halachically, whether both parents are Jewish, one grandparent, if they converted, etc.

The number of Jews in Poland is much larger, however, if one looks at the number of people who maintain some formal ties to Jewish organizations, or the number of Poles who are thought to have one Jewish grandparent. This is why the range is so wide, from 7,000 to 40,000 Jews, depending on sources.

The number of Jews is growing. Many Poles are rediscovering their Jewish roots that were either hidden or ignored until recently, and now embracing their Jewishness and/or Judaism.

What is contemporary Jewish life in Poland like?

There's a very vibrant set of communities in Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw.

The community is very diverse. It used to be mostly Orthodox, but now there's also Reform Judaism, which emerged in Poland between five and 10 years ago. You have Chabad, which showed up in Poland after the fall of Communism.

To give you an idea of the range, one community in Krakow is led by a female rabbi.

There are Jewish community centres in Krakow and Warsaw that are primarily secular institutions open to Jews as well as non-Jews interested in all things related to Jewishness – Yiddish and Hebrew classes, yoga classes, cooking classes and Shabbat dinners every Friday.

In Krakow, visitors to the city to visit Auschwitz are invited to the dinners and can go meet Krakow Jews.

There are also about 40 festivals celebrating Jewish culture. Clearly, Jewish revival is a very popular phenomenon that goes way beyond the borders of the Jewish community.

Why are non-Jewish Poles interested in Jewish history and culture?

A number of things have converged to make all things Jewish really present in the public sphere. There's been a push from Poles in different political and social circles to expand Polish national identity beyond the Catholic Church and therefore embrace Jewishness and Jewish culture.

But it's also related to Holocaust tourism and people coming to Poland to visit the death camps and industries developing around that, an examination of ethnic Poles' role in the Holocaust and the opening of Poland to the West and the European Union.

A book published in 2001, called *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, showed the participation of ethnic Poles in a pogrom in the Jedwabne village in Nazi-occupied Poland in 1941.

Poles' persecution of Jews during and after World War II was not talked about under Communism.

The book created a very public debate about the roles of Poles in the Holocaust and contributed to Poles wanting to understand more about their roles and about Jewish life before World War II.

Was this partly motivated by a sense of guilt on their part?

Not really. It's not as clear-cut in the Polish case as in the German case. Six million Polish citizens were killed during World War II, so the issue of guilt is very complicated.

Mostly it's about recovering a past that had been completely destroyed. The Museum of the History of Polish Jews that opened in Warsaw last October has been intended as a museum of life, believing that, to show the tragedy of the Holocaust, you need to understand the world it erased – an entire culture and civilization, villages, urban neighbourhoods, an entire way of life that has disappeared.

So the Jewish revival is also an attempt by non-Jewish Poles to recover the history eradicated by World War II and the memory erased by the Communist system.

Have you seen resistance to the Jewish revival in Poland stemming from anti-Semitism?

Obviously there is some anti-Semitism. You have right-wing groups in Poland for whom the Jew is the enemy. But most Jewish activists and rabbis I talk to say they feel more comfortable in Poland than places like Germany, Italy, France. I'm sure on the Internet you can see a lot of anti-Semitic comments, but there isn't a real pushback [to the Jewish revival].

The president of Poland is the official sponsor of the festival of Jewish culture in Krakow, the museum was funded with public money. The Polish state is endorsing a lot of the initiatives. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Walking on water

Backstory

EROL ARAF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Neville Chamberlain could have walked on water! Having betrayed the only democracy in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia, Chamberlain returned to England as the man who had saved the peace. "No conqueror returning from Victory on the battlefield," effused *The Times*, "has come adorned with nobler laurels."

As he emerged from his plane on Sept. 30, 1938, Chamberlain stopped and announced to delirious crowds that the resolution of the Czechoslovak problem was only a "prelude to a larger settlement in which all of Europe may find peace." He then waved the famous piece of paper and declared that he had signed an agreement with Hitler stating "the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again."

Amidst laud renditions of "For he is a jolly good fellow," he was whisked to Buckingham Palace so that the monarch could express personally his "most heartfelt congratulations" on the success of his negotiations with Hitler. At the Palace's main balcony, the king and queen presented the prime minister to a roaring crowd as he basked in the adulation of the masses in the centre of a sphere illuminated by a giant searchlight. Festivities continued late into the night at 10 Downing St. Responding to the chants of the crowd, he appeared at an open window and declared that it was "Peace in our time."

In a little over two years after the tumultuous reception accorded to Chamberlain, his funeral was held at Westminster Abbey on Nov. 14, 1940. The congregants sat in frigid cold as the windows had been shattered by incendiary bombs rained down by the Luftwaffe. The Blitz was turning London into an inferno.

Ever magnanimous, Churchill, the new prime minster, who had foretold everything, delivered one of the most poignant funeral orations in history by praising his predecessor for his sincere quest for peace.

But how was it possible that in so short a time since Chamberlain's triumphal return from Germany, Britain found herself in the shadow of scaffolds, alone and friendless, facing the relentless Nazi juggernaut?

It happened because the appeasers imagined that they could work with a criminal regime to maintain the peace. It happened because they abandoned their friends preferring instead to work with genocidal dictators. It happened because they dismissed the anti-Semitism of the Third Reich as inconsequential in the greater scheme of their grand agenda. It happened because they remained silent and ignored, as William Manchester wrote in his biography of Churchill, *The Last Lion*, the Nazis' "frequent resort to murder and torture, submitted to extortion, humiliation, and abuse, having sold out all who had sought to stand shoulder to shoulder against the new barbarism."

It happened because they and the governing elites in both France and England refused to heed Churchill's warning that "Virtuous motives, trammeled by inertia and timidity, are no match for armed and resolute wickedness. A sincere love of peace is no excuse for muddling hundreds of millions of humble folk into total war. The cheers of the weak, well-meaning assemblies soon cease to count. Doom marches on."

And, indeed, "doom marched on" as more than 60 million souls followed Chamberlain into the grave.

It is perilous to propound any direct contemporary lessons from the events preceding World War II, not least because it is difficult to extrapolate from the past into the future where different circumstances prevail. But to the extent that there are historical patterns concerning the consequences of appeasing genocidal tyrants, in the misplaced hope that such propitiation would moderate their behaviour, there are lessons to be learned.

In that context, Chamberlain's policies illuminate the inherent risks in negotiating in good faith with those who are congenitally incapable of reciprocating in kind. While Chamberlain's approach to dealing with the Nazis produced a global conflagration, the current appeasement of Iran will most certainly engender a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region of the world.

The consequences are incalculable. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

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Saul Murray Love	**Mar 30/15**	**99 Hayden St., # 706**
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Olga Bogouslavskaia	**Mar 31/15**	**10 Kenneth Ave.**
Naomi Gertler	**Mar 31/15**	**11 Townsgate Dr.**
Barry Kasman	**Mar 31/15**	**650 Briar Hill Ave.**
Malka E. Simon	**Mar 30/15**	**355 St. Clair Ave. W.**
Harry Green	**Mar 31/15**	**70 Bernard Ave.**
Paul Devenyi	**Apr 2/15**	**50 Grangemill Cres.**

Kasman, Barry Howard (Chaim Borov) ז"ל

on Tuesday, March 31, 2015 at Baycrest Hospital

Barry, who lost his battle to cancer, fought until the last day with strength and dignity, just as he lived his life. Loving father of Gianna Kasman and father-in-law of Grant Brown. Devoted grandfather of Eden and Sasha. Sadly missed by Joscelyn Kasman. Dear son and brother of the late Philip ז"ל and Evelyn Kasman ז"ל and Sheldon Kasman ז"ל.

He was larger than life, and will never be forgotten by those lives he touched. Service was held at Beth Tzedec Memorial Park on Thursday, April 2, 2015. Shiva was concluded with the onset of Passover.

Memorial donations may be made to the Barry Kasman Memorial Fund c/o The Benjamin foundation 416 780-0324 or www.benjamins.ca

Nouly Ariadini Howard ז"ל

1927-2014

It is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of **Nouly Ariadini Howard (Nee Vasilakis)** ז"ל on December 23, 2014 at Shalom Village, Hamilton, Ontario in her 88th year.

Beloved mother of Elena, Marilyn and Nick and very much loved grandmother to Noah, Sarah and Jamie.

Nouly came to Canada in the early 1950's and began work in her chosen field – nursing. Trained in Greece as an RN, Nouly was also Mother, caregiver, seamstress and finally in a management position at McMaster University.

Nouly was well-read, appreciated the arts and was an excellent cook. Her early life, being a small child in occupied Corfu Greece, provided many hardships and challenges. Our mother loved us all without conditions.

Nouly's last few months were spent at Shalom Village in Hamilton. She was an early volunteer when Shalom opened and she loved the home and the wonderful people. We were so happy to know that this was the place she wanted to be and that her final days were peaceful and filled with warmth.

Gone but never forgotten, her family here and in Greece will mourn her loss for ever. Mom, we love you and miss you always.

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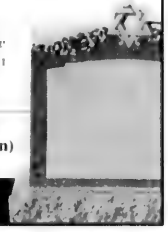

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The story of Israel's 67th year

The images that defined a tumultuous 12 months in the Jewish state.

Pages 8, 26, 27

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Vancouver	8:00 p.m.	9:13 p.m

6 27843 39403 7

Shaarei Shomayim gets a facelift

Basement flood in 2011 spurs $6.8-million renovation.

PAGE 12

Church vows to fight anti-Semitism

Anglicans re-issue 1989 document for Yom Hashoah.

PAGE 24

TORONTO THEATRE STARTS HERE
mirvish.com

Facebook apologizes for removing picture, and Gunter Grass dies

Photo flagged as 'insensitive'

Facebook apologized to Julius Ciss, the Canadian executive director of Jews for Judaism, last week for removing a photo of his daughter holding an Israeli flag at the entrance to Auschwitz after it was tagged as being insensitive. Miriam Ciss took the picture last month on a tour of Nazi death camps and sent it to her father, whose mother and aunt survived the death camp, but whose father's and mother's families were murdered by the Nazis. Julius Ciss posted it on his group's page and was told by Facebook it was removed because "it could offend or upset some people." After the posting went viral, reaching almost two million people, Facebook apologized, saying the photo was "mistakenly flagged by one of our reps."

Miriam Ciss at Auschwitz

German Nobel winner criticized Israel

Gunter Grass, the Nobel Prize-winning German author who admitted in 2006 he had served in the Nazis' Waffen-SS, died April 13 at age 87. Grass wrote more than 30 plays and novels, as well as poetry, essays and memoirs. He's best known for his debut novel, *The Tin Drum*, dealing with the rise of Nazism in Danzig, Poland. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1999. In 2012, Grass was declared *persona non grata* in Israel after publishing the poem *What Must Be Said*, which claimed Israel was endangering world peace by threatening Iran with a nuclear attack. In interviews about the poem, Grass repeated the claim and criticized Germany for supporting the Jewish state. In a 2006 interview about his new autobiography, Grass admitted he served in the Waffen-SS, a paramilitary force he was drafted into at 16.

If only they had guns?

A Polish far-right politician lobbying for easier access to firearms says the Holocaust wouldn't have happened if every Jew had a gun. Janusz Korwin-Mikke, the only lawmaker in parliament from his Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic-Freedom and Hope, was speaking in a TV interview on the eve of Yom Hashoah. "If every Jew had a gun before the war, there would be no Holocaust," said Korwin-Mikke, a candidate in Poland's May 11 presidential vote. ■

Gematria

40%

The percentage increase in violent anti-Semitic incidents worldwide in 2014 compared to 2013, according to a new report from the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University.

50%

The percentage of U.S. Jews who support U.S. President Barack Obama, a new poll found, down from 61 per cent in February

Quotable

There is a future for Jews in Europe.

— Rabbi Jair Melchior, chief rabbi of Denmark. See full interview on page 50.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz looks at the history of *Hatikvah* in Jewish & Digital.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Sephardi voices omitted

I was disappointed to see that *The CJN*'s image of the future of Canadian Jewry appears to include so few non-Ashkenazi names ("These 24 Jews are changing the world as we know it," April 2).

I commend the recent efforts made by the paper to be more forward thinking and inclusive. I also respect and admire many of the outstanding individuals on this list. But time and time again, our institutions fail to represent the whole community, and many of us have simply stopped paying attention to organizations and publications that do not reflect our vision for modern Judaism. I hope that you revise your process for future lists and highlight some of the great work happening in all corners of our community.

Jonathan Moyal
Montreal

Those infamous signs

In reference to the lack of hard evidence, such as photographs, of anti-Semitic signs, here are some memories on the matter ("No dogs, no Jews: No evidence," April 9).

Those of us in our 70s and 80s (or more) are not yet in our dotage. Many of us vividly remember those signs. "No Jews no dogs"; "Restricted clientele"; "Gentiles only".

Very few families had cameras, and if they were lucky enough to own one, it was used for happy occasions: visits with family and friends, the children, bar mitzvahs, weddings, etc. Who in their right mind would have wasted film on such unpleasant subjects as those signs, reminiscent of Europe, particularly during World War II? Revisionist interpretation is a dangerous sport.

Miriam Cohen
Montreal

Be wary of school funding

Cantor Eric Moses' impassioned plea for equality in government funding for faith-based schools in Ontario is refreshing and welcome ("Ontario should fund Jewish day schools," April 9). But we should be careful about what, exactly, we ask for.

taking government money could lead to government meddling in our schools' curricula.

Would funding embolden Queen's Park to demand we suppress traditional Jewish teachings about homosexuality because it doesn't fit with the secular law on same-sex marriage? Would it lead to demands we never speak of Palestinian Arab terror past or present, declaring it prejudicial to Ontarians of Palestinian Arab descent?

Perhaps what we should be asking for are permanent and major tax credits and rebates for parents, essentially full-tuition vouchers, that could only be used at faith-based schools, not secular private schools. These could be of equal financial help to parents, but not risk making our schools beholden to the secular political and social agendas of the provincial government, as the public schools currently are.

Steve Mitchell
Toronto

A touching remembrance

I read the article on Jews in jail ("Easily shunned: Canadian Jews behind bars," April 9) with interest.

Several years ago, I was a social worker at the Guelph Correctional Centre. The late Rabbi Philip Rosensweig, the rabbi from Kitchener and the father of Avrum Rosensweig of Ve'ahavta, used to visit the centre regularly.

We met because paycheques were distributed in a special room and he heard my last name "Katz" called out. We were friends from then on. Just a little remembrance of a wonderful man.

Gilda Katz
Toronto

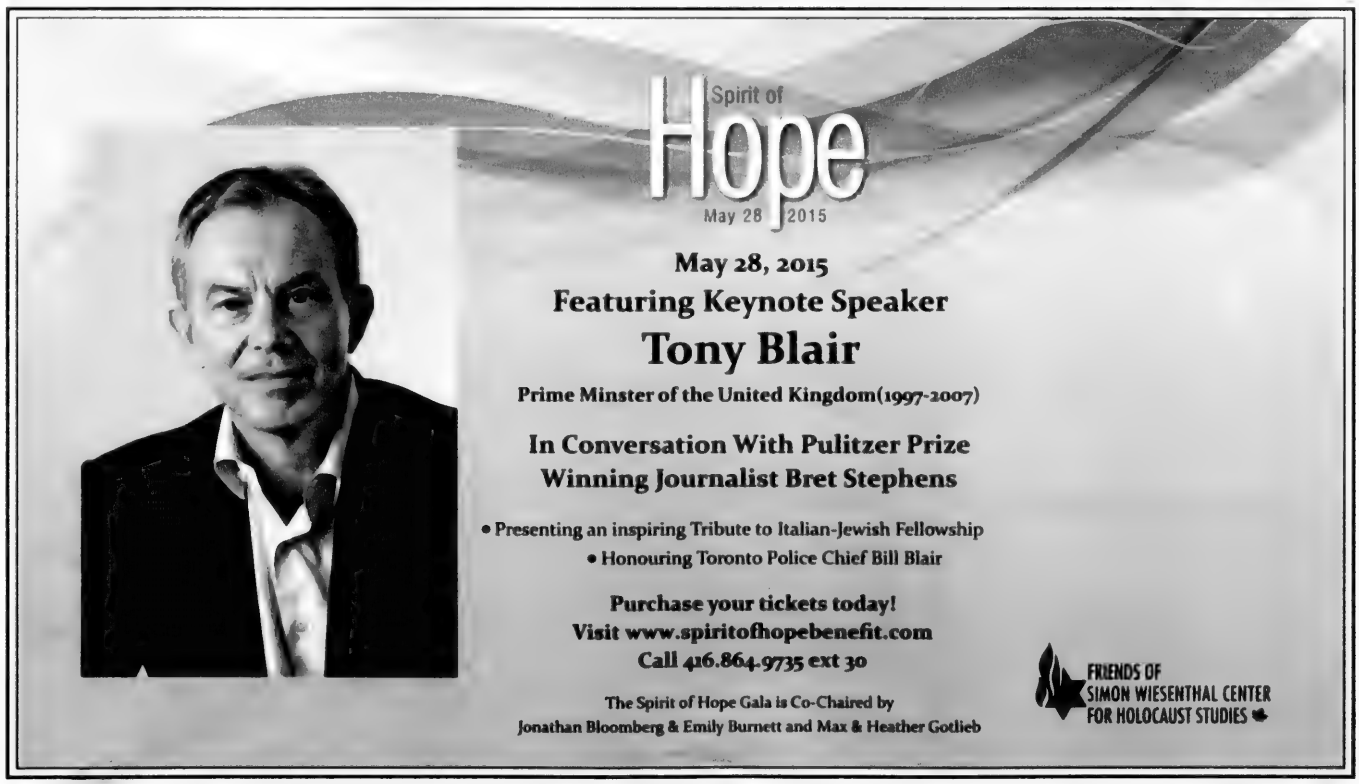
Memories of York U

I take strong objection to the statement "to the best of his knowledge, in his early years at York, [Martin] Lockshin was the only person to wear a kippah on campus," ("York prof to make aliyah this summer," April 9).

My late husband, Prof. Sol Tanenzapf, was brought to York University in 1968 to help start the department of Jewish studies. As an observant Jew, he always wore a kippah, be it on or off campus.

Elaine Tanenzapf
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*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RABBI-2-RABBI

Diaspora disconnect?

Are we becoming more attuned to the complexities of the Jewish state, or are liberal Jewish leaders contributing to increased antipathy by obsessively discussing its flaws?

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Korobkin: With this year's celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut comes a certain uneasiness and concern for Israel that hasn't been felt in years.

While Israel's economy and technological prowess are stronger than ever, and there is greater unity overall within the country, the external threats from a nuclear Iran and a bloodthirsty Arab element in the region are looming large. Meanwhile, Israel's most important ally, the United States, is pulling away and seems to be OK with letting Israel face its existential threats on its own. Finally, Diaspora Jewry is becoming more and more apathetic, if not downright antipathetic, to Israel.

Am I being melodramatic in my concern? Should I be reassured that "this, too, shall pass," just like so many other dire threats Israel has faced in the past? Or, is there something different about the current situation that should make us fear that Israel as we know it could soon disappear?

And is there anything for us to do?

Rabbi Grushcow: The model of the Talmud is one of discussion and debate. A true friend is one who challenges you – and also has your back. That's the relationship I wish for Israel with its allies.

In terms of the Diaspora, I think there are two major factors in the disconnect you describe. First, an increasing number of Jews (myself included) were born after the Holocaust and the founding of the state, some even after the wars of 1967 and 1973. For many of us, our Jewish values call for us both to stand up for Israel and to recognize the complexity of the situation – including the suffering of other human beings.

Second, many non-Orthodox Jews feel increasingly not at home in Israel. We see our conversions not being recognized or women not being able to pray at the Kotel. It can be very disconcerting to realize that the Jewish lives we live in the Diaspora are often treated as second class in Israel.

I really believe that the more we see Israel in all its complexity and diversity, the more we will love it and be engaged with it. I grew up learning about Israel as "a land without a people for a people without a land." When I got older and realized that there were other people there before, that made me question everything I had learned – and then re-engage. Similarly, the issues of religious freedom are very real, but I'm inspired by the work being done within Israel to create a just society.

Let's trust that Israel is beautiful and meaningful and important enough that if we share the whole story, our commitment will only be stronger.

Rabbi Korobkin: I appreciate your commitment to Israel despite your conflicts about some of its social policies. At the same time, I respectfully suggest that by repeatedly invoking these issues in public when referencing Israel – almost in Pavlovian fashion – liberal Jewish leaders have contributed to the increasing antipathy of which I speak.

I, too, have ambivalent feelings about some of Israel's social issues (albeit different issues). I raise these critiques in select audiences, and rarely. My overall love for Israel has thus never been directly associated with my criticisms of it. Perhaps in the past, we took it for granted that we could speak our minds about Israel without compromising our communities' support, but unfortunately, that is no longer the case.

By toning down the negative rhetoric about Israel's social ills – real or perceived – from our pulpits, we might help stem the tide of ill will that much of Diaspora Jewry is currently feeling toward Israel.

Rabbi Grushcow: I respectfully disagree. Any critique that my more liberal colleagues and I may share comes out of a deep love of, and commitment to, Israel.

My own experience has been that Jews aren't disaffected from Israel because of the things it gets wrong (as every country does). They are disaffected because they feel like their own communities have a strict party line on Israel, with no room for dissension or debate.

For people to care, they have to be part of the conversation. Israeli society is miraculous and beautiful, complicated and challenging. I can't wait to share it with my congregants, so we can join in the conversation together. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Balfour parade

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Pictured, from left, at the Toronto Zionist Balfour Declaration parade, in 1917, David Abramowitz, president of the Toronto Zionist Organization; secretary/treasurer Meyer Michalson; Esther Michalson (Cooper), representing "Britannia"; and an unidentified girl representing "Palestine" and "Canada."

SeeJN | Survivors honoured

DAVID AMOILS PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO

Premier Kathleen Wynne, fifth from left, poses with 10 Holocaust survivors after recognizing them for their contributions to Ontario and Canada at a Yom Hashoah Queen's Park tribute to Holocaust survivors. From left, are George Landesman, Manny Langer, Jan Blumenstein, Max Iland, Wynne, Health Minister Eric Hoskins, George Stern, Martin Kulbak, Israeli Consul General DJ Schneeweiss, Gitta Ganz, Dave Gold, Norman Srebrolow, national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem (CSYV) Fran Sonshine, MPP Monte Kwinter and CSYV executive director Yaron Ashkenazi. Lore Jacobs is in front.

From Yoni's Desk

What's so bad about the Kosher Switch?

A group of inventors claim to have developed a solution to one of the most pressing questions facing every Orthodox Jew: how can I turn the lights on and off during Shabbat without running afoul of the prohibition against using electricity on the day of rest?

The Kosher Switch, introduced to the Jewish world last week (see page 34) with a flurry of social media buzz, looks a lot like your run-of-the-mill light-dimming switch. But there's much more to it: inside the white plastic casing, the dimmer is not actually connected to an electrical current – instead, it acts as a sort of internal canvas onto which an electrical light pulses randomly.

Manipulating the dimmer is purely a mechanical act, the developers say, and since the Kosher Switch does not directly lead to any electrical modification, there is no reason it can't be used on Shabbat.

The Kosher Switch follows on the heels of the Shabbos App, a cell-phone-based program in development that claims to provide a halachically permissible way to send and receive text messages on Shabbat. Together, these two inventions have energized an important debate about the intersection of technology and religious observance.

It may very well be true that the Shabbos App and Kosher Switch do not transgress the letter of the law. The question is whether that's good enough, or if these devices nonetheless violate the spirit of the Shabbat rules. Even if it is technically okay to flip a switch or send a text, in other words, doing so may still infringe on the very idea of what Shabbat represents.

Orthodox authorities have been almost unanimous in opposition to the Kosher Switch, as they were to the Shabbos App before it. (On their website, the New York-based entrepreneurs behind the Kosher Switch include endorsements from several Jewish legal authorities, but some of the Orthodox rabbis involved have since claimed they were misquoted.) It's not hard to see why: for many Orthodox Jews, electrical abstention is a pillar of Shabbat observance, right up there with blessing the candles on Friday night and going to synagogue on Saturday morning. These new instruments represent a challenge to the classic Orthodox interpretation of Shabbat laws since the dawn of modern electrical science.

Technology and tradition will always be difficult to reconcile for many Jews. I include myself among them, especially when it comes to Shabbat. Still, I sure could have used a workaround to those pesky electricity laws these last few weeks.

We welcomed the latest addition to our family, a son, on the eve of Passover, literally minutes before the holiday and Shabbat arrived simultaneously. Despite all the preparation, in the hectic hours and days since then, I've found myself turning on lights, baby monitors, swings and other electrical devices on Shabbat and yom tov – anything to maintain some small degree of order, peace and quiet.

If I'd had a couple of Kosher Switches, maybe I could have at least avoided some more blatant breaking of laws – and if Shabbos App had been installed on my phone, perhaps I would have been able to share the happy news more immediately. What would have been so bad about that? ■ — YONI

FEATURE

Catching up with an African-American environmental activist

Gary Lytle is also an Orthodox Jew who was raised as a Christian Pentecostal

Robert Hirschfield

I have found Jewish stories by the banks of the River Ganges, near the Bagmati River in Kathmandu, but not until now, along the frozen Susquehanna, here in Harrisburg, Penn.

I am listening to Gary Lytle, a 30-something African-American in a black Sierra Club baseball cap in a hall inside the Hilton, addressing a crowd on climate change and the need for human change in response.

"You must reach out to people in your community who are different from yourselves. Potential allies whose lives you may not even be aware of."

Under his baseball cap was a black skullcap. "I am an Orthodox Jew," he told his listeners.

Lytle took me back to my yeshiva days in the Bronx, where the rabbis all wore skullcaps under their black fedoras.

Two head coverings for one head always seemed to strange to me. But in Lytle's case it struck me as symbolically correct. He was a Jew who was raised as a Christian Pentecostal, an environmentalist whose own psychological ecosystem was damaged as a soldier in the second Iraq War.

I decided I must meet him when my friend Alison Hirsch of Keystone Progress, Pennsylvania's largest online progressive action network, told me how they had to negotiate with Lytle to have him come from Philadelphia to Harrisburg before the Sabbath, and to arrange to have him speak at the Progressive Summit after the Sabbath. I was intrigued by how a new Jew shoulders the old burden of getting a place in line with the sanctity of time.

Gary Lytle speaks about climate change at the Progressive Summit in Pennsylvania.

His talk was on bringing environmental awareness to African-Americans and veterans, two groups previously neglected by the Sierra Club.

"A colleague at the Sierra Club used to complain, 'We always go to the same people, to the same places. You are never going to get anything different, if you never do anything different.' When we went to African-Americans and used words like smog and dirty air, it didn't connect. But when we related dirty air and smog to asthma, it became very personal because so many African- Americans suffer from asthma. When we went to the veteran's centre in Philadelphia, they thought we were a bunch of hippies in Birkenstocks. The first time, we brought in live music. We conducted classes for a year, dialoguing with the veterans about climate change, fracking, every environmental issue you could think of. After six months, 50 veterans were actively engaged in the class."

With him were three Vietnam veterans from the class, to whom he related with a mix of jocularity and deep humility. A wise younger son who learned first from suffering, then from others who suffered.

When we sat down and spoke after the talk, in the half-light of the emptying hall, I asked Lytle about his path to Judaism. He emphasized he wasn't looking for Judaism when he found it.

"I was suffering badly with PTSD. I didn't know what God wanted from me, or even if he cared. I thought maybe he had walked away."

His choice of words surprised me. They seemed to belong to someone of a different generation, a post-World War II veteran perhaps, when a spiritual crisis was more likely to express itself "by the book." Or maybe in his case, the son of Pentecostals, not so surprising.

If nothing else, the key by which he entered the Jewish world was surprising for a man of his generation.

"I picked up Herman Wouk's *This Is My God*, and it lit a spark in my mind. But I only actively pursued Judaism three years ago. I was fortunate enough to have had an introduction to Judaism from a good Reconstructionist rabbi in Philadelphia. She said, 'OK, there is Reformed and there is Orthodox, and there is Conservative and there is Reconstructionist, and she explained each one. When she finished, I said, 'You know, rabbi, I think I am Orthodox.'"

He shook his head with amused wonder. It was not possible, he said, to explain the conversion process to one who hadn't undergone it. It was not even possible to explain it to oneself. The force that drove it had its own mysterious logic different from the logic that drove a war veteran to seek good alternatives to bad air.

"Judaism is what saved my life. It connected me to a kind and giving people, and to a system where family and relationships were of primary importance. I would not think of letting a Shabbes go by without sitting at a table with others. I came to Judaism with all my fears and anxieties about people still there, but I let myself be embraced whether I liked it or not."

In Jerusalem, I find the city reminds me of all the places it took for people to get there. Lytle, congregant of Mkor Habracha Orthodox Synagogue in Philadelphia, is a man who carries within him many places, dark and light, and being sensitive to all of them, unites all of them. ■

Robert Hirschfield is a New York-based writer.

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Israel's year in pictures

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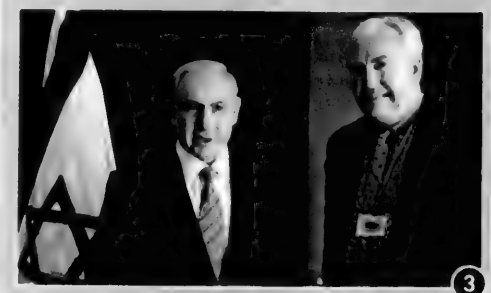

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1. Howie Rothman, a Canadian-Israeli citizen remains in a coma after sustaining injuries in the terror attack on a Jerusalem shul on Nov. 18.
2. Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaar and Naftali Frenkel were abducted June 12 while hitchhiking in the West Bank. Their bodies were found on June 30.
3. Ken Vickers, right (pictured with Benjamin Netanyahu), the Canadian Parliament's sergeant-at-arms who shot a gunman inside the Parliament building in October, was honoured by Israel's Knesset on Nov. 12.
4. Vivian Bercovici, Canada's ambassador to Israel, presents her credentials to Israeli President Shimon Peres in Jerusalem in June.
5. Tel Aviv's Gan Hahashmal scored second place on Thrillist's "Top 10 sexiest neighbourhoods on Earth," in October.
6. On Aug. 20, a group of 19 Manitobans set off on a five-day visit to Israel.

COVER PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Late on March 17, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed victory and promised to form a new government without delay.

On July 8, Israel launched Operation Protective Edge, a seven-week military operation against Hamas-ruled Gaza to stop rocket fire against Israel.

On Nov. 18, two Palestinians entered a synagogue in Jerusalem and attacked worshippers with a gun and butcher knives killing five.

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGES 26 AND 27

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Yom Hazikaron: there will be no baptism

Avrum Rosensweig

Yoram's leg stuck out of the bunker – enough so that his commander barked at him to tuck it in. His instruction was a mild inconvenience but could save Yoram's leg.

Yoram's *plugah* (unit) had bunkered down in Khan Yunis preparing for a major Israel Defence Forces attack on a street known for hiding Hamas leadership.

The private's iPhone chirped out a bird call, perhaps a raven, notifying him of a text message from his friend in Toronto, Noah. It was against army policy to have a cellphone in Gaza, but Yoram had turned on the appropriate security. He shouldn't be tracked by terrorists. "Besides," Yoram laughed quietly but with attitude, "the chutzpah of the IDF."

"Where are you now?" Noah texted.

"I'm in Gaza," Yoram responded.

"Where are you?"

"I'm in sociology class in Convocation Hall," Noah answered. "I'm sitting next to a beautiful woman. She doesn't look Jewish."

An explosion went off nearby. Grey and brown calcareous sandstone bounced off of Yoram's helmet. Hamas operatives knew the Israelis were there. He wiped his eyes. No casualties. Thank God.

"Go ask her if she's Jewish," Yoram texted Noah. "I'll wait. Nothing much happening here. Only a few bullets – lol."

A minute went by. The 18-year-old Yerushalmi saw a Katyusha rocket flying overhead without majesty.

Yoram texted his friend, Moishe, the keeper of the Iron Dome nearby. "Moishe did you knock this one out?" he asked.

"Like a bat out a'hell," came the response.

"She's Jewish," Noah texted Yoram. "And she has an aunt in Sderot."

Bursts of machine-gun fire interrupted the boys' communication. Yoram scrambled to dig deeper into the rock-strewn terra. A bullet whizzed past his ear.

"Yoram. Are you there?" Noah e-yelled. "Yoram. I say she's Jewish. JEWISH."

"*Shamati* (I heard)," Yoram texted back. "That's good. You should date a Jewish girl, Noah. I couldn't attend a baptism for your son – lol."

The commander yelled for the troops to evacuate the area – fast! Yoram gathered his gear and looked around to see who needed help. At 18, he was the strongest in his troop. Yoram, the brother of six others, put his arm around the weakest fellow in the unit and led him down the hill to the street.

Noah was perturbed by the orphaned moments between him and his childhood friend when they were growing up in Toronto. The professor asked him to explain Goffman's theories about total institutions. Noah yammered something, enough to satisfy the lecturer.

"Yoram, are you there?" Noah texted, sensing the battle had begun.

Silence.

"YORAM ANSWER ME. There will be no baptism. Only a bar mitzvah," Noah typed in dread, feebly adding, "lol."

Again silence. The professor asked another question of Noah about Goffman, this time about interactive order. "*I don't know!*" Noah yelled out. "*We're under attack! Can't you see?*" the Canadian Jewish student screamed! Everyone stared.

Yoram was down. Blood ran out of his head. The weak boy was crying. A medic arrived. He wrapped Yoram's wounds. He pumped his chest. Another Katyusha flew overhead. The weak boy sobbed. Yoram's iPhone played the noise of a bird.

The weak boy grabbed the phone from Yoram's flak jacket pocket and read the text aloud to the downed soldier.

"There will be no baptism!" he screamed. "Yoram, only a bar mitzvah. Wake up Yoram! Wake up!"

Noah exited the grand college doors. Yoram was put on a stretcher.

The weak boy typed a note on Yoram's iPhone. "He won't wake up."

Noah fell to the cafeteria floor. He wept. ■

My fir kashes – *my four questions*

Bernie Farber

Reflecting on Passover just past, I've always been enthralled with the centrepiece of the Seder. As a child, I used to refer to it in Yiddish as the *Fir Kashes, The Four Questions*. And that got me thinking: since I officially left professional Jewish communal advocacy almost five years ago, four questions have consistently dogged me.

1. Why did you leave Jewish communal work?

As 2010 was drawing to a close, it became quite clear to me that a sea change was about to occur in Canadian Jewish advocacy. There was much talk about the financial resources being spent on advocacy and that a new, more streamlined approach would be necessary. As I kept my ear to the ground, the chatter centred more and more around the need to place a greater emphasis on Israel advocacy.

I certainly understood the need to advocate aggressively on behalf of Israel, but I felt strongly that the agency mandated to undertake this work, the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), was already doing a stellar job. I saw the evolution of thinking toward a new single entity that I believed was unnecessary. Nonetheless, that's exactly what happened. Canadian Jewish Congress and the CIC were gobbled up and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) was born.

It became clear to me that CIJA's emphasis would be exactly as its name implied: Israel advocacy. I have the deepest of respect for the professionals at CIJA who advocate on our behalf, even if in my opinion the weight of that advocacy is unbalanced. However, I have always believed that social justice, human rights, refugee support and helping the impoverished were core Jewish values. Losing the necessary balance between Israel advocacy and social justice troubled me greatly.

Concomitant to these developments, I was approached by the Ontario Liberal Party to consider running for political office. I had always harboured the idea of entering politics, and with the blessings of my board, I took a leave of absence to run in the provincial riding of Thornhill. It was a great learning experience, and while I did not reach the holy political grail, it did help shape the rest of my journey.

2. Why a Liberal?

I am proud of my Liberal roots. With their emphasis on compassion, human rights and a just society, they mirror for me what Jewish core values are all about. Following in the footsteps of folks such as Irwin Cotler, Herb Gray, Robert Kaplan, Monte Kwinter, Elinor Caplan and many more was a true honour.

3. What are you doing today?

During my time off, I met an incredible socially progressive philanthropist, Michael Dan. He was then chair of the Canadian Peres Centre for Peace, on whose board I sat. We began to talk about his work, which is basically helping First Nations reach economic independence.

I helped him with the provincial political process, connecting him to a number of ministers he needed to access. Next thing you know, he asked me to work with him. Today I assist Michael in his First Nations work and administer his Paloma Foundation, which provides learning opportunities for frontline staff at homeless youth shelters.

4. Why First Nations?

I have long tried to be a champion of the underdog. As a son of a Holocaust survivor, this was simply in my DNA. As I continued my work with Michael, I began to see a synergy between the tragic histories of our two peoples. We, too, were an aboriginal people faced with prejudice, bigotry and genocide. As a Canadian Jew, I believe we have much to share with and much to learn from our First Nations. We're two peoples that have for so long travelled different, yet in some ways parallel, roads.

There is much more to be said about this. I will do so in Part 2 of this column next month. ■

Israelis in the Diaspora

Rabbi Dow Marmur

Many years ago, I took a visiting Israeli academic to lunch in a Toronto club. There were few people present, and nothing about the place was very interesting, including the food.

I was about to apologize for taking my guest to such a dull venue when he exclaimed: "If only we had places like this in Israel!" He then said that being able to have lunch in a quiet club far away from the intensity of his daily life in Tel Aviv was idyllic. He craved it. This was one reason, he said, why he was happy to be in Canada.

I thought of this last month when I read a long report in the magazine section of the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* about Israelis who have come to live in St. John, N.B.

Not all of them seem to have done it for economic reasons. Several argued that it was the security and the serenity that made them move there.

At a time when Israel's prime minister and many other officials were urging Jews, particularly in Europe in view of the anti-Semitic attacks, to leave their countries and settle in Israel, some Israelis, many of them native, chose to give up reasonable jobs and uproot their families in order to find peace and quiet in this relatively remote part of the world. There are Israelis in other towns in Canada and in many places around the world.

Local Jews welcome them in the hope that they'll revive their at times dwindling communities. In some cases, longtime Jewish residents actively promote Israeli immigration. It works occasionally. Several recent arrivals have joined their congregations.

However, many more have come to assimilate and aren't likely to revive the community or to take steps to make sure that their children receive a Jewish or even a secular Hebrew education.

There was a time when being a *yored* – a person who "came down" from Israel in contrast to an *oleh* (a person who has "made" aliyah, "ascended" to Israel) was a stigma, particularly in the eyes of those who stayed behind. That's no longer the case. There are over six million Jews in Israel today, more are coming and the birth rate is high, particularly among the ultra-Orthodox. Those who leave – there are probably a million Israelis living abroad today – aren't going to wreck the country.

But most of them are likely to be lost to Judaism. Perhaps that's part of their motivation for leaving. Assimilation in Israel is virtually impossible; it won't be much of a problem in St. John or in any other place in the Diaspora.

Mercifully, most Israelis still want to stay Jewish. Periodic "happiness surveys" indicate that the overwhelming majority of those who reside in the country – including Arab citizens – are satisfied with being where they are. There's therefore no reason to be alarmed that some want out. There's hardly a country in the world, including Canada, that doesn't have maladjusted citizens.

Nevertheless, the irony of it all shouldn't escape us. At a time when aliyah is still central to the Zionist ethos and anti-Semitism renders Jewish life precarious in the Diaspora, there are Israeli Jews who go out of their way to live abroad.

Let's hope that they'll be happy there, although I seem to recall that research suggests that the best-adjusted immigrants are those who were forced to leave their country. Those who did it by choice often agonize about whether or not they've made the right one.

The Israelis in St. John and elsewhere may have exchanged discomfort at home for Diaspora *Weltschmerz*. They may soon discover that, despite all the problems, being a Jew in Israel is much more comfortable than trying to escape being Jewish elsewhere. Perhaps that's why some children of Israelis abroad return to serve in the Israel Defence Forces. They seem to know that, in the long run, identity trumps security and comfort. ■

Weighing in on the niqab debate

Sheryl Saperia

The federal government's attempts to ban women from wearing the niqab while reciting the oath of citizenship have sparked national debate. I contend that Canada's multiculturalism policy does not preclude the government from taking this position.

Under existing law, a citizenship judge is instructed to "administer the oath of citizenship… [while] allowing the greatest possible freedom in the religious solemnization" of taking the oath."

This qualifying language reflects the fact that our rights and freedoms, rather than being absolute, often conflict. The judiciary is tasked with assessing the legality of infringing on one right to preserve another.

Proponents of wearing the niqab at a citizenship ceremony rely in part on the principle of religious freedom – an essential component of Canadian multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism refers to state-sanctioned respect for the cultural, religious and ethnic distinctiveness of each member of society, and the protection against discrimination stemming from such differences. But a policy of multiculturalism is itself a balancing act between promoting personal freedom and constraining choices in order to preserve national unity.

At its most innocuous, our multicultural mosaic means we can appreciate the food, music, and language of people from various backgrounds. At its most egregious, cultural values have been used to defend criminal acts in Canada that can never be condoned. Honour killings, terrorism and female genital mutilation top that list.

Religious and cultural garb falls somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. Canada has generally sought to accommodate the individual's desire to wear religious symbols, highlighted by the 1990 decision to permit Sikh RCMP officers to wear turbans while in uniform.

Wearing the niqab at a citizenship ceremony is more controversial.

Basic security requirements demand that the identity of the citizenship candidate be confirmed. Reasonable accommodation is achieved under the current arrangement that allows a citizenship clerk to see the person in private.

But the actual oath of citizenship is to be recited in public. Arguably, an implicit corollary of public oath-taking is obtaining visual assurance that prospective citizens are actually reciting the citizenship oath and doing so in a heartfelt manner. The niqab is an obstacle in this regard.

There are two additional factors that exacerbate anxiety about the niqab wearer. The first is that human beings rely on reading each other's faces to interact and ascertain threat. A recent UC Berkeley study found that human facial diversity evolved from our highly visual social dealings. Animals, in contrast, rely on smell or sound. In her history of the salute, the *National Post's* Jane MacDougall explains that the gesture originated from the act of displaying one's face and hand to demonstrate that one posed no harm. She concludes that "showing oneself to defray concern and offer assurance is genuine and ancient and widespread." The niqab conflicts with this basic human need.

The second compounding factor is that radical Islamists, who pose a significant security threat, force women under their control to don the niqab. Thus, the face covering, which already makes some uncomfortable on a primal level, is now perceived as a greater threat because it is associated with a movement that has embraced terrorist tactics.

Relatedly, many consider the niqab to be a tool of oppression against Muslim women, who are forced to dress "modestly" by hiding themselves entirely. No doubt there are some women in Canada who choose to wear the niqab. But there may also be citizenship candidates who are coerced by family or community members to cover up. How is a citizenship judge to know when wearing the niqab preserves a woman's religious freedom and when it entrenches a woman's inequality and subjugation?

There are no simple answers to these questions. Any multicultural society will ultimately face difficult choices between minority rights and social cohesion. Time will tell how this debate is resolved. But the government is not unreasonable to maintain that the niqab should be removed during a citizenship ceremony. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

News

$6.8-million renovation of Shaarei Shomayim completed

PAUL LUNGEN
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When life give you lemons, you make lemonade.

That's just what Shaarei Shomayim Congregation did when in September 2011 a pipe burst in the shul's lower level, causing extensive damage. Repairs had to be done, but the shul took the opportunity presented by a boatload of waterlogged lemons to not only repair the damage, but bring the 49-year-old shul into the 21st century.

The results are there for all to see as Shaarei Shomayim has shed its dowdy weather-beaten look for a fresh, sunlit visage.

On May 8 and 9, the synagogue will host a community celebration called "Reopen and Rejoice" to mark the building's re-dedication. The event comes as the culmination of the shul's "Retire, Rebuild, Renew" campaign, which raised more than $6 million for a three-stage renovation project.

With work almost completely done – on time and on budget – the life of the shul will be enhanced and the membership can continue to grow, said Rabbi Chaim Strauchler.

"Everything is new, and everything is the same," he said. "When you go inside, you feel there's a new energy. But there's a sense of continuity and tradition. A member from 50 years ago would know it's the same place."

"We didn't change the essence of the shul," said architect Clifford Korman, himself a member of the congregation. "We changed 100 little things that when you add them up, it created a great new facility."

The changes are apparent even before you enter the building. Facing the synagogue's main doors on Glencairn Avenue, visitors are greeted by an open space that serves as a patio, courtyard and meeting area. A curving ramp accommodates the infirm and the disabled, making it easier to enter the building. In fact the renovation was designed to make the facility accessible all the way from the sidewalk to the bimah, said Korman.

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler and architect Clifford Korman in the renovated beit midrash.
PAUL LUNGEN PHOTO

A copper-coloured cladding protects the shul's east-facing and most weather-beaten wall.

Inside, the redesigned foyer features lots of natural light, as well as new chandeliers. The space, about 600 square feet, doubles as a grand entrance and can also be used for social occasions, such as kiddushes and parties or as overflow space from the adjacent social hall.

Changes were made to the staircase as well as to the entry to and from the social hall and sanctuary, to dampen sounds and to make traffic flow more easily, said Korman.

The sanctuary itself has seen some major upgrades, Korman continued.

The carpet has been removed from the bimah and replaced with the same limestone that is featured in the Aron Kodesh. Twin ramps allow for people with disabilities to more easily mount the bimah and take part in services.

When needed, a temporary Aron can be placed on the stairs leading up to the permanent Ark to permit people in wheelchairs to be honoured with opening the Ark during services, said Rabbi Strauchler. It's all part of the shul's plan to make it more inclusive and welcoming, he added.

The old seats in the sanctuary have all been replaced with "theatre seats," each with their own armrests, and reduced in number from 750 to 650.

There is new carpeting and the sound technology has been enhanced to permit people throughout the room to better hear what is being said on the bimah.

Visitors will see major changes downstairs, on the lower level, Korman said. The beit midrash has been moved to a larger room that features natural sunlight, making it a more inviting space. The room is lined with new wooden bookshelves and new carpeting, but it retains the old brass doors to the Aron Kodesh, whose provenance can be traced back to the shul's previous location on St. Clair Avenue West near Oakwood Avenue. The beit midrash remains the heart of the synagogue, where services are held daily, as well as formal study sessions and a room where members can come, pick up a book and study on their own, Rabbi Strauchler said.

There are also renovated meeting rooms downstairs, more rooms for Netivot HaTorah Day School, whose south campus is housed in the synagogue, as well as a new roof, new heating and electrical system, and other modern upgrades. The shul changed caterers as well.

The three-phase renovation project began in 2011 after the pipe burst. The first phase was meant to repair the damage, but after that it was a case of, in for a penny, in for a pound.

As the first phase of the project was completed, aided by an insurance payout that funded 30 to 40 per cent of the cost, the congregation decided to continue to make upgrades and to renew the facility to better meet the needs of the members, said Rabbi Strauchler.

Of the synagogue's 650 member families, about half contributed toward the renovations. Four Seasons Hotels founder Isadore (Issy) Sharp was the single largest contributor, putting $1 million into the effort. The Jack Weinbaum Family Foundation contributed $500,000 towards the beit midrash, while other members contributed an average of $10,000 each.

That's a testament to the value the congregation holds in its synagogue, Rabbi Strauchler said. ■

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Retiring professor fostered Jewish identity at Guelph

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Michael Grand, who is retiring from his impressive 40-year career as a University of Guelph psychology professor, is being honoured next month for his dedication to fostering a positive Jewish atmosphere on campus.

Speaking to *The CJN* in advance of the May 12 event at Beth Emeth Synagogue, which will also raise funds for a Jewish student engagement fund in his honour, Grand said that when he began teaching at the university in 1974, he joined a small group of Jewish faculty and students who would take part in weekly bagel lunches.

He soon took an active role in recruiting Jewish students to come to the meals and other events organized by Guelph Hillel, then known as the Jewish Student Organization.

From 1976 until last year, Grand served as the organization's faculty adviser. He was also a member of the school's multi-faith resource team, from 1990 to 2014, and helped develop the university's religious accommodation policy.

"I spent some time trying to make the university campus a more welcoming campus for Jewish students and for all students who come with diverse backgrounds… I'm very proud of that fact," Grand said.

He said Guelph has developed into "one of the most welcoming of campuses in Canada," for Jewish students, adding that the Jewish student population has grown from two students in the mid-1970s to about 1,000 today.

Grand recalled a time when Jewish groups wanted to pull funding from the bagel lunches, but he and his peers lobbied to save them.

"We argued that the bagel lunch was a vehicle to bring Jewish students together… If we were worried about the future of the Jewish People, we had to put Jews together… A lot of kids made lasting friendships and I've attended many, many weddings of students from Hillel that began at either a bagel lunch or a Shabbaton," he said.

Hillel Ontario's executive director Donald Sylvan said that "Prof. Grand has been an influential presence in the Canadian Jewish community, including being a member of the Hillel Canada board for many years. Canadian Jewry owes a debt of gratitude to Michael Grand for his leadership and dedication."

Grand said fostering a Jewish community atmosphere on campus never felt like a job.

"It just felt like the natural thing to do. I'm a proud Jew. I have never hidden the fact that I am Jewish… and being with students was part of that for me. The kids made me feel young, and I love their excitement, and I love their interest and I love their commitment, and all of these things have enriched me," he said.

Michael Grand

"So I feel kind of strange actually being honoured, because I feel in many ways that it was they who have given me so much."

Torontonian Suzy Rosenstein, an organizer of the event who was a student at Guelph in the 1980s, recalled the impact Grand had on her.

"I'm from Philadelphia, so as soon as I got to Guelph, I got involved with the Hillel and met Michael immediately. He took me in, because I didn't have family in Guelph. He took me in as a friend. He invited me to Passover seders, and he was just a wonderful friend, and he even ended up reading our ketubah for us at my wedding," she said.

"He was very warm and accepting and not judgmental at all about whatever level of Judaism you practised. He was very inclusive and his emphasis was on connection and really building a family, like a home away from home… I honestly don't know what Jewish life in Guelph would have been like without him."

She said the upcoming event is a chance for former students and colleagues to "hear some great stories and some warm speeches and have a chance to talk to Michael again."

Rosenstein is asking former students, friends and colleagues to contribute to an online memory book at www.celebrateahero.com.

Grand said that although he's officially retiring, he's "not planning to disappear from the Guelph scene," and plans to continue volunteering for Hillel Ontario. ■

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Einstein Legacy Awards mark Hebrew U anniversary

SHERI SHEFA
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When the Hebrew University of Jerusalem opened its doors 90 years ago – 23 years before the State of Israel was established – it set the foundation for a culture in Israel that prides itself on academic excellence and succeeding against all odds.

On May 12, the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (CFHU) will celebrate the university's 90th anniversary, as well as the centennial of the Theory of Relativity, posited by Albert Einstein, one of the institution's founders.

At the Einstein Legacy Awards, to be held at Toronto's Liberty Grand with former U.S. first daughter Chelsea Clinton as the keynote speaker, a number of families will be honoured for their commitment to social responsibility and education.

"Albert Einstein was a leader and an inspirational figure and an outstanding, remarkable scientist. He influenced the world, and his spirit and unique approach to science was adopted also by the Hebrew University. Therefore, we chose to honour all the leadership," said Rami Kleinmann, president and CEO of CFHU, an organization that is also celebrating a 70-year milestone as a Canadian fundraising arm of the university.

Albert Einstein co-founded Hebrew U.

"We're celebrating three parts. We're celebrating leadership, we're celebrating inspiration and we're celebrating science."

Kleinmann explained that Einstein, who founded the university in 1918 along with Sigmund Freud, Chaim Weizmann and others, was also the first fundraiser for Hebrew U.

"He and Chaim Weizmann held the first fundraiser in [1920]... to fundraise for the establishment of the Hebrew University. They ended up raising an astonishing amount, $2 million," Kleinmann said, adding that today, that would be the equivalent of about $25 million.

"As [former Israeli president] Shimon Peres said a couple years ago, the Hebrew University was a rare situation where a daughter gave birth to a mother because Hebrew University was established well before the state of Israel was established," he said.

"This is the only rare example where, before you even have a state, you have a university, but I think this was also part of [Einstein's] very deep understanding that in order to have the right tools to build a future state [you must] understand that the foundation is in education, and science..."

Kleinmann said that Hebrew U served as the foundation to science and academia in Israel.

"Until today, we like to talk about it as an excellent university. Israel today, in every single aspect, is thanks to the approach of putting education and striving towards excellence into the DNA of the country," he said.

"You need to create a quality of scientists, and you need to create a culture and you need to create an inspirational climate of creativity in order to be able to achieve all these goals in the area of entrepreneurship, in the area of the 'start-up nation' and in the area of coming up with a very unique and creative way to defend yourself.

"All of this together is definitely a culture that has been initiated by the Hebrew University and spilled over into many other institutions in Israel. But this is one of the major contributions that Hebrew University created and the impact that it created in Israel."

Hebrew U president Menahem Ben-Sasson, who will attend the event in Toronto next month, wrote in a letter posted to the CFHU website, that looking back over the past 90 years, the university has succeeded even beyond the expectations and dreams of its forefathers.

"Thanks to the vision of Hebrew University's founders and the determination of their successors, we have succeeded in making rigorous scientific investigation an integral part of common parlance in Israel," Ben-Sasson wrote.

"Today, too, we remain loyal to the basic principles of the founding vision: rigorous scientific inquiry along with service to society through research. In addition, we must serve as an exemplar of a multi-cultural, pluralistic, socially aware community characterized by mutual respect and co-operation." ■

מרכז ישראלי לכלבי נחיה לעיוורים
Canadian Friends of the
Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind

Happy Yom Ha'atzmaut!

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For the next eight years, Lottie will be the constant companion of Eitan, a resident of Bat Yam who lost most of his sight over 20 years ago due to a degenerative disease.

At first Eitan tried using a white mobility cane to get around. He didn't think he'd ever get back the old life he loved.

That is until he found the Israel Guide Dog Center – a discovery that changed his life forever. Eitan's first guide dog gave him his independence and confidence back.

"All of my guide dogs have improved my life five times over compared to using a cane," explains Eitan. "I go out more with a dog, sometimes whether I want to or not!"

As we celebrate Israel's independence on Yom Ha'atzmaut, we invite you to give others like Eitan – many of whom are IDF veterans or victims of terror – their own gift of independence.

Eitan is back to doing the things he loves in life. He's even returned to his favorite hobby, SCUBA diving. In fact, Eitan holds the distinction of being Israel's first blind SCUBA diver!

We know what you're thinking. With all our innovations in guide dog training, we haven't started teaching our dogs to SCUBA dive! **But with your help, our dogs do give clients like Eitan the confidence to get on with their lives.**

"I'm much more confident walking with a guide dog," Eitan reports. "I've been saved by my guide dog numerous times, when I've almost been hit by a car."

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Continued →

Eitan knows first-hand how life changing a guide dog can be. So we asked him what he thought about being the recipient of our 500th dog.

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Will you please help us fulfill Eitan's wish to see 1000 dogs matched with other Israelis who want their own independence back?

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On behalf of all of our clients, our guide dogs, and everyone at the Israel Guide Dog Center, thank you! We wish you a happy Yom Ha'atzmaut!

With gratitude,

Sara Gabriel

Sara Gabriel
Executive Director

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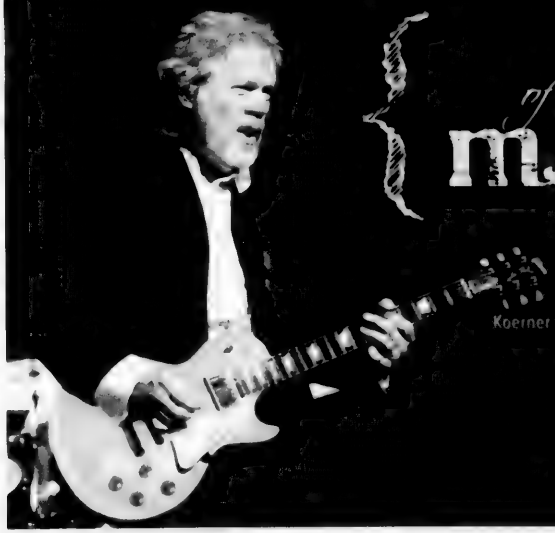

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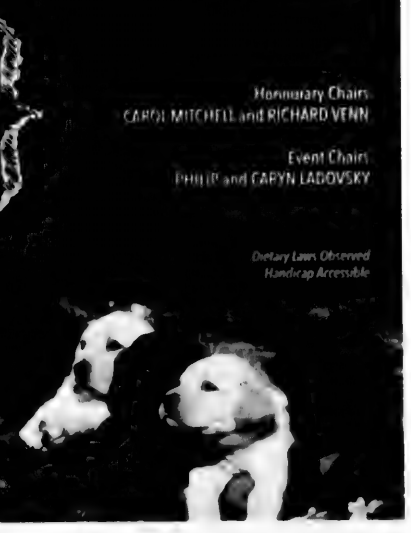

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 23, 2015

Orthodox community joins shinshinim program

SHERI SHEFA
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Netivot HaTorah Day School, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue and Bnei Akiva of Toronto will be the first Orthodox institutions in Toronto to participate in the Jewish Agency for Israel's (JAFI) shinshinim program.

Shinshinim, a Hebrew acronym that refers to a gap year of service, is a program developed by JAFI for North American cities and implemented in Toronto by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

The program brings Israeli high school graduates to the Diaspora to volunteer for a year in various Jewish communities, educating the community about Israel and Israeli culture.

"The shinshinim program is not a new program to Toronto. Up until now it has been servicing a variety of organizations and institutions, but none of them have been Orthodox," said Rabbi Elliott Diamond, Netivot's head of Jewish studies, and leader of a minyan at Shaarei Shomayim.

"I think at some point we said, you know, we would really like to be a part of this exciting opportunity as long as the people coming to our shuls and schools reflect our values."

Rabbi Diamond explained that in late January, a group of 55 Toronto-based Jewish professionals travelled to Israel to meet with 48 shinshinim candidates selected by UJA Federation and JAFI to participate in the year-long program.

"We met with these 48 candidates, and federation along with JAFI assigned each organization its candidates according to its needs. Netivot and Shaarei Shomayim and Bnei Akiva were represented by me and my wife. We interviewed nine candidates who fit the requirements and of those nine we picked a boy and a girl.

In August, Yoni Hadad, who is currently a student at a yeshiva in Ramat HaGolan for Israeli air force candidates, and Noa Voss, an 18-year-old student who majors in classical singing, will join Toronto's Jewish community.

Rabbi Diamond said he chose Hadad and Voss because they are "bright, personable, excited, passionate, involved in their country, want to come, want to learn, what to contribute, want to make connections, want to touch people, and want to bring the excitement of modern Israel to the Diaspora.

Yoni Hadad and Noa Voss

Another important requirement was that the shinshinim candidates offer their services in the context of a religious perspective.

"We wanted the kids who are coming to our schools and shuls to sort of represent the best of the religious Zionist perspective of modern Israel, and that's what they are going to do."

Voss, who has ambitions to work in Israel's education system and eventually open a school that offers alternative teaching methods, told *The CJN* that she is looking forward to teaching Canadian Jewish youth about Israel.

"I think the main thing I would like to bring to Toronto's young Orthodox community is the unique lifestyle in Israel that is hard to put into words – the Israeli warmth and mutual understanding we have between each other and a certain maturity and perception of life you have to gain from a young age," Voss said.

She said she hopes the program will benefit her as much as it will benefit the institutions she plans to serve.

"I take living [in Israel] for granted although it is something that for decades people were just dreaming about. I hope that being away for the year might bring me to a bigger appreciation and understanding of what we have here," she said.

"I see the shinshinim program as an opportunity to do an act of Zionism of what it means today, as well as giving back and thanking the community for its big support of Israel." ■

Law Society Yom Hashoah panel tackles anti-Semitism

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Anti-Semitism can't be sanitized or glossed over if it's to be eliminated.

That was one of the key messages at a panel discussion hosted by the Law Society of Upper Canada April 15, in partnership with the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Entitled "How do we Stop the Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism Today: Legislation vs. Education," the talk was held at Osgoode Hall in honour of Yom Hashoah and attended by about 150 people.

Moderated by Mark Sandler, a Law Society bencher and senior partner at Cooper, Sandler, Shime & Bergman LLP, the panel consisted of Judge Ed Morgan of the Superior Court of Justice and a former president of Canadian Jewish Congress; Evan Zelikovitz, chair of the March of the Living digital archives project and national chair of the management committee of the Canada Israel Experience; and Elly Gotz, a Lithuanian-born Holocaust survivor.

Morgan noted that education and legislation are not, as antidotes to anti-Semitism, mutually exclusive, before delving into a discussion on what he termed "importing anti-Semitism."

He explained that even within a typically open and culturally sensitive country like Canada, there are dangers of bringing in messages of racism of anti-Semitism from other places. For example, he cited a recent incident in which online ads with the headings "You don't have to be Jewish to buy this house" and "You don't have to be Jewish to rent this house" were posted under the name of a Brampton-based real estate agent, apparently by an employee at a third-party posting service located in the Philippines.

"Presumably the anti-Semitism was not coming from Brampton, but from overseas," Morgan said.

He further gave an example of U.S. President Barack Obama commenting, in an interview with Fox News, on the shooting rampage that took place in January in a kosher supermarket in Paris.

He noted that Obama referred to the victims of the attack as "folks," rather than Jews.

"This is a kind of sanitizing of anti-Semitism... where the world generalizes it as though it's a thing everyone shares," said Morgan.

More insidious than importing anti-Semitism is ignoring it, he added, stressing that, "naming and shaming it is the real way to stop it... The law on its own can't stop it. We have to educate ourselves on it and at the very least, call it by its name."

From left, Mark Sandler, Ed Morgan, Evan Zelikovitz, and Elly Gotz

Zelikovitz then spoke about the power of education to help quash anti-Semitism. On a recent March of the Living trip he attended, Zelikovitz said, he was struck by a survivor telling the group, "I'm not telling you these stories to sadden you, but to empower you."

Enabling younger generations of Jews to witness what happened during the Holocaust through trips such as March of the Living is a way to spread messages of hope and perseverance, not hate, he said.

Zelikovitz also spoke of the importance of Holocaust education for non-Jews, as exemplified by Conservative MP and Minister of State for Multiculturalism Tim Uppal, who is Sikh and has publicly championed a national Holocaust memorial to be built in Ottawa.

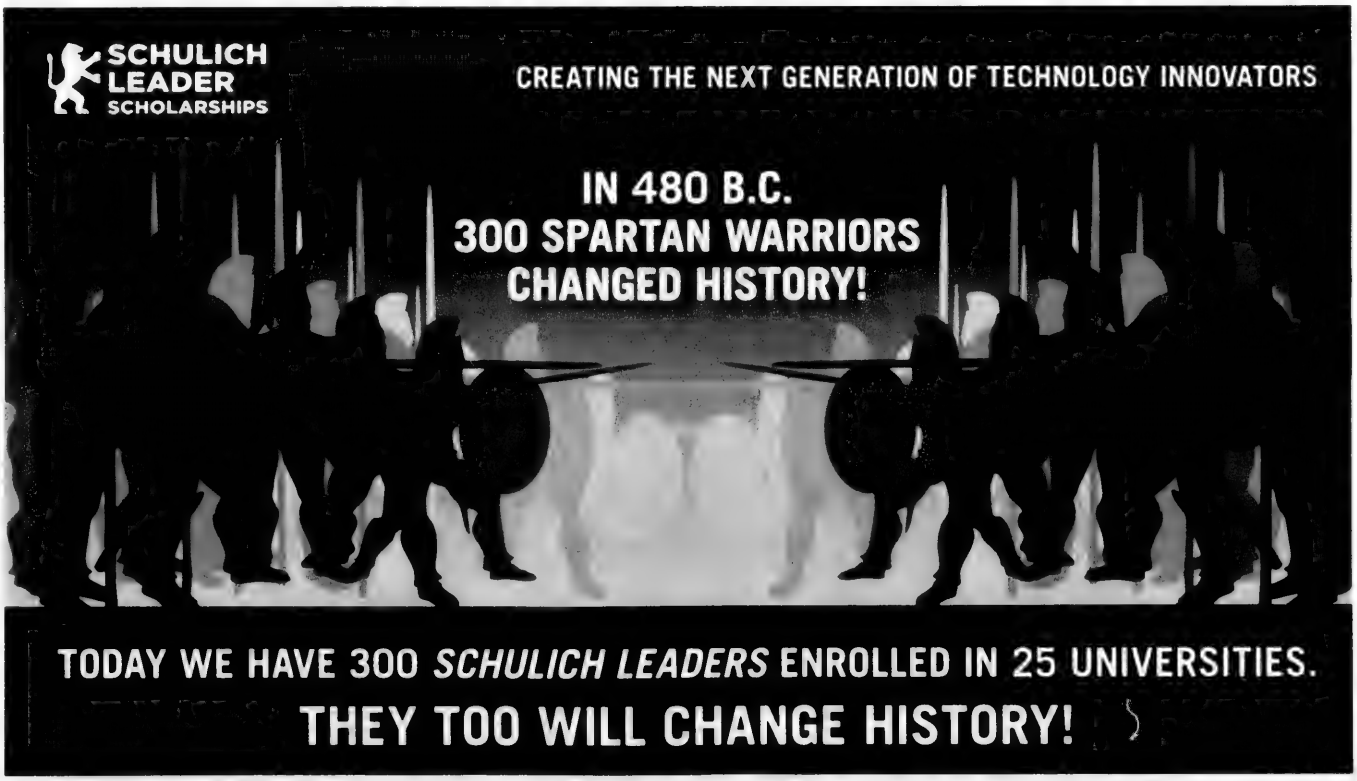
Uppal, Zelikovitz said, is married to a woman who more than a decade ago, applied to attend a March of the Living trip, despite not being Jewish. While she initially faced resistance from organizers, she was ultimately allowed to go and was praised for her inquisitiveness and sensitivity.

"This is education and legislation coming together," Zelikovitz said, suggesting that Uppal had been significantly influenced by his wife's experiences.

Gotz told the audience of being a young teenager in Lithuania when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union. After spending several years in a ghetto, he was taken to a satellite camp of Dachau, where he was put to work building an underground factory for jet fighter planes.

After being liberated by the Americans in 1945, Gotz lived first in Germany, then Norway, then Zimbabwe and South Africa and finally, Canada.

He has spoken to thousands of students at schools and universities about the Holocaust, spreading his message of the supreme importance of Holocaust education. ■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CIJA denounces Quebec union's BDS endorsement

JANICE ARNOLD
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Luciano Del Negro

Jean Lacharité

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has denounced a major Quebec labour federation's decision to join the international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel.

On April 14, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) announced that its central council had voted to join the campaign. The CSN represents 325,000 workers in both the public and private sectors, in close to 2,000 unions throughout the province.

Luciano Del Negro, CIJA's Quebec vice-president and a former CSN activist, commented that CSN leaders are imposing "a campaign of denigration of the Jewish state that the majority of its members probably don't support and of which even the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, disapproves."

CIJA characterizes BDS as "anti-Israel extremism" whose "ultimate objective...is not the resolution of the Israeli-Arab conflict but the dissolution of the only Jewish state into a new Arab state."

The CSN, which has supported the Palestinian cause for many years, is not new to BDS. Its Montreal council endorsed the campaign in 2010.

This latest move at the top level, the CSN says, is in solidarity with Palestinian unions which endorse the boycott as a means of pressuring Israel to "respect international law, end the military occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, respect the rights of Palestinian refugees and end racial discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel."

CSN vice-president Jean Lacharité said in a statement: "For decades, Israel has pursued in a shameful way and with violence a settlement policy of Palestinian territories and flouted international law with regard to the Palestinian people."

He said the BDS campaign in Canada must be especially vigorous to counter what the CSN views as the Harper government's "unconditional" support of Israeli "conservatives" and their "apartheid policies."

The CSN insists that BDS, launched 10 years ago by Palestinian groups, is a peaceful strategy, not anti-Semitic, and recognizes the right of Israel to exist within the pre-1967 borders. The boycott covers the economic, cultural and academic spheres, and the CSN is calling for its members and Quebecers not to buy goods from Israel or invest in Israeli companies or other "complicit" businesses or banks.

Del Negro said BDS is not in the interest of Quebec, which is benefiting from increasing bilateral relations with Israel, especially in scientific and technological innovation. He also insisted the CSN could be of more help if it used its considerable resources to bolster the economic development of the Palestinians.

Jewish Heritage Month

Centre for Israel & Jewish Affairs

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

ONTARIO JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH 2015

During the month of May, the province of Ontario proudly celebrates Jewish Heritage Month by acknowledging the achievements and contributions made by members of the Jewish community while honouring Ontario's vibrant Jewish culture and heritage. Celebrate by attending the various programs, exhibitions, and events being hosted by organizations around the GTA.

Complete listing of events: **ontariojewishheritagemonth.com**

Jewish Heritage Month Community Consortium Members:

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Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue
Beth Torah Congregation
Beth Tzedec Dennis Museum
Bialik Hebrew Day School
Canadian Friends of Herzog Hospital
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College of Technology
Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee
Canadian Museum for Human Rights
Canadian Zionist Federation
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Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation of Toronto
New Israel Fund of Canada
Sarah & Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre - UJA Federation
Ontario Jewish Archives Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre - UJA Federation
ORT Toronto
Prosserman JCC
Schwartz Reisman Centre
Shaarei Tefillah Congregation
State of Israel Bonds
Steeles Memorial Chapel
Temple Har Zion
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Toronto Board of Rabbis
Toronto Hebrew Benevolent Society
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto
Ve ahavta

Jewish community recalls Cardinal Turcotte's friendship

JANICE ARNOLD
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The late Roman Catholic Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte was described in condolences issued by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) as a friend of the Jewish community.

Cardinal Turcotte, whose funeral was held April 17, was Archbishop of Montreal from 1990 to 2012. He died on April 8 at the age of 78.

"The Jewish community is deeply saddened by the death of Cardinal Turcotte, who for 50 years served the Catholic Church with dignity and honour," Eric Maldoff, CIJA's Quebec chair, said in a statement.

"Cardinal Turcotte was a friend who understood and appreciated the many contributions of the Jewish community to Quebec society. He will be missed."

In 2012, Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte, left, applauds Victor Goldbloom after the presentation of a knighthood bestowed by Pope Benedict. JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Victor Goldbloom, a longstanding representative of the Jewish community in the group Christian-Jewish Dialogue of Montreal, commented: "Cardinal Turcotte leaves a rich ecumenical legacy to all Quebecers."

He recalled that in 1995, the archbishop celebrated at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of Nostra Aetate, the historic declaration of the Vatican revising its relationship with Judaism and other non-Christian religions to one of mutual respect.

On the 50th anniversary, he returned as guest speaker at Yom Kippur services.

In 1992, Cardinal Turcotte presided over a ground-breaking conference of Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders held at the Grand Séminaire de Montréal.

Three years ago, the recently retired archbishop bestowed a papal knighthood upon Goldbloom, a rare honour to a non-Catholic, in a ceremony held at the temple, in recognition of his pioneering interfaith work.

"I know few people who stand so firm in their religious conviction, while being so open to listening to those of others," Cardinal Turcotte said at the time. He had recommended to the Vatican this recognition of Goldbloom, a friend for more than 30 years.

Goldbloom and Myriam Azogui-Halbwax, CIJA's associate director of community and university relations, officially represented the Jewish community at the funeral, held at Mary Queen of the World Cathedral. ■

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Poland and Ukraine: New Insights into Jewish Civilization

Thursday, April 30 to Shabbat, May 2

THURSDAY, APRIL 30 AT 7:30 PM

Surprising Voices of Jewish Women in Early Modern Poland

Prof. Rosman examines how Jewish women in the early modern period participated in Jewish culture, public and private religious ritual, education and intellectual life.

FRIDAY, MAY 1 BEGINNING AT 6:30 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat Service, Lecture and Dinner

The 'Golden Age' of Polish and Ukrainian Jewry?

Following Kabbalat Shabbat service, join us for dinner and lecture with Prof. Moshe Rosman. Cost: $38 adults; $18 youth (ages 5-14); $6 children (ages 1-4). Dinner by advance reservation only by **Monday, April 27.**

SHABBAT, MAY 2–SERVICES AT 8:45 AM

The New History of *Hasidism*

Prof. Rosman gives a pulpit address followed by a question and answer session after the Kiddush.

Moshe Rosman is Professor of Jewish History at Bar Ilan University in Israel. His ground-breaking research has been honoured with two National Jewish Book Awards (America), the Zalman Shazar Prize (Israel), the Jerzy Milewski Award (Poland), and the Jordan Schnitzer Award of the Association for Jewish Studies.

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60 Years of Tradition-Building for the Future

Weizmann Canada celebrates women in science

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Some 300 people will gather next week to learn about success from a panel of accomplished women at Weizmann Canada's second annual Wonderful Women event.

The April 28 panel includes moderator Pattie Lovett-Reid, chief financial commentator, for CTV News; musician Jann Arden; Olympic gold-medal rower Marnie McBean; physicist Hagar Landsman of the Weizmann Institute of Science; and Beth Horowitz, former president and CEO of the Amex Bank of Canada.

"These women have all come from areas where, purely by brains, talent and motivation, they have worked themselves up to become foremost in their fields," said event chair Michele Atlin.

The presenters will share their success stories, obstacles they have overcome, and the factors that motivated them to become leaders in their fields.

"Impressionable young women can see what these women have achieved on our panel and that anything is possible. If you work hard and you are motivated and you are passionate about what you do, then you can overcome various challenges and reach this pinnacle of achievement," Atlin said.

The evening will begin with 6:30 p.m. cocktails and conclude with a dessert reception and book signing with Arden. All guests will receive a complimentary copy of her memoir *Falling Backwards*.

Philanthropist Marvelle Koffler founded the International Weizmann Women for Science in 1988.

"The idea originated in Israel and was then founded in Canada with a committee of women. This knowledge-based community has now engaged a younger generation of women that continues to learn from and promote the exceptional world-renowned scientific achievements of Weizmann. It's a true example of women empowering women, and ultimately science," said Marvelle's daughter, Tiana Koffler Boyman.

Weizmann Canada has chapters in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, and Calgary. Its mission is to raise awareness for the Weizmann Institute, develop sustainable philanthropic support for it, and encourage science literacy.

Marnie McBean CATHERINE FARQUHARSON PHOTO

The Wonderful Women event is aiming to raise more than $100,000. The proceeds will help fund two post-doctoral fellows under Weizmann's National Post-doctoral Program for Advancing Women in Science. It allows recipients to train at leading international institutions for two years, with the objective that they return to Israel for an academic career. The aim is to provide strong role models to motivate and encourage the next generation of young female scientists.

"These women [on the panel] have done it. Other women can do it. We want to celebrate all women," Atlin said.

Based in Rehovot, Israel, Weizmann is one of the world's leading multidisciplinary institutes of basic research. Its scientists have made a global impact in a variety of areas ranging from health and medicine to alternative energy and security and technology.

"Over the last five years, the Weizmann Institute has been responsible for major breakthroughs in diabetes, Crohn's and colitis, 83 different autoimmune diseases, and research linking inflammation to cancer. Weizmann is synonymous with excellence," Atlin said.

"I *shep naches* every day. There is always something exciting to talk about." ■

Tickets are $180 and can be purchased at www.weizmann.ca or by calling 416-733-9220.

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We thank all applicants who apply; however only those selected for further consideration will be contacted.

Anglican Church reissues document on anti-Semitism

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Archdeacon Bruce Myers.

To coincide with Yom Hashoah, the Anglican Church of Canada last week re-released a 1989 document stressing its opposition to anti-Semitism and acknowledging its historical complicity in Jewish persecution.

From Darkness to Dawn: Rethinking Attitudes Towards Jews and Judaism in the Light of the Holocaust, which can be found on the church's website, is a 64-page study guide produced by the now defunct subcommittee on Jewish-Anglican relations of the church's national executive council, the predecessor to the church's current governing body, the Council of General Synod.

The document's re-release – which Archdeacon Bruce Myers, the church's co-ordinator of ecumenical and interfaith relations, stressed could be of value not just to Anglicans, but all Christians – was prompted by a Anglican General Synod resolution passed in 2013 committing the church to "strengthen relationships with Jews and Muslims [and] resolutely oppose anti-Semitism, anti-Arab sentiments and Islamophobia."

Initially written in response to the church's 1983 resolution to "deplore recent expressions of anti-Semitism in Canada," the 1989 document was intended as a resource to help parishioners, congregations and study groups better understand Judaism, as well as Christianity's roots in Judaism and how Christianity has misunderstood Judaism in ways that contributed to the marginalization or persecution of Jews in the past.

Len Rudner, director of community relations and outreach for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said the document has "aged remarkably well" and is "an honest attempt to consider the terrible roots of anti-Semitism and the fruits it bore in the middle 20th century."

Archdeacon Myers said he discovered the original document while researching Anglican-Jewish relations, and having been unaware of its existence, thought, "perhaps this document hadn't been received by the church and its members in the way that had been intended."

Save for a new preface he wrote, the document has been left unchanged, because, he said, "though the case studies cited in [it] seem a bit dated, the wider themes and questions the document raises are just as timely as ever."

The Anglican Church has, he said, been looking to strengthen relations with Jews, particularly since the 2012 suspension of the Canadian Christian-Jewish Consultation (CJCC), a roundtable comprising representatives from Canadian Jewish Congress (CIJA's predecessor) and an assortment of national church bodies, including the Anglican Church.

CIJA stepped away from the table after the General Council of the United Church of Canada boycotted goods produced by Israeli companies in the West Bank.

"The decision made by the General Council of the United Church remains, and we remain away from the table," Rudner said. "To restore our relationship with the General Council of the United Church, they'd have to rescind their position [on boycotts]."

He said CIJA continues to work with individual United Church congregations and that its issue is with the General Council.

In a statement, Gail Allen, the United Church's co-ordinator of interchurch and interfaith relations, didn't address the boycott issue, but said her church "would certainly want to affirm [the Anglican church's] decision to engage in the kind of study they're talking about. She added that the United Church "encourage[s] our members to seek opportunities to meet with Jews, learn about Judaism… and be aware of, and vigilant about, resisting anti-Semitism."

Despite progress in terms of Christians better understanding of Christianity's origin in Judaism, Archdeacon Myers said, anti-Semitism remains, even in places as seemingly tolerant as Canada.

"Whether just in casual conversation or more public demonstrations of intolerance against Jews, such as the desecration of cemeteries… [and] a detectable spike in public acts of anti-Semitism in different parts of Canada last summer… We need to be constantly vigilant and not be lulled into a false sense of 'anti-Semitism is an issue of the past,'" Archdeacon Myers said.

From Darkness to Dawn references Canadian Holocaust deniers James Keegstra and Ernst Zundel, who were prominent when it was written:. "We did discuss internally whether we should come up with more recent examples of anti-Semitism or tweak some of the text. But mainly we chose to re-release it [without changes] to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that went into it," he added. ■

Sudbury Wolves choose Israeli first overall in 2015 OHL draft

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

David Levin

David Levin has lived in the Greater Toronto Area for three years now, and in that time he's been immersed pretty deeply in Canadian hockey culture. Not only is he a skilled player on the ice, the Israeli-born Levin has adopted the code of a typical Canadian player: work hard, never give up and say nice things about the place where you play.

A star forward with the Don Mills Flyers AAA Minor Midget team, he was recently picked first overall by the Sudbury Wolves in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) draft.

Levin joins a list of hockey's who's who as first overall picks, including Connor McDavid (touted to go first in the NHL Entry Draft this year), Aaron Ekblad (Florida Panthers) and Alexander Galchenyuk (Montreal Canadiens).

Not bad for a kid from Netanya who cut his teeth playing the inline (rollerblade) version of the sport. A perennial MVP in international tournaments, he moved to Canada to develop his skills and reach his ultimate goal – playing in the NHL.

Naturally, Levin is pleased with his first-overall selection. "It's amazing," he said, not long after a visit to Sudbury. "It's really exciting for me. I came from Israel where there's no ice and I'm drafted first... I hope I make the fans there happy."

Levin, who stand 5-10 and weighs 160 pounds, is likely to play the next three or four years in Sudbury. His NHL draft year is not until 2018.

His team is naturally ecstatic at landing such a slick and creative forward.

"David is an outstanding hockey player and is the dynamic forward that the Sudbury Wolves need to build a winning team around," said team president and general manager Blaine Smith. "David's skills and offensive talent will be appreciated by his coaches, his teammates and hockey fans here in Sudbury."

Head scout Andrew Shaw said Levin has improved "by leaps and bounds in each of his three short years playing hockey" in Canada. "If David's development continues to improve at the same rate, his potential as an OHL player is off the charts. David was obviously born with a special gift and he has simply developed into an incredible hockey player."

Wolves' coach Dave Matsos said Levin combines great character, raw natural talent and a high "compete level."

Levin is a humble guy who probably doesn't fully appreciate the significance of being chosen first overall, Matsos said.

He is well respected by his contemporaries. In advance of the draft, Matsos contacted other highly ranked players and asked who, other than themselves, they'd like to be drafted with. Ninety per cent said Levin. "They said he's skilled, he's unpredictable. He's so creative, you can't anticipate [what he's going to do next.]"

Heady praise indeed, and while Levin is something of a magician with the puck, not all his abilities are God-given. It takes long hours of practice to become a natural. He practised with the Flyers twice a week. And he's in the gym working out pretty much every day.

He attends the Hill Academy, a school for gifted athletes, and three times a week at 6 a.m., he's on the ice at the school, practising his moves. His pro heroes are Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and Pavel Datsyuk, and he tries to copy what they do on the ice, he said.

"I work on my moves and I try new passes so no one knows where they come from," he said. "Now, when I go on the ice, I try to make my own moves."

All that hard work paid off with a remarkable season. He led the Flyers in scoring with 80 points in 55 games, including 39 goals.

Levin was born and raised in Israel. His father is from Latvia and was the man behind Israel's inline hockey league. Levin took to the sport readily and excelled at all levels. He barely played any ice hockey, given the country's only full-sized rink is in Metulla, a four- or five- hour drive from Netanya.

At 12, Levin moved to Canada to pursue his hockey dreams. He lives with his aunt and uncle. He still calls home three times a day and he'll be heading back to Israel this summer for a five-week visit.

After a little time off, he'll be back in the gym to get ready for the upcoming season. He figures he can also do some on-ice training in the mini rink in Holon.

Then it's back to Sudbury for a new chapter in his hockey life.

Though Israeli, he hopes to make Team Canada's Under-17 team and play for his adopted homeland. Who's to say he won't make it. His credo remains: "Always work hard, never give up. Always go for it." ■

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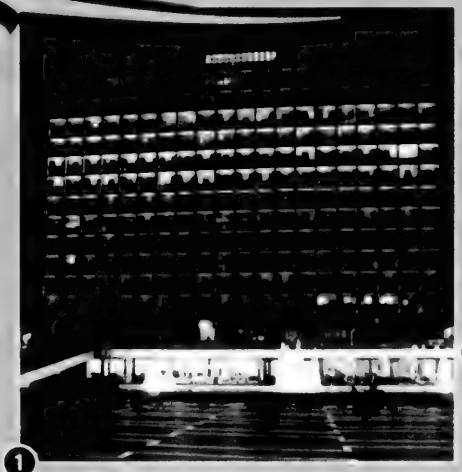
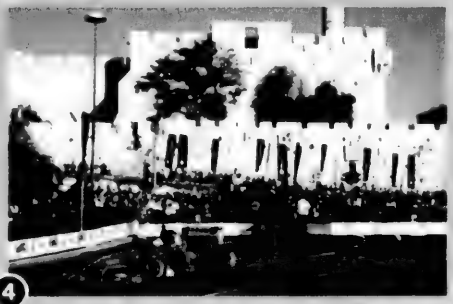
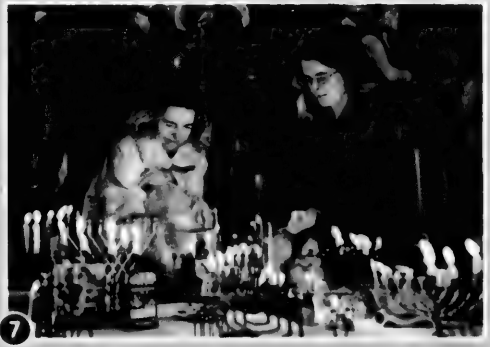
Israel's year in pictures

1. Thousands of anti-Netanyahu protesters gathered in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square on March 7.
2. A woman walks through snow in Majdal Shams, in the Golan Heights in northern Israel on Feb. 12.
3. Israel's President Reuven Rivlin, left, with Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird during Baird's visit to Israel in January.
4. Protesters demonstrate against the wedding of Mahmoud Mansour and his bride Morel Malka,a Jewish convert to Islam,on Aug. 17.
5. Guards stand watch outside the Temple Mount after protests erupted in October.
6. All over the country, Israelis mourned teenagers Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaar and Naftali Frenkel, whose bodies were found on June 30.
7. Benjamin Netanyahu visits the Israeli soccer team dressing room after Israel beat 10-man Bosnia-Herzegovina 3-0 Nov. 16
8. Four-year-old Daniel Tregerman was killed by shrapnel from a mortar outside his home near the border with Gaza in August.

Israel's year in pictures







1. A massive, illuminated gay pride flag with 480 LED light bulbs adorned Tel Aviv City Hall in celebration of Gay Pride Week in June.
2. Counsellors at Camp Ramah in Utterson, Ont., contributed $2 each, to order pizzas for an IDF unit stationed on the Gaza border during Operation Protective Edge.
3. Isaac Herzog and Tzipi Livni announced a unity deal ahead of the Israeli general election.
4. A Ferrari Formula One racing car drives in the Old City of Jerusalem in October.
5. Federation CJA's Montreal Mega Mission in May featured 570 participants.
6. Delegates from Montreal's Federation CJA in Israel in July duck for cover during a safety drill.
7. Women of the Wall held a Chanukah candlelighting ceremony in the women's section on Dec. 18.
8. Members of the Likud party met with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in March to form a new government.
9. Street performers, musicians and artwork featured at a cultural event on Aza Street in Jerusalem on Dec. 30.
10. Young students help Pope Francis lay a wreath of flowers in the Hall of Remembrance at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial museum in Jerusalem on May 26.

COMMENT

The problem with the March of the Living

Jessica Lang
JTA

The evening before we visited Auschwitz, over pizza with a group of young people in Oswiecim, the town on whose outskirts lies that infamous symbol, one of my students approached me with tears in her eyes.

Tears are hardly uncommon to visitors of sites of mass death. But for this student – a participant in a week-long trip to Auschwitz undertaken as part of a course on Holocaust history and literature that I teach at Baruch College in New York City – the trip marked her first time on a plane, her first time in a foreign country, and her first time experiencing an academic setting that didn't involve a laptop and a classroom located at a busy Manhattan intersection.

Unable or unwilling to bridge these two worlds – a crossing of time and space that seven decades after the war's end enables a group of American students to casually dine with European counterparts at the edge of history's most notorious killing centre – she felt lost, detached from all that was familiar and unsure of what lay ahead.

Students on our trip were a diverse group, self-identifying as Latina, Jamaican, Polish, Israeli, Moroccan, Mexican and American, among others. By day, we toured sites essential to a historical understanding of the Holocaust. In the evening, we discussed readings connected to the places we had visited. Some students shared their own journals, which joined Primo Levi and Ruth Kluger as texts for analysis and reflection.

The great advantage of looking at the Holocaust in this way is that it eliminates the notion that this history belongs more to one person than another. This democratic take on the Holocaust makes the experience meaningful, even transformative, for everyone.

Typical Jewish teen tours hold themselves to a poorer standard. Confined to Jewish youth, the trips eliminate the diversity of voices essential to ensure that the imperative of remembrance is broadly observed. Aimed principally at Jewish identity building through the Holocaust, they offer a limited rendering of history, narrow in reach.

Trips like the March of the Living, which completed its 27th iteration earlier this month, fail the objective of Holocaust remembrance itself through sheer simplification, making the genocide of European Jewry a subject to be explored among friends, rather than the profound wrestling with history and its consequences that it could be. As a former participant in the march, I find its goals around Israel and Jewish identity laudable. But the very fact that it even has such goals makes it doctrinaire by nature rather than inquiring.

In a diverse intellectual environment like our trip, it is the questions, not the answers, that define the approach. And by sharing the richness of their own varied backgrounds and perspectives, my students discovered that the unavailability of easy answers to the questions posed by the Holocaust is important – essential even – to their learning.

It's not a comfortable place to be. Learning to live with ambivalence is a hard lesson for undergraduates, but an essential one. After we returned home, one student approached me about the final paper he was struggling to write. The sheer enormity of our trip was proving paralytic. He felt powerless trying to confine his thoughts and analysis in a tidy little paper – a reaction that in itself might be the most important lesson learned.

It may never be possible to fully imagine or understand this history, and doing so surely grows more elusive with time. But by actively studying, analyzing, visiting, speaking and thinking about the Holocaust, by refusing to make a trip to Auschwitz easy or comfortable by fully embracing the intellectual challenge it presents, may be the best way to best remember. ■

Jessica Lang is an associate professor of English at Baruch College at the City University of New York and the Newman director of the college's Wasserman Jewish Studies Center.

On behalf of the Ontario Liberal Caucus, best wishes to the community on the

Anniversary of Israel's Independence

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COMMENT

Why we must choose to remember

Sigmund Rolat

Remarks to March of the Living participants, April 16 at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

We have all gathered here to remember. From all sides, we are called upon not to forget. But why should we remember at all?

If I had a choice I would prefer *not* to remember. Not to remember the Czestochowa Ghetto where my family and I, then a child, were imprisoned. Not to remember the killings of my father and mother, of my brother and family members, of my Polish nanny Elka who chose to remain in the ghetto because she loved a Jewish child – me. Not to remember the daily humiliation, the routine of murder, the hunger, the cold, and the numbing knowledge that we are powerless and alone. I would prefer not to have these memories, but I do not have the choice. Why then choose memory if you are not forced to?

I can think of four reasons.

The first is simple solidarity. If you choose my memories, this means that we together are no longer with them alone. Each time we reach out to the legacy of horror, we make a crack in the ghetto wall, a breach in the barbed wire. Not that we can tear them down – it is 70 years too late for that. Walls built with blood and death survive their physical downfall. They need to be pulled down day by day by remembering.

The second is simple decency. The Germans had managed not only to murder the six million: they murdered also the memories of them ever having existed. True, the great majority of those then killed would have passed away by now, even had there been no Shoah. But they would have lived on in the memories of their children and friends, in the record of the achievements and even failures of their lives. The Shoah eliminated all that as well. Your remembrance is their only chance.

The third reason is simple fear. It is an illusion to believe that Auschwitz can be forgotten simply because the right side won the war. Auschwitz remains with us forever always waiting to be realized again. Do not believe the magic incantation of "Never again": it *has* happened again. Think of Bosnia, Sudan, Rwanda. In different ways, to different peoples – but it has. The Shoah remains unique in the sense it was unprecedented. But all genocides are tragic in their own ways, and remembering them is the first step to preventing their recurrence. Remembering is, after all, the least we can do.

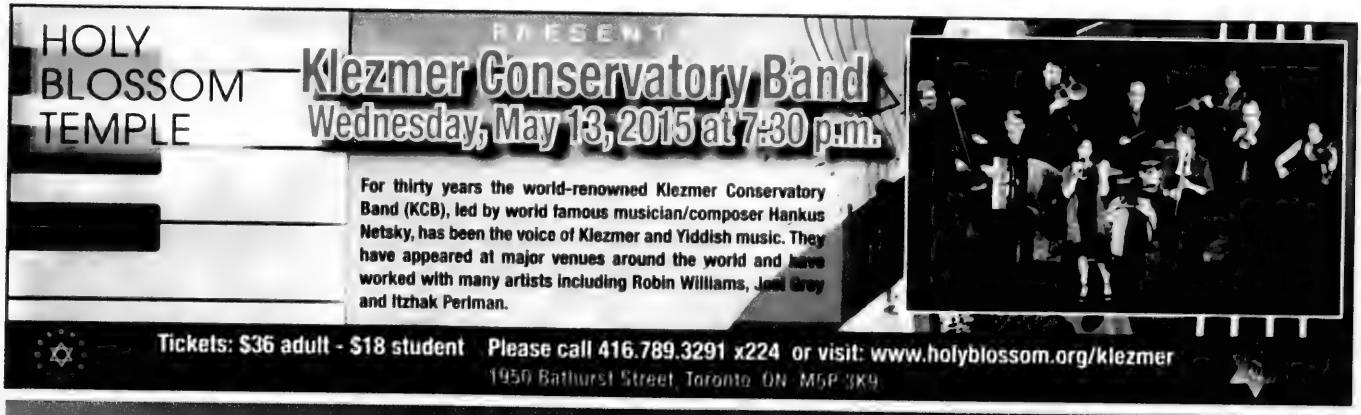
> *If I had a choice, I would prefer not to remember... but I do not have the choice.*

And so we stand here in solidarity, mourning and fear. Our unity is rooted not only in our Jewish peoplehood, which we share with those whom we remember today. Their Jewishness was not incidental to their fate: it determined it. But our unity today encompasses all, Jews and non-Jews, who remember, grieve and mourn – and participate in our solidarity.

In a world in which once again there are places where it is not safe to be Jewish, today's meeting assumes an added dimension. For Poland, on whose occupied soil the Germans had placed the abomination of Auschwitz, is today a place where it is safe to be a Jew. Poland now embraces its small but thriving Jewish community. Our history is cherished in the Polin Museum, which has recently opened in Warsaw. And next to the museum we shall build a monument to those Poles who – like my Elka – risked their lives to save Jews from the chimneys of Auschwitz. From the ghetto walls of Czestochowa. From the abyss.

And our gratitude toward them is the fourth reason to remember. God bless you and your memories. ■

Sigmund Rolat is a native of Czestochowa, Poland, a Holocaust survivor, one of the founders of Polin: The Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, and an internationally known philanthropist.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European Jewry in trouble, Yom Hashoah event told

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

The future of European Jewry is precarious, to say the least, with fear and uncertainty growing and spreading from country to country.

This pessimistic, yet realistic, assessment was shared by Julien Klener at the Ottawa commemoration of Yom Hashoah, which marked 70 years since the end of World War II.

Klener, who was a hidden child in Brussels during the war, is a world-renowned academic and speaker who, since 2000, has been president of the Consistoire Central Israelite de Belgique, the official Jewish umbrella organization representing Judaism to the Belgian state. He delivered his address to a standing-room-only crowd of more than 450 people at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre on April 16.

"I am, indeed, a genuine European Jew, born and raised in Europe," said Klener as he proceeded to share his experiences and opinions of life for Jews in 2015 Europe.

According to Klener, anti-Zionism has been replaced by anti-Judaism, with no attempt to hide or pretend otherwise.

Pictured, from left, are Julien Klener; Jewish Federation of Ottawa CEO Andrea Freedman, Pinchas Gutter, Azrieli Foundation CEO Naomi Azrieli, Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak, Ambassador of Religious Freedom Andrew Bennett and Hungarian Ambassador Bálint Odor.

"Isn't it outrageous that we are still discussing the foul subject of anti-Judaism [70 years after the Holocaust]? Outrageous, yes, but not surprising... anti-Judaism is so deeply rooted in the European psyche that it never died. It merely went underground," he said.

"Is there a future for Jews in Europe? I don't know. What I hope is that Jewish people will have the wisdom to know when it is high noon. The situation in Europe is not good. People don't feel safe any more. I don't know what the future is."

The evening's keynote speaker, Pinchas Gutter, was a child of seven when the war broke out. He, his twin sister and entire family fled their hometown of Lodz, Poland, for what they had hoped would be safety in Warsaw. Instead, they spent more than three years in the Warsaw Ghetto and were then deported to the death camp Majdanek, where Gutter's parents and sister were murdered.

He shared his experiences in the camp with the audience, along with his fortunate tale of survival. After liberation, Gutter was taken to Britain with other children, then spent many years in South Africa before immigrating to Toronto where he now lives.

Naomi Azrieli, CEO of the Azrieli Foundation, which supported the Jewish Federation of Ottawa in presenting the Yom Hashoah commemoration, was the event's MC. She noted the attendance of various local and federal politicians as well as representatives of several embassies.

Rafael Barak, Israel's ambassador to Canada, addressed the audience. He said that Yad Vashem has chosen to trace the lives of survivors after liberation.

"These people with broken hearts and families emerged from the horrors of the past to build new futures... today we are so incredibly privileged to have some of those brave souls with us," he said.

Six of those survivors then lit memorial candles, each representing one million lost lives.

Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces marched on the colours to open the program and marched off the colours following the chanting of *Kel Maleh Rachamim* and the recitation of *Kaddish* by Gutter. ■

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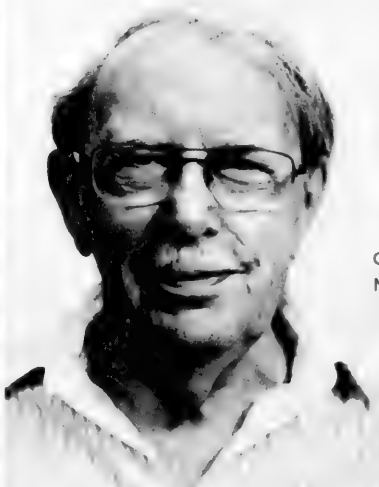

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Winnipeg shuls host Conservative women's conference

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

The intra-continental region of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism (WLCJ) is holding its annual conference in Winnipeg this year for the first time since 2006, and local co-chairs Randy Schwartz and Sandy Polanski say they've put together a balanced program.

Nine years ago, Winnipeg was part of the midwest region, which extended from Winnipeg and Saskatoon south to include Missouri and Kansas. Shortly after the 2006 conference, the midwest region merged with the southwest region – consisting of Oklahoma, Texas and Mexico – to create the intra-continental region.

"Our region is one of the largest demographically," said Schwartz, who represents Congregation Etz Chayim and is also a WLCJ international vice-president. "It behooves us to get together at regular intervals face to face."

Polanski, who represents Shaarey Zedek, said about 75 WLCJ members are registered to attend the conference, and roughly one-third are from out of town.

Schwartz said the WLCJ has 13 regions overall in North America, with a total membership of more than 75,000. The WLCJ is dedicated to the perpetuation of traditional Judaism in the home, community and synagogue. The organization raises money in support of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the American Jewish University in California, the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires and the Schecter Institute in Jerusalem.

Shelly Goldin

Rabbi Alan Green

The keynote speaker for the conference, which takes place April 25 to 28, will be Shelly Goldin, a WLCJ consultant from Maryland, whose major presentation will focus on adapting to change. At a second presentation, Goldin will be illustrating the elements of leadership by telling stories that balance fiction and reality.

Also speaking at the conference will be two local congregational rabbis – Congregation Shaarey Zedek's Rabbi Alan Green and Etz Chayim's Rabbi Larry Lander – who will discuss different perspectives on finding spiritual balance through Torah study and will take part in an informal question-and-answer session with conference attendees titled "Rap with the Rabbis."

Other speakers include Rush Ashrafi, Shaarey Zedek's program co-ordinator and Judaic studies co-ordinator at Winnipeg's Gray Academy of Jewish Education, speaking about Israel; Bonnie Cham, a past president of Shaarey Zedek who will discuss physician-assisted suicide; and holistic educator Dawn MacDonald, who will be guiding participants in "finding balance in life through mindfulness."

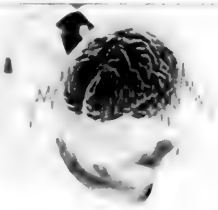
Schwartz said the conference will also include a "speedfest" – akin to speed dating – in which participants will take part in a series of 15-minute sessions on five different topics related to the WLCJ, as well as a concert featuring Shaarey Zedek and Etz Chayim cantors Anibal Mass and Tracy Kasner Greaves, along with Shayla Fink, who is best known as a member of the klezmer group Finjan.

The highlight of the conference will be the installation of new intra-continental region president Ardis Wexler from Minneapolis.

Schwartz said WLCJ membership at Winnipeg's two Conservative synagogues stands at about 250.

"We offer a variety of educational programs and are constantly trying to get more people involved," she said, "but, like many other organizations, it is a struggle attracting younger women. Younger people do not seem to be joiners." ■

Maximizing Memory



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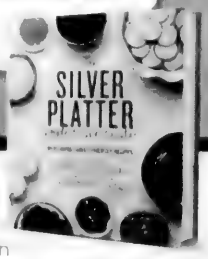

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INTERNATIONAL

Clinton weighs loyalty to Obama with differences on Israel

JTA
WASHINGTON

Hillary Clinton did not appear until 90 seconds into the two-minute video rolling out her campaign. No one among the bright and diverse array of everyday Americans in that video mentions foreign policy. Or President Barack Obama.

Jewish Democrats say the video released April 12 to launch Clinton's presidential campaign is emblematic of the approach that Clinton is likely to take as she tries to straddle her loyalty to Obama with the perceived need to distance herself from the tensions that have characterized his administration's relationship with Israel.

That tack is embedded in her statement issued March 29 through Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive vice-president of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"Secretary Clinton thinks we need to all work together to return the special U.S.-Israel relationship to constructive footing, to get back to basic shared concerns and interests, including a two-state solution pursued through direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians," Hoenlein said, describing a phone conversation he initiated with Clinton.

Clinton, notably, is once removed from the statement, delivered in Hoenlein's voice. Obama is not mentioned, but she calls for a "return" to "constructive footing," an acknowledgment that the relationship has gone off track.

"The language she used very much indicated it is time to reignite the bonds that are essential to the countries and how the U.S.-Israel relationship is perceived by the rest of the world," said Steve Grossman, a past president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, who supported Clinton in her first presidential bid in 2008 and is backing her for 2016.

Grossman chaired the Democratic National Committee during the presidency of Clinton's husband, Bill Clinton.

Steve Rabinowitz, a senior communications official in the Bill Clinton administration who now runs a public relations consultancy, said there is "no needle to thread": Clinton and Obama worked well together when she was his secretary of state in his first term, Rabinowitz said, and she would be able to distinguish herself from the president without diminishing his accomplishments.

Hillary Clinton met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel in 2012. FILE PHOTO

> *She's really in between a rock and a hard place*

"It will be obvious she has her own vision of the world and that none of this is disrespectful of the president," said Rabinowitz, who backed Clinton in 2008 and this year helped found the fundraising group Jewish Americans Ready for Hillary.

Barbara Goldberg Goldman, a Democratic activist who campaigned for Obama in 2008 and 2012 and now backs Clinton, said attempts to cast Obama as harmful to Israel were "shameful." She expected Clinton would focus on the domestic issues that draw Jewish majorities to Democrats.

"When you look at polls and talk about the Jewish community in terms of what issues are most important, Israel's not on there," Goldman said, noting that Jewish voters are concerned mostly with the economy – the issue on which Clinton's campaign launch video focused.

Some Jewish Democrats who have had longstanding relationships with the Clintons said Hillary Clinton could ill afford to alienate the party's base by appearing to attack Obama.

"She's really in between a rock and a hard place," said a former top party official who worked closely with the Clintons in the 1990s and has strong ties to the pro-Israel community.

"Most Democratic voters in primaries in particular will look for someone who is agreeing with Obama on everything," said this former official, who spoke anonymously in order not to alienate any candidate. "Some of the most prominent Jewish Democratic donors are very concerned about the relationship the president has had with (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu and the Iran deal."

Obama and Netanyahu have been at odds for years over Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking and the nuclear negotiations between the major powers and Iran. Obama backs the outline of an Iran deal released earlier this month, which trades sanctions relief for restrictions aimed at keeping Iran from becoming a nuclear power. Netanyahu has said the deal, to be completed by June 30, would leave Iran a nuclear weapons threshold state and endanger Israel.

Clinton, as secretary of state in Obama's first term, was deeply involved in the ultimately failed Israeli-Palestinian talks as well as in laying the groundwork for the Iran talks.

In statements since then, she has simultaneously endorsed Obama administration efforts while subtly staking out a position to the right. After this month's deal outline was released, Clinton called it an "important step" but added that "the devil is in the details."

A major donor both to the Democratic Party and pro-Israel causes wondered whether Clinton is the unalloyed Israel supporter she was during her term as U.S. senator from New York, from 2001 to 2009, or the secretary of state loyal to Obama.

"The senator was good on Israel, the secretary was average," said this donor, who also asked not to be identified in order not to alienate candidates.

Clinton in her most recent autobiography, *Hard Choices*, depicts herself as unabashedly in love with Israel. But like Obama, she is also clearly ambivalent about Netanyahu.

In the book, she called the slain prime minister Yitzhak Rabin a "close friend" and former prime minister and president Shimon Peres an "old friend." She said Tzipi Livni, a former opposition leader and a key negotiator in the talks with the Palestinians, was "smart and tough." And then, upon Netanyahu's 2009 election: "I had known Netanyahu for years. He is a complicated figure."

She describes her March 2010 phone call to Netanyahu after Israel's government embarrassed Vice-President Joe Biden during a visit to Israel by announcing plans for new building in eastern Jerusalem.

"I didn't enjoy playing the bad cop, but it was part of the job," she wrote.

But Republicans won't let her get off the hook so easily.

Matt Brooks, who directs the Republican Jewish Coalition, said he will cast a Clinton presidency as a third term for Obama.

"She was the one who proudly talked about spending 45 minutes on the phone yelling at the prime minister," he said, referring to the 2010 call. ■

Two notable rabbis die

JTA AND
TIMES OF ISRAEL

Rabbi Elio Toaff, right, with Pope John Paul II in 1986. FILE PHOTO

Two notable rabbis died this week.

Rabbi Elio Toaff, who served as the chief rabbi of Rome for 51 years died April 19 two weeks before his 100th birthday.

And Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, among the most prominent rabbis in Modern Orthodoxy and the Israeli national-religious movement, died on April 20 at the age of 81.

Rabbi Toaff served as chief rabbi from 1951 to 2002, and is considered an important figure in the history of Italy and of European Jewry.

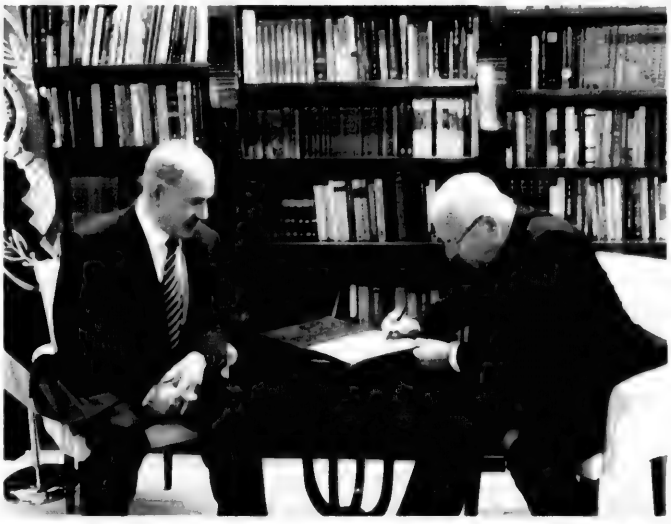
He welcomed Pope John Paul II on his historic April 1986 visit to the Great Synagogue, the first known visit by a pope to a synagogue in some 2,000 years.

Rabbi Lichtenstein was a noted and prolific Jewish legal authority, head of the Har Etzion Yeshiva, a key religious seminary in the Israeli religious-Zionist world, and the son-in-law of famed American Modern Orthodox spiritual leader Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.

He was born in Paris in 1933, the year the Nazi party rose to power in neighbouring Germany, but fled Vichy France with his family in 1941 for the United States. The family settled in New York in 1945, where Rabbi Lichtenstein studied in religious seminaries and eventually entered Yeshiva University.

He was invited to jointly head, with Rabbi Yehuda Amital, the Har Etzion Yeshiva, located in the Etzion Bloc in the West Bank south of Jerusalem, in 1971, and has lived in Israel ever since. ■

SeeJN | Extension to coalition talks



FLASH90 PHOTO

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, right, on April 20 gave Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a 14-day extension to coalition talks, the maximum allowed under law. Netanyahu must complete the negotiations and establish his new government by May 7.

Germany must remember its past, foreign minister says

JTA
BERLIN

Germany must remember its past and "stand against injustice, against any form of xenophobia and discrimination," its foreign minister said at the former Nazi concentration camp Sachsenhausen.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier laid down the challenge at a ceremony marking 70 years since the liberation of the camp, near Berlin, where tens of thousands of Jews and other inmates died during World War II.

"Do we want to live in a country where there is still anti-Semitism and exclusion? Where asylum homes are set on fire? Where a young man is beaten up on a Berlin subway because he is a Jew?" Steinmeier asked.

More than 200,000 people were incarcerated in Sachsenhausen. Some 3,000 were still alive when the camp was liberated on April 22-23, 1945.

The tens of thousands who died were killed by starvation, disease, forced labour and a death march.

"The crimes of the Nazi regime are without equal," Steinmeier said. "They make us shudder – the murder of millions of Jews in Europe, the crime against humanity that is the Shoah."

He praised the "deep friendship" between Israel and Germany and the "flowering of Jewish life" in Germany, *AFP* reported.

A second ceremony was held Sunday at the Ravensbruck concentration camp near Berlin, where more than 27,000 people, mostly women, died. ■

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Introduction by Michele Landsberg, Officer of the Order of Canada

Is the Kosher Switch really kosher for Shabbat?

URIEL HEILMAN
JTA NEW YORK

It promises a revolutionary innovation that could transform Jewish Sabbath observance.

By changing the way a light switch works, the patented Kosher Switch offers a novel and, its backers say, kosher – way to turn light switches (and, perhaps, other electrical appliances) on and off during Shabbat, circumventing one of the Sabbath's central restrictions: the use of electricity.

In just four days last week, the product's backers reached their $50,000 fundraising goal on Indiegogo, the crowdsourced fundraising website, to start manufacturing the device.

Menashe Kalati, the device's inventor, calls it a "long overdue, techno-halachic breakthrough."

But critics say the Kosher Switch isn't really kosher for Shabbat at all and that Kalati is misrepresenting rabbinic opinions on the matter to give the false impression that he has their endorsements.

At issue is whether the device's permissibility for Shabbat relies on a Jewish legal loophole that applies only to extraordinary circumstances such as medical or security needs. The loophole, known as a "*gramma*," allows for indirect activation of electronic devices on Shabbat.

How does *gramma* work? If, for example, a non-life-threatening field fire is burning on Shabbat, jugs full of water may be placed around the fire to indirectly cause its eventual extinguishing. Dousing the fire directly – a Sabbath prohibition – is permitted only in life-threatening circumstances.

Kalati, 43, says his switch does not rely on the *gramma* loophole. When the switch is in the off position, a piece of plastic blocks an electronic light pulse that when received turns on the light. Turning the switch on moves the piece of plastic, which is not connected to anything electrical, so that it no longer obstructs the pulse. Because the light pulse is subject to a "random degree of uncertainty" and won't instantaneously kindle the light when in Sabbath mode, it is kosher for use on Shabbat, according to the video.

This "adds several layers of halachic uncertainty, randomness, and delays, such that according to Jewish law, a user's action is not considered to have caused a given reaction," the company says on its website. (Kalati's office did not respond to phone calls or emails from *JTA*).

Kosher Switch's backers crowdfunded $50,000 in just four days last week. KOSHER SWITCH VIDEO

In the Indiegogo video, Kalati says his team has spent years on research and development, during which "we've been privileged to meet with Torah giants who have analyzed, endorsed and blessed our technology and endeavours."

But Yisrael Rosen, head of the Zomet Institute, the leading designer of electronic devices for use on the Jewish Sabbath, says the Kosher Switch is unfit for Sabbath use. "Today, Israeli media reported the invention of an electric 'Kosher switch' for Shabbat, with the approval of various rabbis.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Blind Vision, her second novel, explores the Inquisition of the Conversos of Spain in the 15th century, the role Christopher Columbus played, and the resultant struggle for identity of the present-day Crypto Jews.

Moderator Q&A
Michael Coren
Columnist, author,
public speaker
television & radio host

Us Conductors, Michaels' debut novel, won Canada's most prestigious literary award in 2014 - **The Scotiabank Giller Prize**.

The jury said that he has succeeded at one of the hardest things a writer can do. He makes music seem to sing from the pages of a novel.

Critics say rabbinic endorsements in video misleading

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

This item was recycled from 2010 and already then denials and renunciation by great rabbinic authorities were published regarding everyday use for this product," Rosen wrote April 14 on Zomet's website. "No Orthodox rabbi, Ashkenazi or Sephardi, has permitted this '*gramma*' method for pure convenience."

Rosen appended a letter from Rabbi Yehoshua Neuwirth, the first rabbi whose endorsement appears in the Kosher Switch video – in a one-second pull-quote reading "I, too, humbly agree to the invention" – suggesting that his endorsement was misrepresented.

"To allow one *a priori* to turn on electricity on Shabbat – impossible, and I never considered permitting except for the needs of a sick person or security," reads the letter, which bears Rabbi Neuwirth's signature and letterhead and is addressed to the manager of Kosher Switch. "And please publicize this thing so no [Sabbath] violation will be prompted by me."

The son of another rabbi whose endorsement appears in the video, Rabbi Noach Oelbaum (who says it does not violate the prohibition on Sabbath-day labour), told *JTA* that his father's position was distorted.

"I regret that my father's position on Kosher Switch was misrepresented by stating that he endorses it *l'maaseh*," the son, Moshe Oelbaum, wrote in a statement, using the Hebrew term for "regular use."

Oelbaum said his father's true position is that while the switch does not involve a technical violation of the Sabbath prohibition against labour (which forbids electricity use), it is a desecration of the Sabbath spirit. Oelbaum advises consumers to consult their own rabbis on the question of whether or not they may use it on Shabbat.

Kosher Switch is hardly the first technological innovation devised to ease Sabbath observance. For decades, Sabbath-observant Jews have used electronic timers set before Friday night to control lights and appliances such as air conditioners or hot plates. Multistorey buildings throughout Israel and some in the United States and Canada have Shabbat elevators that can run on autopilot. In 2004, Canadian rabbi and entrepreneur Shmuel Veffer invented a bedside-style lamp called Kosher Lamp that could be "turned off" by twisting a cylinder encasing a lit bulb so that the bulb was completely concealed.

> *I regret that my father's position on Kosher Switch was misrepresented*
>
> **Moshe Oelbaum**

The Zomet Institute, located in the Jerusalem suburb of Gush Etzion, in the West Bank, has invented baby sensors, sump pump gadgets, hot water heater contraptions, and special switches that modify wheelchairs, hospital beds, electronic scooters and staircase elevators for use on Shabbat. However, many of these devices rely on the *gramma* loophole and are permitted only for medical or security use.

Many observant Jews also rely upon non-Jews for help circumventing Sabbath restrictions, though such requests for help are forbidden from being expressed explicitly.

The Kosher Switch video parodies this problem of using "Shabbos goys" with a staged scene in which a bearded Orthodox Jewish man wearing a black hat stands on the steps outside his house and flags down a young black woman passing by.

They have this exchange:

Man: "Excuse me, ma'am? Hi. I need a big favour. My bedroom – the lights are on, so I was wondering if maybe you could come up to my bedroom and …"

Woman: "Are you crazy!? I ain't coming up to your bedroom!"

Man (nodding suggestively toward his open door): "Yeah but, the lights are on."

Woman (walking away): "You're crazy."

Rabbi Mordechai Hecht, a Chabad rabbi from Queens, N.Y., who appears in the Kosher Switch video says the controversy over its permissibility isn't just a fight over Jewish law. "There's politics in Halachah," he said. "The conversations they have are often money-related. Everyone has an agenda."

He said he can't endorse or reject the product because he's not a halachic authority.

"Is there one way in Halachah? Of course not. That's why the sages say, 'Make yourself a rabbi,'" Rabbi Hecht said. "I think the rabbis need to be brave. A conversation needs to be had, and maybe this is a good place to have it. If there's really a halachic issue, let's talk about it. This is an amazing invention. The question is, can it enhance the Shabbos?" ■

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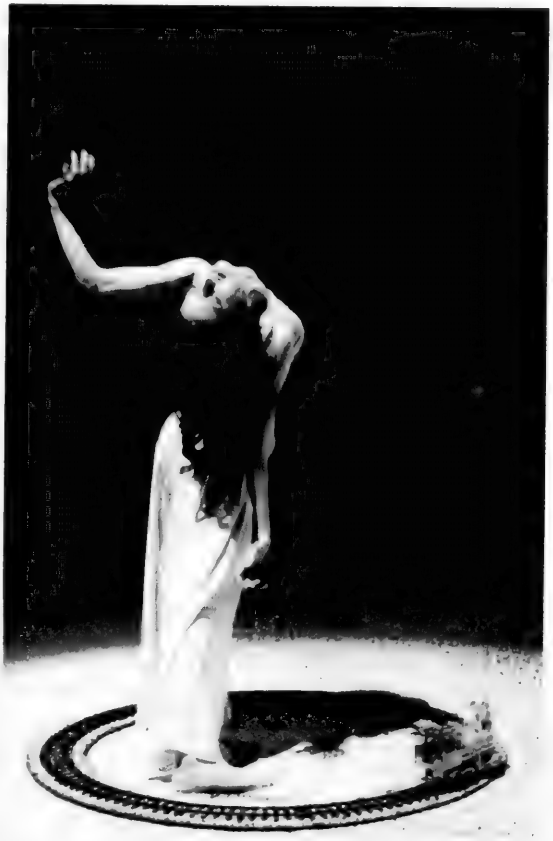
Jewish Life

Classic Tolstoy story in ballet form

SAZONOV ANTON PHOTO



The scenery for *Anna Karenina* has been updated since its debut 10 years ago.
SARHIPOV VECHESLAV PHOTO

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is intimidating; the tome is dense and complicated, but choreographer Boris Eifman's ballet is decidedly more straightforward.

St. Petersburg Eifman Ballet returns to Toronto's Sony Centre for the Performing Arts from April 23-25 for three performances of *Anna Karenina*. In it, Eifman focuses on the love triangle between three of the central characters: Anna, Vronsky and Karenin.

Eifman admits the play doesn't try to cover the entire, complex plot of the book. "I was concerned about the tragic story of a woman who was killed by the strongest erotic dependence on the man," Eifman said via email from Russia.

Eifman's ballet looks at the tragic choice Anna faces between following her desires and staying true to her marital duties. "While working on the performance I was interested mainly in the eternal inner conflict splitting the soul and psyche of the heroine," he writes.

Eifman, who was born in Siberia, started his company in 1977. Since then, he's toured extensively, becoming renowned both in Russia and internationally for his choreographic style and often lavish productions, many of which are based on pieces of literature. Thanks to his unique approach to the classical dance form, some call his genre the "psychological ballet." He also says he's been called a "choreographer-psychoanalyst." But Eifman doesn't focus on these titles.

Instead, "the creative mission is important" to him. Part of that means developing a "ballet language" to deal with life's complex philosophical issues. "One of the most important objectives for me," he writes, "is to take dance back into the course of psychological theatre. To make psychologism not the exclusive privilege of the drama but a fundamental principle of choreographic art."

Eifman's *Anna Karenina* debuted 10 years ago. Since then, he hasn't resisted the temptation to improve parts of it, making it more "harmonious and expressive." The scenery has been updated and the new principal dancers bring with them their own interpretations of Eifman's choreography.

Fans flock to Eifman's shows and he sells out in many international theatres – when Eifman Ballet first came to Toronto in 2013, the company played to a full house. Eifman thinks that's because dance is a universal language.

"A lot of things in this world today separate people, making them aggressive and intolerant to each other," he writes. "A ballet brings people together and helps them to find a common ground. This is the main reason of our art's success."

Eifman however, doesn't like to anticipate how patrons will interpret his ballets. "I cannot and do not want to predict the emotional reaction of the audience. It must be vivid, spontaneous," he writes. "I hope that the audience will be able to empathize with the characters as sincerely as I empathize with them." And with source material as rich and dramatic as *Anna Karenina*, that shouldn't be too hard. ■

St. Petersburg Eifman Ballet's Anna Karenina runs from April 23-25 at The Sony Centre for Performing Arts, 1 Front Street East. Tickets available at 1-855-872-SONY (7669) or www.sonycentre.ca.

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

RAISE THE ROOF TELLS STORY OF DESTROYED WOODEN SYNAGOGUE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival and the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation co-present the festival screening of *Raise The Roof*, with filmmakers **Cary** and **Yari Wolinsky** in attendance. This new American-Polish feature documentary tells the inspiring story of how a decimated wooden Polish synagogue is brought back to life and given a permanent home in the new Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

Prior to their destruction by the Nazis, Poland was home to more than 200 wooden synagogues, including the synagogue in Gwozdziec. The film documents the efforts of Boston-based artists and professors **Rick** and **Laura Brown** and a team of students, traditional artisans and builders, who reconstructed Gwozdziec synagogue's complex painted roof. Using original methods and tools, the team vividly unveils the forgotten artistry, science and culture of Poland's Jewish architectural heritage.

Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W. at Bathurst. Thursday, May 7, 6 p.m. *Raise The Roof* is one of about 110 films being showcased at this year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival, which runs April 30 to May 10 at various venues across the city. Details at tjff.com

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Barbara Rusch on Houdini: Toronto-area ephemera collector and lecturer **Barbara Rusch** gives a talk on "**Harry Houdini**, Poster Child of the Jewish Immigrant Experience," also featuring a magic performance with **Ben-Zion Train**. Artifacts related to Houdini's life and astounding career will also be on display. $10; refreshments. Beth Tzedec Congregation, 1700 Bathurst St. Wednesday, April 29, 7:30 p.m. 416-781-3511, www.beth-tzedec.org

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Literary and Drama

• The newly established Centre for Jewish Literature at Holy Blossom Temple, with **Cynthia Good** at the helm, presents an evening of readings and discussion with three renowned Canadian award-winning novelists — **David Bezmozgis**, **Joseph Kertes**, **Anne Michaels** – whose works reflect family histories and complex relationships. Non-members $10 at the door. Holy Blossom Temple, Tuesday, April 28, 7:30 p.m.

• Encore Entertainment presents *The Love List*, a comedy by **Norm Foster**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St. April 23 to May 3. www.encore-shows.com

• Toronto writer and *CJN* columnist **Bill Gladstone** presents an illustrated talk on "Jewish Immigrant Fiction" as part of Jewish Heritage Month. Bathurst Clark Library, 900 Clark Ave. W., Vaughan. Free admission, everyone welcome. Sunday, May 3, 10:30 a.m. 905-653-7323.

• Playwriting for Beginners, a six-session course with actor-playwright **Julie Tepperman**, focuses on ways to spark your imagination, strategies for generating material, improvisation, writing from an actor's perspective, character development, relationships and learning to discern what makes something "playable." $150 by pre-registration. Miles Nadal JCC. Thursdays from May 7 to June 11, 7 to 9 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Toronto litterateur **Ralph Wintrob** gives a talk on the romantic poet **Lord Byron** (1788-1824), the Jewish figures who influenced him and his own enormous influence on Hebrew and Yiddish writers and translators. Yiddish Vinkl, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. Thursday, May 7, 12 noon. $20 includes buffet lunch. Please RSVP to yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Temple Har Zion presents *A Simple Twist of Faith*, a musical based on a true story of Holocaust survival. $18 at the door; students free. 7360 Bayview Ave., Sunday, April 26, 7 p.m. Tickets, 905-889-2252, ronnimuskat@templeharzion.com

• **The Coen Brothers** in Nayman's Terms, series of eight lectures on the popular filmmakers by **Adam Nayman**, $90 or $12 drop-in (students $6). Miles Nadal JCC, begins Monday, May 4, 7 to 9 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

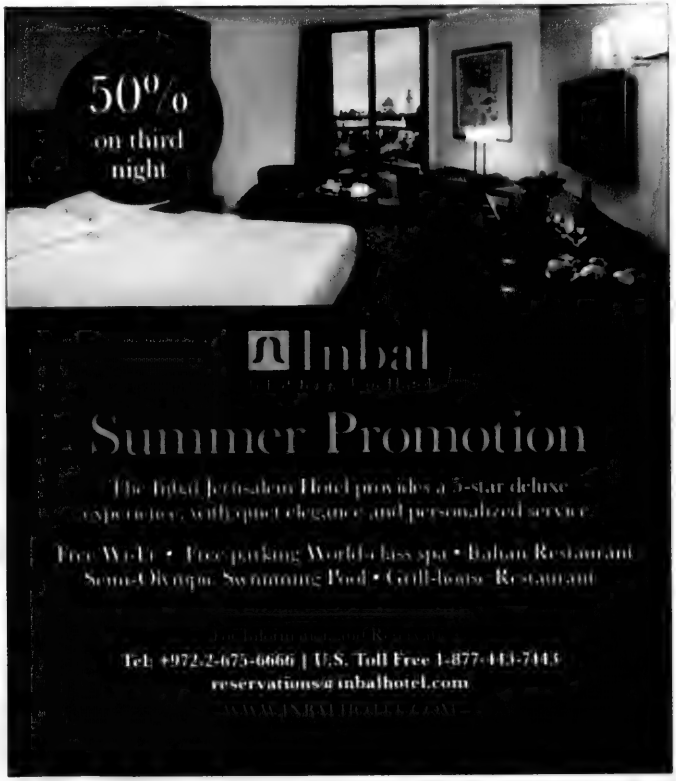
• • •

At the Galleries

• **Matthew Teitelbaum**, director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Ontario since 1998 and chief curator for five years before that, has been appointed director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Teitelbaum oversaw a landmark 2008 expansion of the AGO that resulted in complete refurbishment of the building and a nearly 50 per cent increase in gallery and exhibition space. He leaves the AGO June 26 with the "heartfelt congratulations" and best wishes of the AGO board, says board president **Maxine Granovsky Gluskin**.

• **Osnat Lippa** discusses "Emotion & Primitivism in the Landscape Paintings of **Emily Carr** and **Vincent Van Gogh**." Two-part series, $25; drop-in $14. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, April 27 and May 4, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• *Erratics*, a new show at the Koffler Gallery, features installations by Toronto author **Martha Baillie** and artist-curator **Malka Greene** with writer **Alan Resnick**. *Erratics* explores the tensions between memory and fiction, bringing together two archives where photography takes a central role in uncovering hidden narratives. Artscape Youngplace, 180 Shaw St., until June 14. kofflerarts.org ■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***Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman** is President of the Shalom Hartman Institute, and the Director of its iEngage Project. He has a Ph.D. in Jewish philosophy from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a Master of Arts in political philosophy from New York University, a Master of Arts in religion from Temple University, and Rabbinic ordination from the Shalom Hartman Institute.*

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Big Bang Theory writer premieres film at Hot Docs

Howie Mandel, right, gets behind the camera in *Committed*.

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A look at the immigrant experience in Israel, a comedian's creative struggles and the making of a groundbreaking documentary are among the hottest tickets for North America's biggest non-fiction film festival.

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival – or Hot Docs, for short – will screen these titles from April 23 to May 3 in Toronto.

Of the 210 films at Hot Docs this year, 59 are Canadian productions or co-productions. Three from that list of national titles are comedies from Jewish Canadian directors.

Calgary-born comedy scribe Robert Cohen, of *The Big Bang Theory* and *The Simpsons* fame, will premiere his directorial debut, *Being Canadian*. In that film, Cohen returns to his homeland to ask many of the country's funniest comics – including Martin Short, Mike Myers and Seth Rogen – what it means to be Canadian.

At press time only limited tickets were available for *Being Canadian's* screenings on April 25 and 26.

Another national funnyman, Howie Mandel, is behind the camera with the film *Committed*. The doc focuses on Mandel's friendship with rising star Vic Cohen, an aspiring comedian struggling to find his creative voice.

Meanwhile, Toronto filmmaker Billie Mintz is a co-director of *Jesus Town USA*, having its international premiere on April 24. The film is about a religious Oklahoma community's annual re-enactment of the *Passion Play*. When the actor who plays Jesus Christ retires, the community has to search for a new performer.

Aside from lighter fare, Hot Docs will screen a few riveting Israel-set films.

"The goal for the festival is knowing the diversity of Toronto and the curiosity of Torontonians, not just in their own specific culture but to learn more about the world," says Hot Docs programmer Alexander Rogalski.

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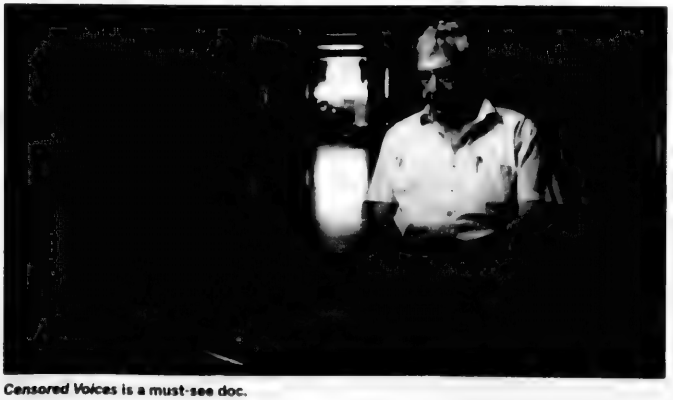


***Censored Voices* is a must-see doc.**

Jesus Town, top, and *Mussa*

> *The goal for the festival is knowing the diversity of Toronto and the curiosity of Torontonians.*

One of the festival's most intriguing titles is *Beyond the Fear*, an Israel co-production. The doc focuses on the relationship between Yigal Amir – the assassin of Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin – and the woman he fell in love with during his prison sentence.

One must-see doc is the fascinating *Censored Voices*, which received rave reviews at Sundance earlier this year. Mor Loushey's film features exclusive audio clips with Israeli soldiers after the Six Day War in 1967.

Those recordings had been censored for many years, but are now available. The comments from Israeli soldiers are startling and insightful, exploring how the war corrupted these young men.

Another new film from Israel, *Mussa*, explores the struggle of a mute, 12-year-old Sudanese refugee living in Tel Aviv. The title character lives in squalor yet attends a private school.

Anat, Goren's doc, premiering on April 24, looks at one boy's perspective of Israeli economic disparity and the immigrant experience.

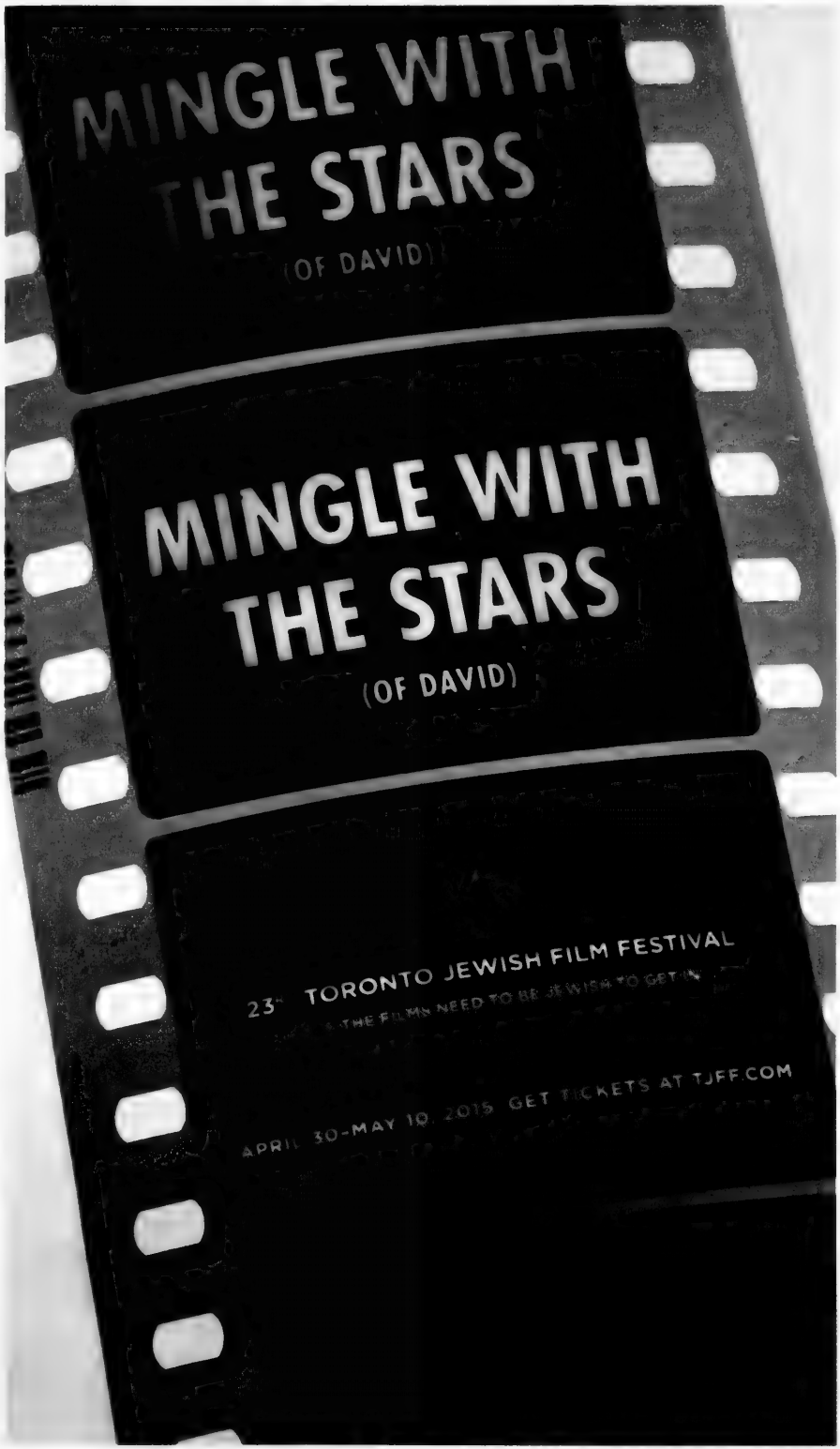
Meanwhile, Rogalski highly recommends *Lanzmann*, a 40-minute doc about director Claude Lanzmann and his experiences making the remarkable film *Shoah*. That nearly 10-hour doc about the Holocaust, released in 1985, took Lanzmann 12 years to make.

"His story relates to so many documentary filmmakers who dedicate their lives to sharing very difficult stories," Rogalski tells *The CJN*. "He didn't want to ignore so many important facets of [the Holocaust]. He needed to complete it for others."

Lanzmann's world premiere at Hot Docs will mark the 30th anniversary of *Shoah*.

Meanwhile, this year marks 10 years since the release of *The Last Mogul*, Barry Avrich's acclaimed doc about Hollywood studio head Lew Wasserman.

A screening on April 26 will celebrate the film's anniversary, and will be followed by a panel discussion with industry experts. ■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Hot Docs celebrates 10th anniversary of *The Last Mogul*

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When Toronto filmmaker Barry Avrich began to prepare a documentary about Hollywood studio head Lew Wasserman, he got the chance to shake the mogul's hand at a party in Los Angeles. There, Avrich told Wasserman he planned to make a movie about the executive's six-decade career.

Wasserman's response: "Not while I'm alive, and not while I'm dead."

Avrich did not abide by the studio head's wishes. Regardless, his 2005 doc, *The Last Mogul*, became a stellar tribute to one of Hollywood's hungriest power players.

The director announced production in 2002, on the day Wasserman died. Avrich's doc then found critical praise and Oscar buzz during its time on the festival circuit in 2005. On April 26, the film celebrates its 10th anniversary with a retrospective screening at the Hot Docs festival in Toronto.

Even though the film is just a decade old, the industry has changed so drastically since the early 21st century that the doc feels like more of a period piece.

"How Lew operated could not possibly exist today," Avrich told *The CJN* from his office in Toronto. "If I were shooting [*The Last Mogul*] today, I'd have to shoot it against the backdrop of what the industry has become."

Unlike the Ivy League grads that Avrich says are at the helm of much of the film industry today, Wasserman didn't even have an MBA. Wasserman's reign included a great deal of influence in Washington, and he had close relationships with many presidents, including Ronald Reagan, a former actor.

The mogul's career spanned much of the rise and changing face of the Hollywood studio system.

Born to Jewish Russian immigrants in Cleveland, Wasserman grew up around gambling dens, speakeasies and vaudeville shows. He began his prosperous career as an usher for a local movie house and later worked as a publicity director for a casino.

Early in his career, he landed a job at the Music Corporation of America (MCA) as a booking agent. The young film lover left for Los Angeles in the late 1930s to work as the head of MCA's movie division.

Barry Avrich, top, and Les Wasserman.

"He came from a mobbed-up world where a deal was a handshake," Avrich says. "This was a guy who came from nothing, a street guy who just understood the art of the deal and power and knew where to find it."

One of Wasserman's greatest tactics in the business was how he packaged films. At MCA, he represented many A-list actors, musicians and filmmakers, giving him the power to pitch projects with several of the studio's clients.

He helped to negotiate better studio deals for many of these big-name stars, including Bette Davis, James Stewart and Judy Garland.

Twenty-five years later, working as an executive for Universal Studios, he helped to spawn the rise of the summer blockbuster with the box office behemoth *Jaws*.

Although one of the mightiest figures in Hollywood history, Wasserman was a very private, secretive man. He didn't own a cell phone and his desk was always clean, since he abhorred making notes and keeping records.

It is no wonder he was so cautious of people writing books and making films about him.

Even after Wasserman died, Avrich says he found it challenging to find powerful Hollywood figures and politicians to sit with him for an interview. Wasserman's widow, Edie, and grandson Casey tried to yield their influence to sabotage the production.

"I would literally be in the anterooms of power waiting with my crew, and Lew's grandson and widow were making phone calls and sending out emails, saying, 'This is unauthorized and you will not participate with him,'" Avrich says.

Despite doors slamming in Avrich's face, *The Last Mogul* boasts a stellar ensemble of talking heads, including Larry King, Suzanne Pleshette, MPAA president Jack Valenti, producer Robert Evans and former U.S president Jimmy Carter.

Industry opinion on the documentary has gotten warmer over time. Avrich received a rave review from Universal studio head Ron Meyer, who met with him at a private L.A. screening room to view the film.

Avrich says he believes Edie eventually saw the film. "Years after the film came out, friends of mine were at the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills and she was by the pool with some friends having lunch," he tells *The CJN*.

"My friends introduced themselves to her and she said, 'You're from Toronto? A fine young man made a film about my husband from Toronto.'"

Since *Mogul's* release a decade ago, Avrich has made acclaimed documentaries about other industry power players like Harvey Weinstein and Garth Drabinsky.

After the anniversary screening at the TIFF Bell Lightbox on April 26, there will be a panel conversation with today's industry experts and moguls. None of them, Avrich insists, could compete with Wasserman's stature in the film industry.

"When I made *The Last Mogul*, the number one question people asked when we were shooting was, 'Is Lew Wasserman truly the last mogul?'" he says.

"Without a doubt. There couldn't be one powerful man like Lew ever again." ■

An interactive, choose-your-own adventure

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

There was a half hour period when I thought I might be losing it.

Wandering the labyrinthine halls of a dusty old school, I'd lost the people I came with and found myself slipping in and out of classrooms, auditoriums and shadowy passageways watching dozens of scenes simultaneously unfold between shifting, wraith-like characters clad in school uniforms.

One moment I stood with two or three other people in a science lab set in the 1920s watching a charged sexual encounter between a teacher and student, the next I was pressed into a cramped teacher's lounge engaged, for the second time in two hours, in a 1950s-era protest against gender-segregated classrooms.

Such was my experience of *Brantwood 1920:2020*, an innovative musical production put on by The Canadian Music Theatre Project, Sheridan College's musical theatre department.

Co-created by professional Toronto playwrights and directors Mitchell Cushman and Julie Tepperman and produced by Michael Rubinoff, Sheridan's dean of visual and performing arts, *Brantwood* is set in a recently-shuttered Oakville elementary school several blocks from Sheridan College.

Granted permission to use the empty building, Cushman and Tepperman conceived of a fictional high school – also called Brantwood – in which to set their immersive, three-hour play.

The premise is that Brantwood alumni –the audience – have been invited back for a final tour of their old school before it is torn down and converted into condos. But, as they gather on the school's lawn to watch Brantwood's principal and valedictorian unveil a time capsule buried by the class of 1920, a sort of rupture of the space-time continuum awakens the ghosts of students and teachers of the school's past 100 years, who eerily usher the audience inside the school.

What ensues is an interactive, choose-your-own-adventure-style experience wherein, at any given time, 15 distinct scenes are occurring in all corners of the school, acted by 40 actors playing a collective total of 100 characters.

The play includes 40 musical numbers and a smattering of dance sequences.

"Mitchell and I are both interested in pushing the boundaries of intimacy between performer and audience," Tepperman told *The CJN*.

She explained that they and Rubinoff were inspired to bring the kind of immersive, site-specific theatre embodied by the popular New York City play *Sleep No More* to a Toronto-area audience.

***Brantwood* is an immersive, choose-your-own-adventure-style play spanning 100 years of the fictional school's history.**
JOHN JONES PHOTO

Brantwood's 11 storylines span the fictional school's history – from 1920 to 2020 – and the actors are constantly transitioning from one era to the next.

The effect is trippy – particularly when plots loop back around and you end up watching a scene you'd already seen part of happen a second time, only from a slightly different point in time or physical angle.

As scenes unfurl regardless of who – if anyone – is watching, I'd just as likely find myself alone with two characters in the midst of a tense confrontation, as in a crowded cafeteria watching an elaborate drug bust go down.

To capture the essence and angst of high school and the ethos of each decade, Cushman and Tepperman, who wrote 15 hours of script, left no stone unturned when it came to featuring the gritty, uncomfortable and, often, political, issues faced by teenagers throughout the ages.

Topics included race and gender-based discrimination, sexual assault, abortion, teen pregnancy, drugs and bullying.

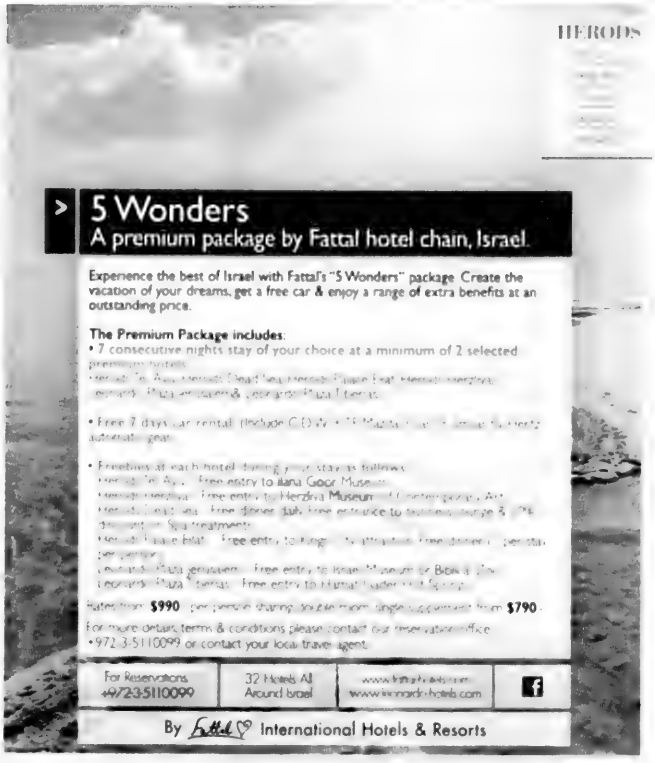
One storyline, set in the late 1930s, involves several students starting a school "swastika club."

"We were interested to explore what a 15-year-old who sympathized with Nazi ideas might be like," Cushman said. "We wanted not to portray him as an evil genius but to look at his circumstances. In this case, the character's father was laid off and he's angry and finds meaning in these ideas."

Cushman and Tepperman hope to adapt *Brantwood* to a professional stage.

"We would love to be able to bring this show to Toronto. We feel like the market there could support it , and is ready for, a long-running, immersive production like *Sleep No More*," said Cushman. ■

Brantwood runs until May 3. Tickets can be purchased online at sheridancollege.ca or at the Theatre Sheridan Box Office, 1430 Trafalgar Rd. Oakville.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Not a love story

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

In a few weeks, on the holiday of Shavuot, Jewish communities around the world customarily read the biblical book of Ruth.

Shavuot is a harvest holiday, so perhaps the custom arose because the action in Ruth takes place during the harvest season. Or perhaps Ruth's famous declaration to her mother-in-law, Naomi, seems appropriate for Shavuot, the holiday that commemorates the acceptance of the Torah by the Jewish People at Mount Sinai: "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16)

At 85 verses, the book of Ruth is one of the shortest in the Bible. A readable and easily understandable short story, it has moving dialogue and a small cast of characters. In a certain sense, it's a story about the courtship and marriage of Ruth and Boaz, and the establishment of the family from which King David later descends.

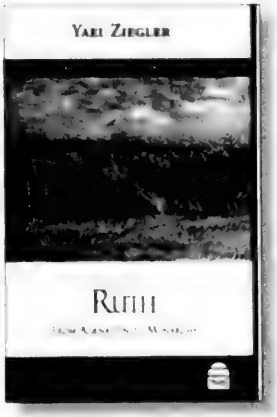
Yael Ziegler, a young Israeli Bible teacher from an American background, has now published a hefty volume (almost 500 pages) of analysis and commentary on the book of Ruth. Ziegler is a leading member of the cadre of modern religious Bible scholars in Israel who combine the best methods of literary analysis of the biblical text with a judicious sampling of midrashic interpretations by the classical rabbis.

She explains the logic of combining these two methods: "We have seen that *hazal* [the classical rabbis] often make observations similar to those made by modern scholars who employ literary tools."

She is acquainted with the writings of modern Bible critics, but her approach is not theirs.

Her fascinating analysis of the unusual courtship of the male and female protagonists, Boaz and Ruth, makes their relationship sound very modern in some ways, but not in others.

Building on the work of literary scholar Robert Alter (in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*), Ziegler shows how the first meeting of Boaz and Ruth follows the literary "type scene" of a couple who meet at a well and later marry. The first time Boaz meets Ruth, he is a wealthy landowner and she is gleaning in his field, as needy people did in ancient Israel. Boaz invites her to eat and drink: "When you are thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of [the water] that the men have drawn." (Ruth 2:9)



Ruth: From Alienation to Monarchy
by Yael Ziegler
Maggid Books

In many ways, their first meeting resembles that of Moses and Zipporah (Exodus 2:15-16), Jacob and Rachel (Genesis 29:9-10), or Abraham's servant, acting as Isaac's agent, and Rebecca (Genesis 24:17-19). In all four of these scenes, the meeting and the offer of water introduce the couple that will later marry.

But Ziegler outlines two significant differences in the Ruth story. As Alter had already noted, in the other stories, the match is initiated when the man travels to the woman's territory. Here, though, Ruth comes onto Boaz's turf, either accidentally or on purpose, to initiate the meeting. Ziegler then notes further that in this scene, nothing happens! The couple meet, an offer of drink is made, they exchange pleasant words, and they both go their own way.

Nothing happens, as Ziegler points out, until after Ruth, prompted by her mother-in-law, Naomi, realizes that further action is required. Ruth sets out to meet Boaz alone at night in what is, as Ziegler proves through careful language analysis, an attempt to seduce him.

Ziegler notes that both Ruth and Boaz had ancestors who played a role in such seduction scenes. Ruth's ancestor, Lot, was seduced by his own daughter, who was certain that the continuity of humanity depended on her actions. (Genesis 19:30-38) One of Boaz's ancestors, Tamar, seduced her father-in-law, Judah, again because she feared that the continuity of her late husband's line would cease. (Genesis 38:14-18) Ruth, too, sets off to seduce Boaz in order to preserve the line of her late husband.

> *The narrative consciously and consistently avoids any indication of romantic involvment between Boaz and Ruth*

Again, the differences are more important than the similarities. In the earlier stories, Lot and Judah slept with the woman who had seduced them, without knowing who she was. In our story, as soon as Boaz wakes up and finds a woman sleeping at his feet, he pointedly asks, "Who are you?" (Ruth 3:9) Ziegler argues convincingly that nothing sexual occurs between Boaz and Ruth that night, even though seduction was the original plan.

Ziegler adds that "the narrative consciously and consistently avoids any indication of romantic involvement between Boaz and Ruth."

The book of Ruth is a story of two exemplary people who both realize the sterling qualities of the other. (Boaz admires Ruth's kindness to her mother-in-law in Ruth 2:11-12; Ruth acknowledges Boaz's kindness to herself in 2:13.)

"The book of Ruth consistently eschews the customary biblical hints of love or romance between Ruth and Boaz. We find respect, admiration and gratitude, but not passionate feelings... The book of Ruth emphasizes that the relationship of Boaz and Ruth is founded on the willingness to fulfil their responsibilities, even at great personal expense."

As much as we might wish it to be a love story, Ziegler proves that it is not. But she brings the story to life in a readable style that should engage any interested reader of the Bible. ■

Cookbook serves up recipes from across the community

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It's not often that one finds cerviche, matbucha, zacusca and chicken machmoosa in a single recipe book. But these international dishes can all be found in the *Bathurst Street Kitchen: A Collection of Toronto Jewish Community's Go-To Recipes*

This new Jewish cookbook, a compendium of recipes contributed by men, women and children from across the Greater Toronto Area, is an initiative of UJA Woman's Philanthropy and was published by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Many contributors turned out for the spring book launch, an elegant affair with live music, sparkling wine and hors d'oeuvres such as brisket bites and ceviche, all recipes from the cookbook.

What's unusual about the *Bathurst Street Kitchen* is the inclusion of archival photos of the Toronto Jewish community. Open the book and the first picture (circa 1938) one sees is of three bakers from Perlmutar's holding the 99-pound challah they prepared for the Hadassah Bazaar.

Elisa Palter, who co-chaired the cookbook committee with Karine Krieger, says that two years ago she was approached to head the project by Lori Rosenthal, a past chair of women's philanthropy. "She was looking for a hands-on project with a social component to develop outreach and camaraderie."

She thought a community cookbook would have wide appeal, recalls Palter. "Everybody loves to cook. The world is a foodie world."

The project generated a lot of enthusiasm. Between 500 and 600 people responded after word went out that the committee was looking for people's favourite recipes and the stories connected to them. "We asked for reliable recipes that were always a hit, and [asked] why they were go-to recipes. There are modern recipes but there are also many traditional recipes, which were passed down from one generation to the next

"We received an assortment of recipes from 25 different countries of origin –Morocco, Russia, Argentina, Mexico...It was quite an amazing list of places."

In the end, 300 recipes were chosen by the recipe collection committee chaired by Daniella Kuhl and they were reviewed by food writer Bonny Reichert and cooking instructor Carolyn Tanner-Cohen. Brenlee Gurvey Gales was the sales and marketing chair.

Palter says she and Krieger, along with committee vice-chairs Naomi Oelbaum and Lissie Sanders are grateful for all the help they received from the 100 volunteers who participated on the various committees, and for all the community support for the project.

The Bathurst Street Kitchen can be purchased through the UJA website (jewishtoronto.com/cookbook), a site where people can engage with others interested in food.

The books are also available online through Chapters and at Chapters stores.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 49

Children's School
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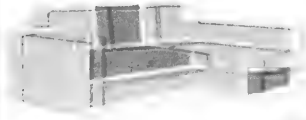

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What's New

APRIL 23 - APRIL 30

by Lila Sarick

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Synagogues, JCCs and schools across Toronto celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut this week.

Thursday, April 23

YOM HA'ATZMAUT
Celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, 7:30 p.m., at Shaar Shalom Synagogue. $10/$20
Celebrate with Beth David Synagogue, 6-9 p.m., $10/$36 per family

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS
Adath Israel Congregation offers bereavement support groups, for widows, April 23-May 28, 12:30 p.m., for men and women, April 23-May 28, 7:30 p.m Members no charge, non-members $180. RSVP 416-635-5340

Friday, April 24

REFORM & REFORMING ZIONISM
Rabbi Larry Englander discusses Reform Judaism and Zionism this weekend at Temple Har Zion. 905-889-2252.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT
Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism discusses "Israel: Intersecting Viewpoints," 7:30 p.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave

BETH EMETH CELEBRATION
Beth Emeth Synagogue celebrates its 60th anniversary with a sing-a-long featuring **Gideon Koren,** 5:30 p.m., and guest speakers Saturday morning. Sunday, **Avi Benlolo** speaks at 11:30 a.m. $12.

TEMPLE TRIBUTE
Temple Emanu-El honours choir members **Ralph David, Helene Rudolph,** 8 p.m.

Saturday, April 25

JAFFA ROAD
Jaffa Road performs at Temple Sinai, 7:30 p.m. $36/$45. RSVP 416-487-4161.

Sunday, April 26

JEWS IN HOCKEY
David Grossman discusses "Jews in sports," 10:30 a.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. $5.

A SIMPLE TWIST OF FAITH
A Simple Twist of Faith, will be performed at Temple Har Zion, 7 p.m. $18/$20, students free. RSVP ronnimuskat@templeharzion.com.

THEATRE TALKS
Philip Akin discusses "Challenges and successes between the African-American and Jewish communities," and the upcoming play *Driving Miss Daisy,* 9:30 a.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP 416-221-3433.
Charles Osborne, Avery Saltzman discuss creating new musicals, 10:15 a.m., Temple Sinai.

WOMEN'S DAY OF LEARNING
Kehillat Shaarei Torah holds a women's day of learning, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. with guest speakers **Ilana Rubenstein** and **Rifka Sonenberg.** $20.
RSVP 416-229-2600.

JEWISH ROCK STARS
Eyal Bitton and the shinshinim discuss Jewish rock stars, 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

REDEFINING AGING
Anne Balaban discusses "Redefining aging," 1:30 p.m., with Club Chaverut, Beth David Synagogue. $7/$10. RSVP 905-764-8141.

GALA DINNER
Congregation B'nai Israel, St. Catharines, holds a gala dinner, 5:30 p.m. $65. RSVP **Diana** 905-685-6767.

EAT, PRAY, LOVE
Rus Devorah Wallen is the guest speaker at Chabad Markham's "Eat, pray, love," event, 4 p.m. $36/$55. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE'S JEWS
The consul general of France in Toronto (in person) and the Chief Rabbi of Denmark, representatives from the Jewish community in France and the Jewish Agency (by Skype), with broadcaster **Michael Coren**, discuss "Is there a future for the Jews of Europe?" 1 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $10/$15. 416-221-3433.

A TASTE OF ISRAEL
Temple Har Tikvah, Brampton, celebrates Yom Ha'atzmaut, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. 905-792-7589.

RELEASE YOUR INNER FLIRT
Singles in the Park (for single Jews over 50) presents **Barbara Katz, David La Thangue** on "The ins and outs of successful flirtation," 7 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre, 4169 Bathurst St. $15/$18. RSVP debbygo@yahoo.com or 416-631-0005.

CRAFT SALE
Beth Avraham Yosef Congregation of Toronto sisterhood holds a craft sale, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

OPEN HOUSE
Oraynu Children's School holds an open house, 10:15 a.m., St. Andrew's Junior High School, 131 Fenn Ave. 416-385-3910.

KAVANAH GARDEN
Help prepare the Kavanah Garden, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Lebovic JCC.

Monday, April 27

TALKING ABOUT ISRAEL
Rabbi Donniel Hartman discusses "Talking about Israel: The need for a new conversation," 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. Sponsored by *The CJN.* Free for subscribers, or $18 (includes a digital subscription). Register at www.CJNews.com or 416-391-1836.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES
Robert Steiner discusses "Empty newsrooms and the bright future for our democracy," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $12. 416-449-3880.

TORAH AND SUSHI
Rabbi Micah Streiffer discusses Maimonides, noon, Sano Sushi, 8143 Yonge St. rabbistreiffer@kolami.ca.

Tuesday, April 28

MAXIMIZING BRAIN HEALTH
Beth Tzedec presents a 2-part series on "Maximizing brain health and reducing the risk of dementia," 1:30 p.m.

LUNCH & LEARN
Lisa Borsook discusses "Women in the workplace and advocating for change," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15 p.m.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of May 7 is April 27. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

TORAH THROUGH FEMALE EYES

Loretta Tanenbaum teaches "Torah through female eyes," 10-11:15 a.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation to May 26. $55/$65

Wednesday, April 29

JEWS AND POLES

Erica Lehrer discusses "Non-Jewish Poles doing Jewish stuff and the Jews who love and hate them," 8 p.m., Temple Sinai Sponsored by the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto

AUTHOR'S SERIES

Vivian Kaplan discusses her new book, *Blind Vision*, 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $15/$20

BIBLICAL REBELS

Hana Werner discusses "Nameless biblical women." Beth Tzedec Congregation. Dessert at 1:30 p.m.; lecture at 2 p.m. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511

Thursday, April 30

BOOK REVIEW

Janna Nadler reviews *Radiance of Tomorrow* by **Ishmael Beah**, 1:30 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $10

THE PROBLEM OF JERUSALEM

Daniel Seidemann discusses the future of Jerusalem, 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple. Sponsored by Canadian Friends of Peace Now

JEWISH HISTORY IN POLAND

Moshe Rosman, professor of Jewish history at Bar-Ilan University, is the scholar this weekend at Beth Tzedec Congregation Tonight, "Poland and Ukraine: New insights into Jewish civilization," 7:30 p.m

Coming Events

MORASHA CLASSES

Barrie Wilson teaches "Jewish books that did not make it into the Bible," May 6-27, 10 a.m.; **Jerry Fink** teaches "Classical music and the Jews," May 6-27, 11:15 a.m. Classes at Beth Emeth Synagogue. **Loretta** 416-789-7400.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com

- Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-10. Starts April 23, 7 p.m. at Lebovic JCC, or April 30, 7 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC.
- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: A 2-session group for couples who are going to be married next year. April 26, May 3, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.
- Bullying and learning disabilities: A 1-session workshop for parents and professionals. Topics include prevention and intervention strategies for children who are being bullied as well as those who bully. April 28, 7 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St
- Mind, body connection for women. An 8-session group for women to learn meditation and mindfulness. April 29, 2-3:30 p.m., 35 Madison Ave. or April 30, 7-8:30 p.m., Lipa Green Centre

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and ping-pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC** Israeli folk dancing workshop, April 23, 1-2:30 p.m. **Jack Gelbloom Quartet** performs *Something Familiar: A Musical Comedy Show*, April 30, 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881 Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m. High tea with live music, April 29, 1:30 p.m.; Spa day April 23
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112 April 28 "Synagogues around the world-Europe," 10 a.m.; April 30, Wellness lecture on "Sleep," 1:30 p.m. Mondays, current events with **Harvey Skolnick,** 10 a.m.
- **VIP Club (Vision Impaired Seniors)** holds an evening of entertainment, May 4, 7 p.m., Bernard Betel Centre. RSVP **Bess,** 905-508-2892. $5/$7
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathys@prossermanjcc.com
- PJ Plus is an active Jewish learning program for children with a parent, April 17-June 19, 9:30 a.m.
- **Kitty Wintrob** discusses her memoir *I'm Not Going Back*, May 7, 7 p.m.
- The JCCs go to Stratford to see *Diary of Anne Frank*, May 20.
- JCC book club discusses *The Children Act* by **Ian McEwan,** April 27, 1 p.m.
- **Bill Gladstone** presents, "Basics of Jewish Genealogy," May 14, 21, 7 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Jewish Sensibility in Hollywood Films- Part II," May 6-27, 1 p.m.
- Osteofit starts May 6, 11 a.m.
- Free demonstration class for meditation workshop, May 5, 11:30 a.m

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Romarising*, photos of Canadian Roma, is in the gallery until May 2
- Playwriting for beginners with **Julie Tepperman,** May 7- June 11, 7 p.m Must pre-register, ext. 0
- Yom Ha'atzmaut community celebration, April 26, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m
- **Lesley Sachs,** executive director of Women of the Wall, speaks April 27, 7:30 p.m
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Emily Carr and Vincent Van Gogh, April 27, May 4, 1:30 p.m
- *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, presented by the Alexander Showcase Theatre April 30-May 3, Al Green Theatre. For tickets, www.alexandershowcasetheatre.com
- **Adam Nayman** looks at the films of Joel and Ethan Coen, May 4-July 6, 7 p.m
- Work toward losing 10 pounds in 8 weeks. Classes start week of May 4. Ext 574
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, May 10, 1 p.m. Ext. 521 Inclusive ballroom and Latin dance workshop, May 10, 2:15 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147
- Daytime choir meets with **Gillian Stecyk,** Tuesdays, 1 p.m.; Open community choir meets Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Email music@mnjcc.org. Join the klezmer ensemble, conducted by **Eric Stein,** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m
- Register for Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singers edition, seeking male voices, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17-21. Ext. 250
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext 3025

- The JCCs go to Stratford to see *The Diary of Anne Frank*, May 20
- Beginner bridge starts April 30, 7 p.m
- JCC Book Club discusses *The Children Act*, April 28, 7 p.m
- **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental mix media," May 20-June 10, 7 p.m
- Drop-in for Israeli dance at Viva Thornhill Woods Retirement Community, Sundays starting May 3, 10:30 a.m. ■

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

What use is it to invoke the 'slippery slope'?

Dr. Michael Gordon

One of the commonly used terms to dissuade the public or policy-makers from pursuing a piece of legislation is the concept of the "slippery slope." The negative imagery is clear to most people, especially those living in northern climates. If you start sliding from the top, the forces of physics pre-determine that you will reach the bottom.

Slippery slopes sound as if they might not be good for the human species, although vast numbers of people seek them out, paying large sums of money to descend them, without anxiety about impending disaster.

For many seniors, slippery slopes, even minor ones are dangerous because of the risk of falls and fractures. What is fascinating is the number of public policy initiatives that have prompted critics to invoke the "slippery slope" argument to dissuade or frighten policy-makers and the public. Critics argue that a policy will ultimately negatively impact the population, society and culture, and the religious basis of a community will be endangered.

I recall hearing an academic rabbi warn that same-sex marriage threatens the foundation of families as we know them. Separate from his own religious views of such coupling, he expressed the fear that the impact on society would promote a "slippery slope" decline in heterosexual marriage and the essential societal basis of the family.

His decade-old prediction does not appear to have materialized in many jurisdictions in which same-sex marriage is now as ordinary as a Tim Hortons coffee and muffin.

A "slippery slope" warning was recently invoked in relation to the Canadian Supreme Court's decision to lift the ban on physician-assisted suicide (PAS). I have heard cries of despair, especially from religious physicians, from faith-based institutions of all denominations and from strongly religious politicians and ordinary citizens.

I vividly recall similar, impassioned warnings of the "slippery slope" when the state of Oregon passed its Dying with Dignity Act. But almost 20 years since the final version of the act passed in 1997, it is hardly a news story in that state anymore. There has been no rush to acquire self-destroying medications, nor has there been a massive movement into Oregon from elsewhere for PAS-seekers to receive lethal drugs from complicit physicians.

I have frequently been asked for my predictions of the impact of Canada's Supreme Court ruling. My reply is, "First, we have to see the federal and likely provincial take on the legislation and determine how it will affect each of us in our specific roles in the health-care system."

We should collectively pressure our governments for alternatives such as readily available exemplary palliative care to thwart the perceived need for PAS. For those unfortunately suffering, proper medical relief from physical and emotional symptoms through good palliative care should be a given.

Looking at many other PAS-allowing jurisdictions, physicians are not obligated to carry out PAS if they cite personal and/or religious reasons for opting out. There is nothing to suggest that faith-based health care institutions will be obligated to carry out PAS if it conflicts with the basic tenets of their religion, as has been the case for abortions, whether one agrees with such policies in publicly funded hospitals or not.

For those patients who may qualify for and request PAS under the carefully crafted guidelines (forthcoming from Canada's Parliament), there will generally be alternative sites they can turn to that have no intrinsic faith-based objection to PAS.

In Oregon, most of the patients who are provided with PAS receive the lethal medication in their own homes, surrounded by their families, in addition to the attending physician.

Invoking the "slippery slope" is not particularly compelling; the experience of time has demonstrated that it is usually an argument used to frighten people. It is evoked when good, empirical evidence is not readily available to demonstrate the basis of a true concern. So, let's put on our snow-grippers and learn to navigate "slippery slopes" in an analytical, empirical and historical perspective. ■

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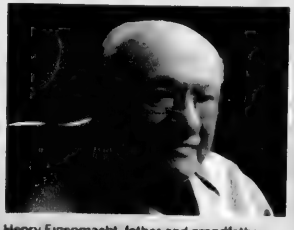
Family Moments

Happy fourth birthday Madelynn on April 2, from her parents Natalie Parnes-Doyle & Jamey Doyle, and two-year-old brother Liam, family and friends

Mazel tov to Rachel Schlosberg & Dan Elbaz on the celebration of their 10th wedding anniversary!

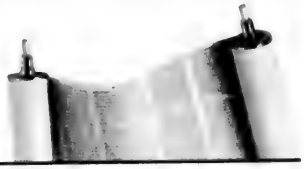


Henry Eigenmacht, father and grandfather, celebrated his 95th birthday on seder night with his children, grandsons and family. Mazel tov. We love you

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Tazria-Metzora | Leviticus 12:1-15:33



Yacov Fruchter examines what ritual sacrifice can teach us about childbirth
Rabbi Shalom Spira explores the halachic questions posed by circumcision
Rachael Turkienicz notes that *tahor* and *tameh* don't mean 'pure' and 'impure'

Yacov Fruchter

In Tazria, the first of the double parshiyot we read this week, we're introduced to a strange practice. After childbirth, a woman is required to bring a *kor ban chatat*, a sin offering. While I think connecting childbirth to ritual practice is powerful and important, similar to a bris or *simchat bat* being celebrated with the community in shul, it's hard to understand what "sin" the Torah could be referring to.

One approach is to reframe the *chatat* as not being connected to "sin," but rather to the *korban* brought following any ritual impurity as a way of returning to regular worship.

The Kli Yakar, a 16th-century sage, explains that in the throes of labour pains, it's natural for a woman to vow to never have sexual relations with her husband again as a way of avoiding future pain. Undoubtedly, he continues, after holding her baby in her arms, her heart is filled with joy and her pain is dulled, and she regrets making her vow. As such, the *chatat* is for not following through with her vow.

A different approach by the great teacher Nechama Leibowitz is quoted in the blog Torah Musings by Rabbi Gil Student.

"The new life within her made her deeply conscious of the greatness of the Creator, and also of her insignificance as 'dust and ashes' and impurity. Hence the need for a sin offering."

The Kli Yakar's answer emphasizes the power of childbirth and perhaps children in general as an unmatched source of joy and an instigator of love. On the other hand, Leibowitz sees it as a source of awe at the incredible power of God.

As we remember the birth pangs of the modern State of Israel on Yom Hazikron and celebrated its achievements and thank HaShem for the sheer miracle of its existence on Yom Ha'atzmaut, let us also find a way to recognize our collective mistakes and offer a *chatat*. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

By virtue of the fact that Leviticus 12:3 duplicates the mitzvah of circumcision already presented by Genesis 17:9-14, the Gemara (Shabbat 132a) derives that circumcision overrides the Sabbath. This license to desecrate the Sabbath applies both to the surgery, as well as to the subsequent therapeutic suctioning.

Accordingly, Mishnah Berurah (*Orach Chaim* 331, se'if katan 36) catalogues a dispute among the decisors whether an individual baby's surgery and suctioning can be orchestrated by separate people on the Sabbath, that is, a mohel and a motzetz acting in sequence. This dispute assumes heightened significance during today's HIV global pandemic.

Specifically, Rabbi J. David Bleich (*Bioethical Dilemmas*, Vol. 1, pp. 171-174) identifies an HIV-proof means of how to cleanse one's mouth prior to oral suctioning so as to protect the baby. The rinse consists of 151-proof rum (40 ounces) with 0.12 per cent chlorhexidine (0.24 ounces), swished for a full minute. In an audio-recorded 1991 lecture available at yutorah.org, Rabbi Bleich adds that the motzetz should immediately rinse his mouth with this recipe for another minute following the suctioning, to protect the motzetz from reverse-infection. Yet, the rinse is itself toxic, and so each time the motzetz must neither swallow it nor to allow it to contact his eyes or ears.

Given the complexity of this protocol, it seems clear that an independent motzetz is warranted. Thus, the permissibility of arranging such a high-tech circumcision on the Sabbath will ultimately hinge upon the controversy described by Mishnah Berurah. Assuming that the synagogue authority who supervises a circumcision is unable to resolve this dispute, two hypothetical alternatives would be to either allow ad hoc suctioning by way of a tube (analogous to Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Iggerot Mosheh, Orach Chaim 2:105, who countenances Selichot before halachic midnight on an emergency basis), provided that an explanatory announcement is broadcast), or to postpone the circumcision. ■

Rabbi Shalom Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

In this week's Torah portion, the text details conditions that get translated as "pure" and "impure." After childbirth you are "impure." Unexplained, pus-filled blisters make you "impure." The transition from impure to pure involves passage of time and immersion in a mikvah, a pool of natural running water.

The Hebrew words used for "pure" and "impure" are *tahor* and *tameh*. We do ourselves a great disservice by accepting the translation on face value without realizing the spiritual complexities involved. We associate "pure" with clean and "impure" with unclean. But in other parts of the text, we're told that when we touch holy objects, our hands become *tameh*, and certainly there is nothing unclean about a holy object.

Tahor and *tameh* are not indicative of purity and sin, or clean and unclean, but rather they are different states of being that reflect different ritual and relationship conditions. When a person is *tahor*, they are ritually open and all their interpersonal relationships flow. When a person is *tameh*, they are ritually closed and their relationships narrow to a small focus. Sometimes this can happen because we encounter things in the world, and sometimes it happens naturally with the ebb and flow of our bodies.

To transition from *tameh* to *tahor*, we watch the sun go down and we immerse ourselves into the earth, into the natural waters that flow and move. The waters of the mikvah return us to a balance of body and soul where we are again open spiritually to ritual and physically to our relationships.

In the modern world, we balk at what we consider to be outdated concepts, particularly when we speak of clean or unclean. But if we're able to broaden our thoughts toward the underlying concepts that speak of balance and imbalance and harmony of body and soul, we realize that, ancient or modern, Jewish values are timeless. ■

Rachael Turkienicz is executive director of Rachael's Centre in Toronto.

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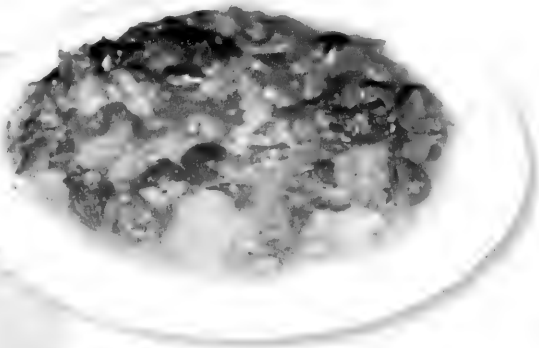

Matbucha

This recipe submitted by Hadassa Slater was given to her by Jewish Iraqi family friends

- ❑ 1 green pepper
- ❑ 1 to 2 tbsp. olive oil
- ❑ 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ❑ 1 small can diced tomatoes
- ❑ ¼ teaspoon chili flakes

Preheat oven to 350.

Slice the green pepper in half and roast in the oven until the skin darkens. Cool and slide the skin off. Cut into cubes about the same size as the diced tomatoes. In a skillet, heat the olive oil on low and add tomatoes. Once the liquid has evaporated, add the green peppers and cook for five minutes longer. Add garlic and cook an additional 2 minutes. Season to taste with chili flakes. Serve cold or at room temperature. Makes 8 servings.

Ceviche A La Mexicana

Submitted by Sandra Frydman de Helfant

- ❑ 1 lb. halibut, cut into ½-in. cubes
- ❑ 2 cups fresh lemon or lime juice
- ❑ 1 white onion, chopped
- ❑ 1 hot green chili, finely chopped (optional)
- ❑ ½ bunch coriander, chopped
- ❑ ½ lb. ripe tomato, chopped
- ❑ 1 tbsp. orange juice
- ❑ 1 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1 large avocado, sliced (for garnish)

Place fish and lemon/lime juice in a glass bowl. Make sure fish is well covered by juice and marinate in the refrigerator a minimum of two hours or overnight. Pour into a colander and drain juice. In a large bowl, mix fish with all remaining ingredients, except the avocado. Taste and adjust salt as necessary. Cover and refrigerate two more hours. Serve in a large or individual bowls and garnish with avocado. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Chicken Machmoosa and Fried Chickpeas

Rochelle Chester and Melanie Zeldman

Our father is from Poland and our mother was born in India, but her family was originally from Iraq and lived there for many generations.

We grew up in an Ashkenazi household in every way ritually, except for the food that our mother cooked. When we were little, we didn't always love our mother's unusual cooking!

As we got older and especially after our mother passed away, we started to long for those familiar smells and tastes of our childhood. These two dishes may be served together or separately. Enjoy!

Chicken machmoosa:

- ❑ 1 lb. ground chicken
- ❑ 1 large onion, chopped
- ❑ 1 tbsp. fresh ginger, chopped
- ❑ 1 garlic clove, minced
- ❑ 1 tbsp. turmeric
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste
- ❑ 2 tbsp. oil for frying

Fried chickpeas:

- ❑ 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ❑ 1/2 cup green onions, chopped
- ❑ 1/2 tbsp. ground cumin
- ❑ salt and pepper to taste
- ❑ 2 tbsp. oil for frying

Combine ground chicken with other ingredients and fry in oil until chicken is cooked. Add additional spices to taste.

Combine chickpeas, onions and seasonings. Fry in oil until chickpeas soften. Add additional spices to taste. Serve with basmati or plain rice. Number of servings: 4 to 6. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 23, 2015

Rabbi Jair Melchior: Jewish life will continue in Europe

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Rabbi Jair Melchior, 32, is the latest in a long line of chief rabbis. His grandfather and great-grandfather were each the chief rabbi of Denmark, and his father, former member of Knesset Rabbi Michael Melchior, served as chief rabbi of Norway. The younger Rabbi Melchior, who was brought up in Israel, currently serves as chief rabbi of Denmark, a country that is home to 6,000 to 10,000 Jews. He will participate via Skype in a forum on the future of European Jewry at Toronto's Beth Tikvah Congregation on April 26. He spoke to *The CJN* by telephone.

Do you think there is a future for Jews in Europe?

There is a future for Jews in Europe. I believe they will want to stay. We have today Jews all over the world. There is no reason to see Jewish existence in Europe disappear. It won't be as in the past, of course, going back to the glorious past of European Jewry. I find that very hard to imagine. But Jewish life in Europe exists, and in some countries just as it did before.

Why are people questioning the future of European Jewry?

I think there is a mixture of a few things. First of all, people remember a time where European Jewry was much more important and larger. So they see it goes down and think it will disappear, and that's not the necessary conclusion.

After the Holocaust, many Jews left. But we also see the opposite: Jews moving back to Germany and Jews moving around Europe.

The other thing is that all the talk about anti-Semitism and attacks against Jews blames Muslim immigrants, but it's very dangerous and very wrong of people to talk this way. We recognize that there is a problem and a danger, but it is still not very high. The vast majority of Muslims in Europe are not a danger to Jews in any way. When we look at numbers of Muslims and conclude that they will all be against Europe and against the Jews, I think this represents a mix of prejudice and fear that doesn't have a connection to real life in Europe.

So the problems facing Jews in Europe are both internal – Jews don't want to practise Judaism – and external, discrimination or intimidation?

I think the main challenge for Jewish life in Europe is the interest to continue Jewish life. You have in some countries, more than others, assimilation, but there are many places where young people have become active. I just don't see a reason to paint a complete picture of all of Europe. Yes, there are challenges, but there are challenges to all Jewish communities, including in the United States. Some challenges have to do with security, some challenges have to do with Jewish identity.

I think the main thing has to do with how Jewish identity will be stronger. It's a challenge of choice. People can actually choose to be Jews. In the past, no one asked Jews if they wanted to be Jews or not.

What is the situation for Jews in Denmark?

The main challenge is the identity challenge. How will it be part of Jewish children's lives in the future? The generations have changed. We don't have as many religious people as before. Many of the strong families who helped the community for the last 200 to 300 years have left Denmark for Israel. But you have a lot of Jews who have stayed here. It means it will change the way the community looks. Where it will go, I'm not sure.

The very big issue we have here is circumcision. I don't see a ban happening in the near future. It is a danger that if something like this happens, it will threaten the existence of the Jewish community here.

Why is this being raised? And aren't there also some European countries that have banned schchitah?

In Denmark, they did that last year, but we didn't have shchitah before, because we are too small a community. We import our meat.

The reason is a lot of secularization of Europe. People can't understand how religion can be so important in people's lives. They see circumcision as a religious rite that contradicts the free will of the child. People need to have a deeper understanding of what religious freedom is. We don't have many politicians who want to ban circumcision, because they understand the issue in a way that normal people in the street can't.

We hear that many Jews are planning to leave France. They don't see a future for themselves in Europe.

The French situation is very different than the Danish one. The French Jews are much more traditional and Sephardi-oriented. They are much less assimilated than in Denmark. There is a much larger Muslim community in France. It's around 10 to 11 per cent of the population.

There's a lot of talk about immigration, but the numbers don't support this talk so much. Also, no one talks about Jews who come back to France, who move to Israel for a few years and who find out how difficult it is to live economically and who move back to France. This also exists, and the numbers are surprisingly large.

So, it exists, but much less than people talk about in the media.

Rabbi Jair Melchior. JULIA & PAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Isn't there a reason for reports of French Jews leaving – the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, the kosher supermarket attack, the killings in Toulouse?

We also had an attack in Denmark two months ago.

So is this not something that worries the average French Jew and leads them to consider leaving Europe?

There are people who think about it, but it doesn't make up as big a part of people's lives as it seems. In France, have been quite a few attacks in the last few years, but it's still more dangerous to be in Israel. You could be hit by a terror attack.

So are you saying that people's fears are not rational?

You have people with some fear. I just lost a friend. I know the real danger that exists here, but it exists everywhere else in the world. The numbers are not that high, if you look back in history.

But isn't the trend pretty bad for the Jews? Twenty years ago, no one was talking about leaving western Europe?

In Denmark over the last few decades, the number of Jews who have left has gone down.

There is a change happening here, and it's happening in the rest of Europe. It's coming to a new balance. I'm not sure what will happen in the future, but I don't see a reason to say Jews will disappear or anything like that, definitely not because of terrorism. There have been attacks on Jews over the last 50 years. We had an attack on the synagogue in 1985 in Paris. It's not a new phenomenon in Europe that Jews are attacked, but it happens much less than in the far past.

There are reports that Jews can't walk wearing a kippah in some neighbourhoods without being threatened, spit upon and insulted, and they don't feel safe.

I think people exaggerate. I go with a kippah everywhere. More people go today with a kippah eveywhere than 40 years ago. It's not that you don't have rising attacks, cursing and spitting and hitting. These things happen, yes. But these are things that can change when social conditions change. The majority of these attacks are in difficult neighbourhoods with social problems. When these problems are solved, the violence will disappear, too.

Usually, the people who perpetrate these attacks are youngsters who just want to pick on someone, so they pick on homosexuals, on Jews or whomever they can see who is different.

And you have a specific problem with people from Palestinian backgrounds who have a deep hatred of Zionism, and they combine Zionism and Judaism. If you solve the situation in the Middle East between Palestinians and Israel, the same day you will solve the problem of anti-Semitism in Europe. The same day.

What is the situation of Jews in Germany?

Germany has had the fastest growing Jewish community in the world over the last 20 years. You have 20,000 Israelis living in Berlin. And you have Jews from other places moving to Germany. It's a rising Jewish community. In Europe, people move around. It happens all over Europe.

Does the European media's coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict play a role in people's attitudes to Jews in Europe?

It does. It's one of those things that many people are angry about. There's a lot of anti-Israel sentiment. In Denmark it's better than in other countries. It comes from a very deep human rights point of view.

The Scandinavian countries were also the most supportive for Israel in the beginning, because they are so occupied about human rights issues. They became very anti-Israel because of the conflict with the Palestinians. They take the Palestinian side, usually, and that's an issue in Scandinavia.

Does that spill over into anti-Jewish attitudes?

From the Muslim community, it does. They don't make a distinction.

So your overall message is...?

There will be incidents, but Jewish life will continue in Europe. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Early 20th century missionary group sparked a riot

Backstory

BILL GLADSTONE

Having recently marked its 25th anniversary, Jews for Judaism continues to counter the activities of missionary groups in Toronto that deceptively target Jews for conversion.

Christian missions to the Jews are certainly nothing new here. In the era before World War I, a time when Toronto's Jewish community was burgeoning with new arrivals, the words of one particular missionary, Rev. Shabetai Benjamin Rohold, sparked a riot in the Ward, the city's principal Jewish district.

A yeshiva-educated Jew who had converted, Rev. Rohold was the son of the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. He had arrived in Toronto in 1908 to head the Presbyterian Church's proposed "Mission to the Jews", having run a similar mission in Glasgow for years.

Rev. Rohold spent a month visiting Jewish homes, shops, synagogues and institutions. Then, using the generous funding designated by the church, he opened the mission on the southwest corner of Bay (Teraulay) and Elm streets. It provided a free medical dispensary with a trained nurse, a night school with English classes, a nursery, reading room, employment service, boys' club, children's choirs and sewing classes. It also offered gospel services, Bible classes, and prayer meetings with free Sunday morning breakfasts.

Although attendance was high, conversions were few. While the second annual Seekers After Truth Society supper attracted a mixed audience of some 200 Jews and Christians (probably the latter in the majority), in its first two years the mission had converted only six women and two men. Still, when the Teraulay Street premises became overcrowded, the church built a new and much larger mission at Elm and Elizabeth. The new premises even boasted a gymnasium and athletic rooms.

No question that the mission helped many a Jewish family in desperate straits. With excellent knowledge of both Hebrew and Yiddish, Rev. Rohold personally took newly arrived Jewish men seeking employment to various businesses where he had friends, often finding them jobs.

The actions of Rev. Rohold and other local missionaries drew a strong counter-reaction from the Jewish community. A free medical dispensary was launched, a rabbi opened an anti-missionary headquarters near the Presbyterian mission, and plans sprouted for a Jewish athletic club.

There is also no question that the missionaries had become a major irritant. One stationed himself daily outside the home of Rabbi Yosef Weinreb until the latter obtained an injunction from City Hall. Another callously remarked to the press that Jewish homes were just like saloons on Sundays for the amount of liquor consumed, prompting a flurry of angry letters to the editor. In response to complaints that Rev. Rohold was proselytizing schoolchildren, he was barred from the grounds of the local Elizabeth Street and McCaul Street schools. Some candidates for municipal office had even promised the Jews that the missionaries would be put off the streets.

The tension seemed to boil over on the evening of Sunday June 18, 1911, otherwise a pleasant summer evening with the sidewalks filled with people. According to newspaper reports, three speakers – a Zionist, a socialist, and a missionary – had stationed themselves at various corners of the intersection at Dundas and Elizabeth streets.

When someone began translating the missionary's anti-Jewish slurs into Yiddish, the crowd became agitated. According to reports, people began throwing things and a melee broke out. Soon more than a thousand people jammed the intersection. Although a battalion of police officers came running from a nearby police station with their batons at the ready, the riot persisted for three hours and resulted in numerous injuries and arrests.

Over the next few days the newspapers carried various articles and letters in which each side blamed the other. Rev. Rohold asserted that while his religious faith obliged him to target the Jews, no one was obliged to listen to him. Despite the dramatic confrontation, missionary activities continued as before.

Rev. Rohold, who left for Jerusalem in 1920, had been only one of several formerly Jewish missionaries in Toronto in that era. Another was Morris Zeidman, founder of the Scott Mission – but that's another story. ■

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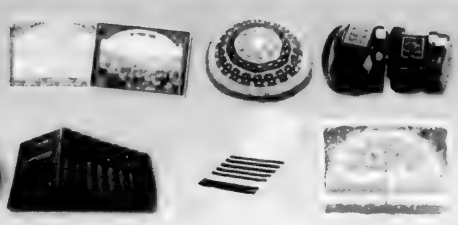

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New release in Vaughan's million-dollar community

The builders of Upper West Side are excited to announce an all new phase of luxury homes in Vaughan's prestigious estate community, located at Bathurst Street and Major Mackenzie Drive.

This new release features an elite collection of 41-foot and 50-foot homes on traditional depth lots. With many greenbelt, pie-shaped, crescent, cul-de-sac and parkside lots available, you can come home to a world of vibrant natural beauty at Upper West Side. With homes priced from just under $1 million, interested homebuyers can own first in Phase 2 by registering today at uwscommunity.com.

Brought to you by distinguished builders Aspen Ridge Homes, CountryWide Homes, Regal Crest Homes, The Conservatory Group and Townwood Homes, Upper West Side offers the finest community setting in all of Vaughan. This rich natural paradise features a branch of the Don River and prime conservation lands along its western border. A beautifully landscaped community pond offers the ideal place to sit, relax and enjoy the beauty of the great outdoors.

The homes at Upper West Side offer a standard of architectural distinction that is without rival. Each of the stunning home designs was crafted with the overall community aesthetic in mind, contributing to the kind of exquisite atmosphere that can only be achieved through the pursuit of an inspired creative vision.

Every lot was carefully paired with the home design that would best reflect the beauty of its surrounding landscape. The homes have also been thoughtfully incorporated into architecturally controlled streetscapes that celebrate the beauty of each individual home while contributing to a stunning overall aesthetic. The homes themselves feature a variety of architectural styles – classic, timeless designs reminiscent of the grand avenues of Forest Hill and Rosedale, and bold contemporary creations featuring an innovative blend of brick, stone and stucco materials. These are homes of remarkable beauty, with stone facades, grand porticoes and countless other exquisite exterior and interior details combining to create truly majestic residences. Offering Upper Thornhill's best selection of designs, a home that reflects your own personal standard of excellence awaits you at Upper West Side.

Upper West Side is ideally located to take advantage of the many pleasures of life in Vaughan. The community's family-friendly location in the heart of Upper Thornhill makes it easy to walk to schools, places of worship and parks within the broader residential community without ever having to cross major streets. There's also an abundance of shopping nearby on Yonge Street at places such as the Richmond Centre and Hillcrest Mall, not to mention a whole host of other impressive shops and restaurants close at hand.

Golf enthusiasts are certain to be pleased with the abundance of nearby courses such as Eagle's Nest Golf Club, Maple Downs Golf Course and Summit Golf and Country Club. And if you're looking to go a little further from home, you're sure to appreciate the convenience of nearby Richmond Hill GO Train Station, as well as easy access to Hwys. 407, 404 and 400 – all available to get you wherever you wish to go in the GTA. ■

To learn more about Upper West Side and register for your chance to own first in Phase 2, visit uwscommunity.com today

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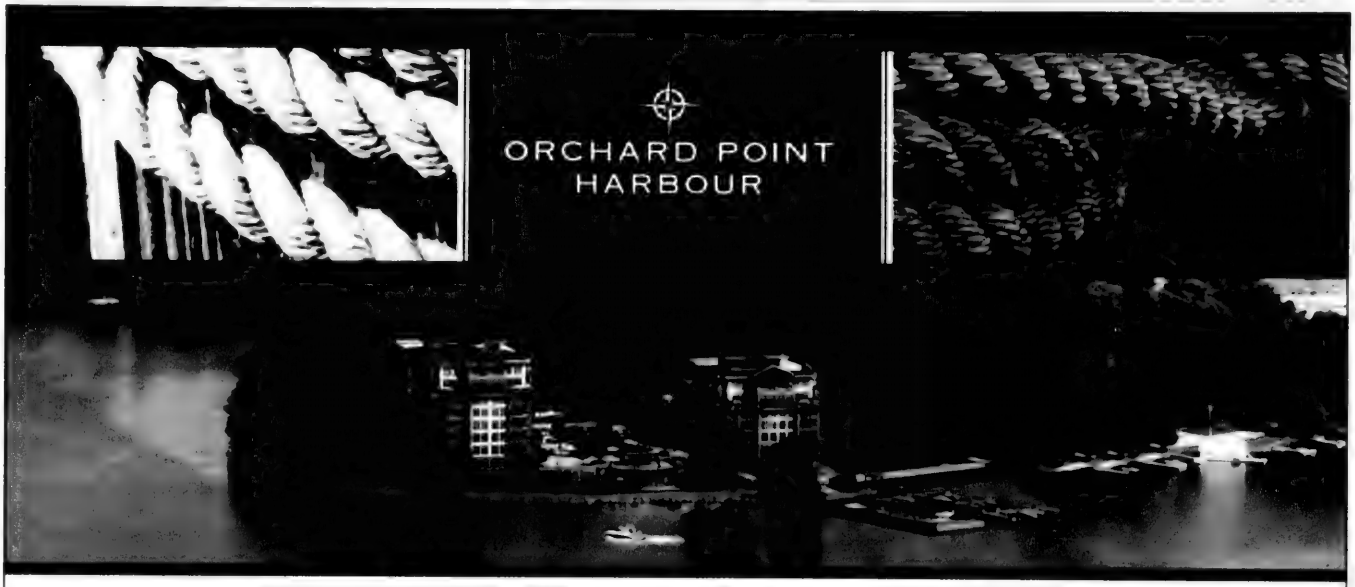

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Located off Bathurst Street just south of Rutherford Road, 9130 Bathurst is an exclusive new community of stylish townhomes nestled in a private enclave community of exquisite natural beauty. Backing onto the picturesque green spaces of the Thornhill Woods Valleylands, and featuring contemporary townhome designs on quiet crescents, this is a place that offers an ideal combination of refined natural living and modern convenience. Offering more than just your average townhome community, 9130 Bathurst is a place that lets you walk to local shops and restaurants, enjoy easy access to public transit and more.

The homes at 9130 Bathurst boast the most striking contemporary designs anywhere in the area. Elevations feature expansive windows that fill the interior spaces with warmth and light. Inside, open-concept floor plans have been designed to suit your modern family's needs, with 10-foot main floor ceilings, gourmet kitchens with granite countertops and stainless steel appliances, stand-alone soaker tubs in the lavish master ensuites and more. With an impressive variety of designs to choose from, you're certain to find your perfect home at 9130 Bathurst. These elegant townhomes are priced from the very low $700's.

9130 Bathurst also offers one of Vaughan's best locations, with a whole host of amazing lifestyle amenities all nearby. A number of Catholic, public and Jewish schools can be found just minutes away, so it's easy to provide your children with the best possible education. And the Rutherford Marketplace offers a great selection of shops and services, such as Longo's, LA Fitness, Aroma Café and dozens of other shops and restaurants. If you're looking for more serious shopping, nearby Vaughan Mills and Hillcrest Mall both offer a wonderful selection of stylish boutiques and major retailers. For those looking to spend a little more time outdoors there are a number of fine parks, golf courses and conservation areas all just moments away.

For the past 30 years Senator Homes has been proud to offer some of the finest new home communities in southern Ontario's most desirable locations. Founded by Angelo Breda, Senator's vision of building excellence is carried on today by son Paul and the senior management team led by Matthew Castelli. Both of these individuals bring a special set of talents that have helped elevate Senator's attention to quality craftsmanship and customer service to the highest possible levels. Collectively, these two individuals offer more than 90 years of building experience – experience they've put to good use with the construction of over 10,000 homes across the GTA. ■

Learn more about 9130 Bathurst at senatorhomes.com today

SPONSORED CONTENT

Orchard Point offers cottage tranquility

Orchard Point Harbour is a prime example of the trend towards resort-style living. Nestled on 500 metres of prime waterfront at the Narrows between Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching in Orillia, these prestigious residences offer the tranquillity of the cottage lifestyle with the conveniences of an urban condominium.

Characterized by its sophisticated design, first-class amenities and panoramic views, this is ideal for empty nesters and those looking to downsize. In addition, it is a desirable vacation property for those seeking the lakeside lifestyle without the hassles associated with maintaining a stand-alone property. Conveniently, Orchard Point Harbour is only an hour's drive from most points in the GTA, so you'll spend more time in your personal oasis and not in your car.

No detail has been overlooked. All suites in Phase Two offer breathtaking views of Lake Simcoe, and luxury finishes are standard throughout. Suites feature granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, engineered plank and porcelain tile flooring, gourmet kitchens, lavish bathrooms, and sliding glass doors onto a generous terrace or balcony. The condo buildings feature timber and stone accents to blend with the surrounding natural landscape. You'll appreciate the heated underground parking, and the welcoming designer-decorated lobby with fireplace and seating.

Orchard Point Harbour offers a selection of penthouses with spectacular views and the upscale finishes offered in the regular suites, plus premier kitchen cabinetry, solid-stone countertops, 10-foot ceilings and much more. A collection of Lakeside suites are also on offer, with premium features.

The comprehensive roster of amenities at Orchard Point Harbour include: the Lakeside Club, a fitness centre at the water's edge complete with a pool, hot tub, sauna, and yoga studio. The rooftop terrace and lounge are great for entertaining, with unparalleled views of Lake Simcoe. Boaters will appreciate the on-site Starport Marina, making it easy to explore the Trent-Severn Waterway, the Great Lakes, and beyond.

Orchard Point Harbour is minutes away from the charming city of Orillia by car or boat, offering quaint boutique shops, cafes, restaurants, theatres, and a full-service hospital. For an exciting night out, Casino Rama, with its gaming tables and big-name concerts, is 10 minutes away. There's plenty for outdoor lovers too. The area is a four-season playground with ski resorts, golf courses, walking trails, and parks.

Planning to dock your boat at Orchard Point Harbour? There are many exciting boating destinations, including nearby Mara Provincial Park, which is a short four-minute boat ride from your marina slip. There you can enjoy pristine beaches, swimming, camping, and other recreational activities.

Visit the new sales centre now under construction in Orillia, featuring a scale model, detailed renderings, Phase Two floor plans, kitchen and ensuite vignettes as well as examples of the various finish choices that will enable you to customize your suite.

Phase Two suite sales will launch this spring with a selection of one- or two-bedroom suites, ranging in size from 800 to 2,000-square-feet plus and starting from the low $300,000s. Occupancy is slated for summer 2017. ■

Call or visit website for more details. OrchardPoint.ca, 1-888-713-7134.

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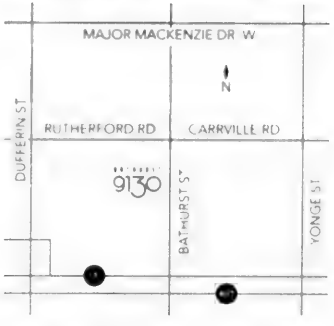

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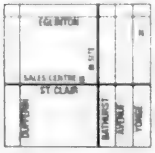

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The Barrington Condominium Flats

At The Barrington Condominium Flats, right on the subway at Bathurst and St. Clair, Lash Group of Companies and The Goldman Group have introduced new suite designs and pricing to offer expanded opportunities to live in luxury overlooking scenic Forest Hill. Like the highly successful 500, 530 and 743 St. Clair Avenue West condominiums they developed nearby, this dynamic duo have a unique insight into the urban chic that permeates this prestigious residential area.

Within blocks, suite owners at The Barrington will also be able to access intriguing boutiques and trendy eateries including Catch Restaurant and The Stockyards. On Christie Street, the dynamic community hub, Artscape Wychwood Barns, offers culture, cuisine, urban agriculture, plus a variety of activities and events. The area around The Barrington is also dotted with libraries, parks, trails, bike lanes and a multitude of services. With a Walk Score of 98 and a Bike Score of 88, this address offers the convenience, health and environmental benefits of walking and biking to shop, dine and run errands.

Ideally located at 1486 Bathurst St., The Barrington is steps to the St. Clair West subway, meaning residents can make the trip to downtown Toronto in less than 30 minutes. The building is on four streetcar and bus routes as well.

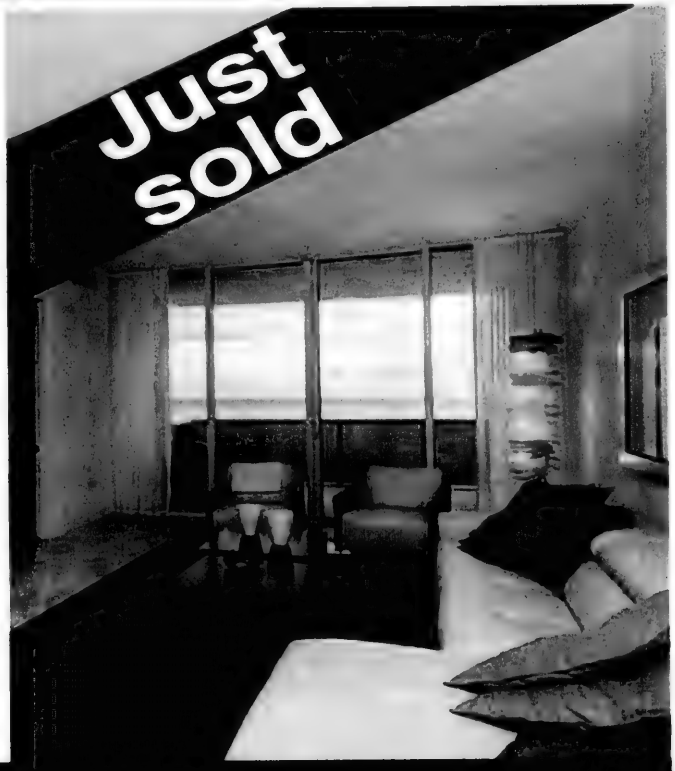
In the midst of it all, The Barrington will inject a fresh, contemporary architectural flair. Designed by El Richmond Architects, the 18-storey tower's striking exterior will frame stylish interiors appointed by Tanner Hill and Associates. A sophisticated tone is set in the lobby, where residents and guests can access attentive executive concierge. On the fifth floor, an elegant multi-purpose room has a catering kitchen and dining area, and the terrace features seating areas, barbecues and outstanding city and lake views. The lounge area encompasses billiards and a large multi-media wall. For the ultimate in convenience, The Barrington's parking facility houses an automobile elevator (a first in Toronto) that maximizes space and minimizes energy consumption.

To accommodate the needs of diverse purchasers, The Barrington Condominium Flats offers two new suite groupings: The London Flats and The Knightsbridge Collection. Features and finishes include nine-foot ceilings, deep baseboards, pre-engineered hardwood flooring, porcelain tiles, spa-inspired bathrooms and kitchens with sleek modern cabinetry, under-valance lighting, granite or quartz counters and stainless steel appliances. Every suite also has at least one balcony or terrace.

The Barrington's 93 suites offer layouts of one, two and three bedrooms, in sizes from 555 to 2,200 square feet. Prices start from the low $300s.

Lash Group of Companies and The Goldman Group offer the peace of mind that comes with longevity. These family-owned firms boast more than a century of combined experience, having developed residential, commercial and industrial projects in Toronto and the United States. Register now to learn more about The London Flats and The Knightsbridge Collection. ■

For information, stop by the Presentation Centre at 522 St. Clair Avenue West – Monday to Thursday Noon to 6 p.m., weekends Noon to 5 p.m. Call 416-410-4444 or visit www.barringtoncondos.com



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A nest of their own

The Nest is over 70 per cent sold. There are still some great options available. Units range from 464-square-feet one-bedrooms starting at $256,900, to 1,100-square-feet two-bedrooms+den into the $600,000s. Maintenance fees are 53 cents per square foot and include unlimited high speed Internet access.

For almost 60 years, The Rockport Group of companies has been engaged in the development, construction, sales and management of quality residential, commercial and industrial properties.

Rockport pioneered the condominium concept in Ontario. Jack Winberg, CEO, says, "my father was the first ever to register a condo in the city, in 1968."

Following in his father's innovative footsteps, Winberg and now his son Daniel, demonstrate this type of forward thinking in Rockport's new project, The Nest, in the emerging, hip, midtown Toronto neighbourhood of Hillcrest Village.

To be completed by the fall of 2016, The Nest is just right for singles, young families and empty nesters. This nine-storey midrise is a new project on St. Clair Avenue West, with 122 suites ranging from one-bedroom suites to two bedrooms plus den.

Street appeal is the result of the building's design of unique stepped stacked glass boxes with a distinctly geometric sensibility. Most suites will have balconies or terraces that are six-feet wide. "Anything less and you can't put a table and two chairs out there," Winberg says. The terraces and balconies will also have gas hookups for barbecues, eliminating the need for residents to awkwardly "schlep" propane tanks onto elevators and down hallways, he adds. "Because who wants to do that?"

"At Rockport, we are completely focused on the needs of our customer, learning what our customer wants and values in a home and then striving to exceed expectations through excellence in design, construction and finishes. The Nest is the result of this process, the best possible combination of features and prices for this neighbourhood."

This desire to exceed expectations is demonstrated in the building's amenities, sure to appeal to singles and young families. There is a beautiful indoor entertainment space for hosting parties, and a cool outdoor roof-top lounge with a fire pit, fully equipped kitchen, and barbecues for residents to enjoy the view, socialize and hang out. This 'green' building is built with geothermal heating and cooling and other sustainable features including an innovative fibre cement panel cladding.

Winberg says, "We know that in the long term these innovations will save owners money and enhance the value of their property."

The Nest also offers other thoughtful and surprising amenities that are sure to be appreciated. Every unit has unlimited high speed Internet included in the maintenance fees. Additional concierge services can be accessed through a smartphone app, in which you can arrange to take care of dry cleaning, shoe repair and other errands through a conveniently located locker drop off and pick up. A doggy spa on the main floor means residents with dogs can wash off paws and coats, so Fido doesn't track mud inside.

Winberg says, "I and other parents I know, want to help our kids to buy their first home. Hillcrest Village is a great neighbourhood to consider. Lots of young Jewish families are already moving in, attracted to the neighbourhood's youthful energy and proximity to amenities they want, including the new Leo Baeck campus which is just down the street. The Nest is an amazing investment opportunity for parents who want to help give their kids a start." ■

Gluckstein guides new home buyers

STEPHEN SWEET
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Trying to figure out what to do with a new house?

One of the best in the business has some tips for you.

Brian Gluckstein of Gluckstein Design, who is internationally recognized as one of the top 35 designers in the world by *Interior Design Journal*, sheds some light on a number of key topics, including matching a buyer with their ideal dwelling.

"You look at a few things," Gluckstein said. "You look at the style of the environment, whether it's modern or traditional, and you take into account the style of the structure, because that often dictates a great deal. And then, you look at the personality of your client.

"Are they young or old? Adventurous or traditional?" Gluckstein added. "You see what's going to be comfortable for them, what's going to reflect their lifestyle, and so you do an evaluation of the clients and their spaces.

"And then from there, we come up with a design proposal that usually is right on...a marriage of design and client."

As an interior designer, Gluckstein gets involved far before the finishing touches.

"Usually, we'll start when the house is in the design stages," Gluckstein said. "With a condo or house, we usually get involved in the design stages, before it's been built."

Being a part of the process that early pays dividends later.

"When you do a new house, you really want to work on the layout of the house," Gluckstein said. "We're involved before construction, so we're part of that initial team and we often have a great deal of involvement in the layout of the house or condo.

"It's important for us to be involved in the beginning because of the electrical plans, shapes and sizes of rooms, and all the finishes and designs, [which are] all very important," Gluckstein added. "We're really involved in the planning of the spaces."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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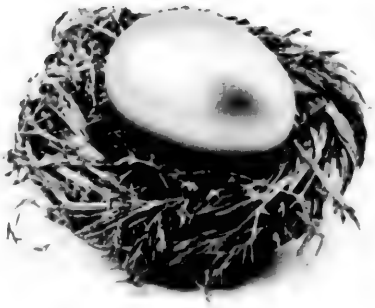

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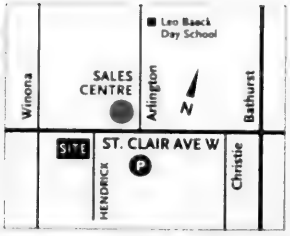

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Legacy Park celebrates grand opening at Thornhill City Centre

Among Liberty Development Corporation's most successful multi-phase condominium projects is the celebrated Thornhill City Centre, a master-planned residential community on Bathurst Street, just south of Highway 407.

With nine condo towers and 60 townhomes, already occupied since the community was first launched a decade ago, Liberty has released Thornhill City Centre's final phase, a 25-storey condo building called Legacy Park.

To celebrate the grand opening of Legacy Park, and welcome first-time buyers to the community, Liberty Development recently hosted a unique first-time buyer seminar. With hundreds in attendance, the event featured insightful comments from a panel of industry experts including Andrew Brethour, of PMA Brethour Realty Inc.; Greg Tucci, from Falconeri, Munro, Tucci LLP; and Renata Issakova, a mobile mortgage specialist from TD Bank.

First-time buyers explored the sales centre and learned about Legacy Park's distinctive architecture (by the award winning Kirkor Architects), amazing amenities, and its well designed, large suites, which range from 563 to 968 square feet (from one-bedroom to two-plus-den layouts).

Amenities at Legacy Park will include a state-of-the-art fitness facility, as well as a sauna and whirlpool for residents to relax and unwind. Other features and amenities will include a party room with sleek lounge-style seating and a modern bar, a media room and a golf simulator.

Legacy Park will overlook the community's centrepiece, a five-acre lush green oasis named Thornhill Green, the City of Vaughan's first urban park. Offering the ultimate in "green" living, Legacy Park will raise the bar in sustainability, with environmentally friendly features such as the beautifully landscaped roof top terrace.

Located just north of the fashionable Promenade Centre and the dynamic new shopping plazas along Centre Street, Legacy Park at Thornhill City Centre is conveniently located just minutes from public transit via VIVA, York Region Transit and the TTC.

With quick access to public transit, getting around the region will be easy, while Legacy Park's proximity to Highways 407, 400 and the 404 will make it easy to get just about anywhere in the GTA.

"While we celebrated the launch of Legacy Park with first-time buyers, this is a community that appeals equally to those looking to downsize," says Liberty Development's senior vice-president and general counsel, Marco Filice.

"It has something for everyone. A prime location, iconic architecture and a range of dynamic lifestyle features, Legacy Park promises to be one of the most successful launches, in one of our most successful communities." ■

For your chance to live at Legacy Park, visit the sales centre at 7890 Bathurst St. today to view the model suite, go to www.legacyparkcondos.com, call 905-731-8302 or email info@legacyparkcondos.com.

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Pointers for buying a new home

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Gluckstein, who was named Canada's favourite interior designer by *Canadian House and Home*, typically loves what he's working on at the moment.

"I think your current projects are always your favourite projects," Gluckstein said. "You're trying new things, so it's always the projects of the moment which are fun projects."

But what was his most beloved job ever?

"I could never tell you my all-time favourites, because then what would the other people think?" said Gluckstein with a chuckle.

Although Gluckstein does enjoy working at the cutting edge of design, he warns buyers about getting too caught up in the current times.

"I think that there are always a lot of trends and I always say that you don't want to do any of the permanent elements too trendy," Gluckstein said. "If a certain colour is popular right now, I'd restrict that to accessories or paint.

"Where you have to be much more thoughtful about the longevity of things is when you're doing the permanent parts of the house, like the floor, kitchen, bathroom, things like that."

That being said, there are popular current options that should hold up well into the future.

"We're seeing a lot of light-coloured reclaimed floors, wood floors that have a taupe grey wash to them, [as] a big trend right now," Gluckstein said. "It's not something that's trendy, because we've seen it in Europe for centuries, but it's come to Canada and it's very serviceable because it wears very well. [Some more] big moves are

towards free-standing tubs in the bathrooms, and in kitchens, we're seeing cabinetry looking more like furniture and not all matching," Gluckstein added. "As well, home gyms are big trends now, [ones]that have exercise areas, massage rooms, saunas, steams, and whirlpools.

"It's the whole idea of wellness, exercise, and fitness, but in a very sophisticated way." ■

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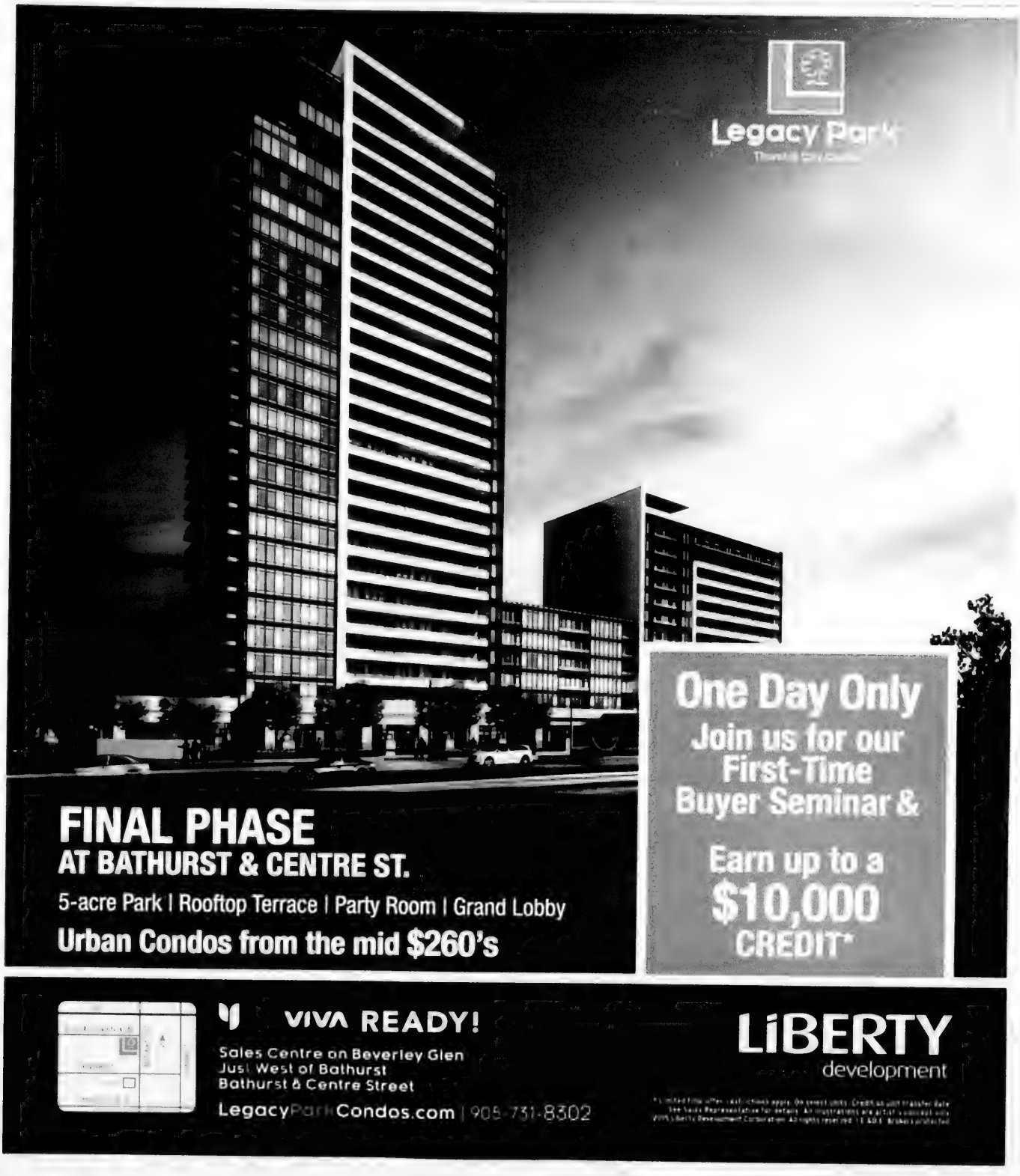
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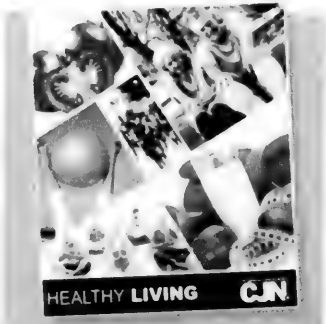

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Is Israel fulfilling its promise?

Diverse panel tackles tough questions about the future of the Jewish state. **PAGE 12**

In defence of *Eshet Chayil*

Is the classic Shabbat poem outdated or a timeless ode to Jewish women? **PAGE 25**

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Skinnamarink singer remembered, and court nixes violent agunah solution

Lois Lilienstein was part of famed trio

Lois Lilienstein of the internationally famed children's singing group Sharon, Lois and Bram, died April 22 in Toronto at age 78 of a rare form of cancer. The trio, perhaps best known for their signature song *Skinnamarink*, formed in 1978. Their TV series *The Elephant Show* ran on CBC from 1984 to 1989. A second series, *Skinnamarink TV*, ran for 52 episodes in the late 1990s. The group received the Order of Canada in 2002. Born Lois Goldberg in Chicago, she came to Canada in 1966 when her husband became a sociology professor at York University. She stopped touring with the group in 2000.

Sharon, Lois and Bram, with a friend

Rabbis guilty in *get* kidnapping case

The problem of agunot, women whose husbands won't grant them a *get* (a religious divorce), is serious, but apparently not serious enough to warrant kidnapping, a U.S. court ruled last week. Three Orthodox U.S. rabbis were convicted in Trenton, N.J., of conspiracy over a scheme to force Jewish men to grant *gets* to their wives by kidnapping them. A jury debated for three days after a two-month trial in the case of Rabbi Mendel Epstein, 69, of Lakewood, N.J., Rabbi Jay Goldstein, 60, and Rabbi Binyamin Stimler, 39, both of Brooklyn, N.Y. They were part of a group that kidnapped men and used violence, including beatings and stun guns, until they agreed to give *gets*. The ring was caught in an FBI sting in 2013 in which agents posing as a Jewish woman and her brother sought its services.

Rivlin and Bibi spurn Carter

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have reportedly rejected invitations to meet with former U.S. president Jimmy Carter after consulting with Israel's Foreign Ministry and National Security Council. An unnamed senior Israeli official said the recommendation not to meet Carter was due to his "anti-Israeli stance" in recent years, including his strong criticism during last summer's Gaza conflict. Israel did, however, approve his request to visit Gaza. Carter, who is slated to visit Israel in the coming weeks, has planned meetings with other Israeli and Palestinian leaders. ■

Gematria

23,320

The number of Israeli fallen soldiers and terror victims honoured on Yom Hazikaron

28%

The percentage of Israelis who made their voting decision at the last minute. A new poll found 15 per cent decided who to vote for in the March election on the way to the polls, while 13 per cent decided in the final days of the campaign.

Quotable

"

The openness of the movement is an extraordinary gift.

— Rabbi Deborah Waxman, head of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. See p. 42

Inside today's edition

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COVER PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

In Jewish & Digital, Mark Mietkiewicz delves deeper into Israel's national anthem.

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Letters to the Editor

The beauty of a group

I would like to express my disappointment and disbelief that an article in *The CJN* would insult group bat mitzvahs ("Celebrating an individual bat mitzvah," April 16). In fact, the article went so far as to question "how significant a Jewish component could [a girl] perform when there were 10 other girls celebrating alongside her?"

Clearly, the author didn't attend the Akiva School group bat mitzvah held last month at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. That event was where my own daughter, Nicole, celebrated her special Jewish moment. This beautiful event featured 20 amazing girls, each with their own parshah, and learning from Lisa Steinmetz, director of Jewish learning at Akiva School.

What if my family could not afford our own bat mitzvah and only if we took part in a group could it happen? What if my daughter felt more comfortable in a group? Is she less of a Jew and is the milestone less significant?

I had my bar mitzvah at the Shaar Hashomayim, and now my daughter celebrated her bat mitzvah on the same bimah 29 years later. It was a magical event.

However Jews choose to follow their religious beliefs and commemorate special events, whether individual or in a group, whether in a synagogue, a hotel, or a home, it is their choice and it's just as important and memorable.

Steven Singer
Montreal

How to remember the Shoah

The juxtaposition of rabbis discussing how to memorialize the Shoah and the essay of Shireen Afzal ("Genocides still happen, and I'm sick of indifference," April 16) was as dramatic as it was appropriate.

The rabbis recognized that if it's not ritualized and doesn't lead to action, memorializing simply will not lead to a change in humanity's behaviour.

Then we turn the page and read an essay from a teenager who is committing herself to that very thing, action, by using her writing talents to discuss the Shoah and other genocides with a view to helping develop an "awareness and compassion in humanity" that actually might contribute to the changing of humanity's behaviour "one word at a time."

It would seem that Shireen's teacher, Ben Gross, at Woburn Collegiate Institute, and presumably other teachers in other public schools, are presenting Holocaust education in a format that is working. Kudos to *The CJN* for sharing Shireen's essay with its readers.

Ron Hoffman
Toronto

Amortizing school tuition

Jewish day school spans about 14 years and current annual tuition is about $15,000 to $25,000. This means that Jewish education will cost about $300,000, after tax dollars, per child. That's quite a distance from a university tuition loan, where the need is for between one and five years and is most often backed by the government ("Why not amortize day school tuition?" April 16).

It seems unrealistic to believe that banks will make loans without substantial guarantees or that UJA Federation could possibly act as a guarantor to the necessary degree. So my vote is for confronting reality.

There are many good and valid arguments for organizing the community to "fight city hall" and work for a justified provincial contribution toward the secular portion of the education offered by the Jewish day schools. It will not be an easy struggle, as I foresee the most difficult resistance will be from our own community: from those who wish to fit in, from those whose principles dictate that preserving Jewish identity is no longer of consequence; from those who view Jewish education as a privilege without understanding its long-run necessity for Jewish preservation; and from those in our community who have political power, but will not spend it for this enterprise.

It is, however, a worthwhile struggle. The issue now is to find a David to lead us in battle with this Goliath and the Philistines.

Joe Kislowicz
Toronto

Signs of the times

I very distinctly remember seeing "No Jews no dogs" on a hotel in the New Toronto/Long Branch area in the late 1930s ("'No dogs, no Jews': no evidence," April 9). I was about 10 at the time.

Seymour Tobe
Toronto

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Are rabbis spectators or players?

Sports can be a powerful rhetorical tool to illuminate truths about Jewish life and help religious leaders connect with their congregants

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Scheier: Last week, my wife and I hosted our pre-marriage group at our home. The couples who took part showed tremendous sacrifice by attending this program, since the event coincided with the first night of the NHL playoffs.

I often wonder about the place of professional sports in religious life. Sometimes we embrace spectator sports as a community-building opportunity, such as the young families Super Bowl party we host every year. At other times, as when a major contest coincides with Shabbat services or a community lecture, we begrudge the hold that sports have on our congregants. Sometimes, we discuss sports in our sermons to illuminate truths about Jewish life.

How does sports fandom factor into the life of your congregation?

Rabbi Cutler: Alas, this year we have not experienced the tension between watching our local NHL franchise in the playoffs and doing something more synagogue-oriented.

The relationship between sports and Judaism is well reflected in a tale, published in *Time* magazine in 1951, involving the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Rabbi Solomon Schechter, and his student Louis Finkelstein, who went on to become a future JTS president.

Rabbi Schechter, walking one day with Finkelstein, stopped at a newsstand to read the latest World Series scores. "Can you play baseball?" he asked his companion. "No," admitted Finkelstein. "Remember this," said the old man. "Unless you can play baseball, you'll never get to be a rabbi in America."

The story is about the subordinate status of sports in relation to Judaism, but also the recognition that religious leaders must engage in worldly interests in order to connect with congregants and non-Jews. Personally, I think it's wise to use whatever means necessary to build relationships and to engage sports metaphors, so long as they elevate the conversation or sermon. And on an institutional level, Beth Tzedec is now in its second year of lectures on the topic of "Jews in Sports."

Rabbi Scheier: I have a vivid recollection from my childhood when my sports hero – a professional baseball player – was arrested for a drug-related offence. I recall my sense of disappointment when I found out. My mistake, I believe, was that I admired him for being something he never aspired or claimed to be – a leader of integrity and morality. I had confused athletic excellence with moral excellence.

Where sports excel are as a lens for expressing our values. Just this past week, I shared a story with my congregation about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, as he encountered a father and a son walking to a Brooklyn Dodgers game at Ebbets Field. He asked the young boy to explain baseball to him, and the boy explained that, if one team has a large lead toward the end of the game, the fans might leave early.

"Do the players leave early?" the rabbi inquired. "Of course not," the boy responded. "They have to finish the game!"

The lesson, of course, is central to religious life: are we spectators or players? When times are difficult, do we leave the game, or play out our destinies? This is but one example of how sports can be a powerful rhetorical tool to teach values.

Rabbi Cutler: When Rabbi Gunther Plaut, the long-serving rabbi of Holy Blossom Temple, passed away, the *New York Times* ran a lengthy eulogy. It concluded with the following story.

"In 1935, shortly after he came to the United States, the future Rabbi Plaut received an eloquent lesson in textual interpretation and the reader's need for a learned guide. Newly arrived in Cincinnati, he was shown an article in the sports section of a local newspaper by his fellow seminarians. Glancing at the headline, he recalled years later, he thought the article was about a revolution in Italy. The headline said, 'Reds murder Cardinals.'"

I have long suspected that rabbis have turned to sports as an entry point into "normal" life. In a field that generally focuses on a small segment on the population and limits most meaningful interactions to one's co-religionists, a turn to fandom enables a rabbi to share something with his non-Jewish neighbours and be part of something greater than himself that is completely apart from any official duties. ■

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From the Archives | Junior gathering

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Members of the National Council of Jewish Juniors gather at 44 St. George St. in Toronto in 1932.

SeeJN | Anthems at Queen's Park

KEVIN DIAMOND PHOTO

The choir of the Leo Baeck Day School's south campus performed *O Canada* and *Hatikvah* as the Israeli flag was raised at Queen's Park April 23 to mark Yom Ha'atzmaut. The students sang the anthems in the presence of Israeli Consul General DJ Schneeweiss, dignitaries from the provincial legislature, and the leadership of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

From Yoni's Desk

Does Oskar Groening deserve leniency?

Oskar Groening, currently standing trial in Lunenburg, Germany, may not be the last Nazi prosecuted for war crimes committed during the Holocaust. In fact, if lawyers are able to argue convincingly that the "Bookkeeper of Auschwitz" was an accessory to 300,000 murders at Auschwitz, they will endorse a template by which dozens more could be tried for their roles in the Nazi death machine.

Whatever the decision, one thing is certain: we are nearing the end of the era of Nazi hunting. At 93, Groening is healthy and aware. By all appearances, he is fit to be tried, even at this later stage in life.

But he is the exception. As the Simon Wiesenthal's chief Nazi hunter, Efraim Zuroff, put it last week, "It would very much surprise me if Oskar Groening... is not cursing his good health and bad luck. For if he had lived to a slightly younger age, or had been in bad health, it is almost certain that he never would have been prosecuted in a German court for his complicity in the crimes committed at the most notorious of the Nazi death camps."

For every elderly Nazi who may yet be brought before the courts, many more will die without being held to account. Soon, there won't be anyone left to prosecute. That's reason enough to pay close attention to the Groening trial, but even if there were hundreds more cases like it on the slate, this particular one would stand out. Groening has proven himself an unusual defendant right from the start.

Unlike many Nazi war criminals prosecuted before him, he has not tried to deny his role at Auschwitz. Quite the opposite – he has affirmed that he played a part in the Nazi extermination effort, and that he is morally complicit in the diabolical operation at Auschwitz. "This moral guilt," Groening told the courtroom during testimony, "I acknowledge here, before the victims, with regret and humility."

That apology hardly suffices as penance, especially since Groening maintains he is not legally guilty. But it is nonetheless distinct in the history of Nazi trials, and Groening appears to be sincere. On the fifth day of the trial, Groening even embraced one of the survivors who testified against him, and kissed her on the cheek. He has also spoken out against Holocaust deniers for years, issuing a powerful message to those who shamelessly claim the Nazi genocide is a myth: "I want to tell those deniers that I have seen the crematoria," he has said. "I have seen the burning pits, and I want to assure you that these atrocities happened. I was there."

It's tempting to think maybe we should make an exception in the case of Oskar Groening, just this one time, and allow a man who obviously regrets his past to live out his remaining years in peace. But that misses the point. Oskar Groening's job was to sort through the confiscated property of prisoners brought in cattle cars to Auschwitz. He witnessed Jews and others being gassed to death. In his own way, he helped make that happen.

He was there, and nothing can change that. ■ — YONI

RETROSPECTIVE

Al Waxman will forever be the King of Kensington

Jordan Adler

One day, Sara Waxman was driving around Montreal with a French-Canadian guide. Waxman told the woman that she was a widow but that her husband had visited Montreal quite often. When the guide asked for her late husband's name, she replied, "Al Waxman."

"The King of Kensington?" the Québécois guide asked, stunned.

Waxman says the guide instantly pulled over and explained that her father watched *King of Kensington* — the CBC series that made Al Waxman a household name across the country – religiously. Her father couldn't speak English, the guide said, but he made sure to watch the show every time it was on television.

"He had an impact in many, many small ways," Waxman says of her husband, who would have turned 80 this year. "After he died, I got over 1,000 letters – and I still have them – from strangers all over the country."

Even 14 years after his death, Sara and son, Adam Waxman, often hear about the impact *King of Kensington* had on the lives of Canadians. Some tell them the show helped to teach their parents English. Sara says a young boy ran away from home and travelled to Kensington Market to meet Al Waxman, who played convenience store owner Larry King on the popular CBC series.

"He was so tender," Adam told *The CJN*. "I think a lot of people felt they knew him because he put so much of himself into his characters."

Audiences hoping to spend some time in the company of the late acting great should line up early for the Canadian Archival series at this year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

The TJFF will play an afternoon of *King of Kensington* episodes May 2 at the ROM Theatre. A Q&A with Sara Waxman, series creator Perry Rosemond, actors Jayne Eastwood and Rosemary Radcliffe and producer Joe Partington will follow the episodes. Adam will lead the Q&A.

The archival series will also highlight some of Waxman's screen work. On May 9, the festival will screen *Sun in My Eyes*, Waxman's film debut, where he plays a Jewish man confronting the darkness of Nazi-occupied Poland. The same day, audiences can check out *The Winnings of Frankie Walls*, for which Waxman won an Earle Grey Award, the Gemini Award for lifetime achievement.

When she first saw *The Winnings of Frankie Walls*, Sara was astonished to discover that the character in the opening scene was her husband. She didn't even recognize him until a few minutes into the film.

"All his performances amazed me because I know the man," she says. "I know every movement, I know every expression. [On-screen], his whole body, his whole demeanour… he became a stranger."

The son of Jewish immigrants from Poland, Waxman was on his way to becoming a lawyer when the flu made him miss several months of classes. He abandoned law school to pursue acting, initially much to his parents' chagrin.

Waxman was working as a director at the CBC and doing occasional acting gigs when he was offered *King of Kensington*. Although he was first asked to direct, Waxman campaigned for the part of the lead character. The producers approved.

The part of King came to him naturally. As a boy, Waxman grew up near the corner of Spadina Avenue and Nassau Street in Kensington Market in Toronto, living in a small apartment above a poultry shop.

Al Waxman in *King of Kensington*

CBC STILL PHOTO COLLECTION, HARRY DAWES

The show was an instant hit, pulling in nearly two million Canadian viewers a week. Canadians responded to King's working-class sensibility, as well as the show's humour, social commentary and ethnic diversity.

"He was so unabashedly proud to be Canadian and to be Jewish," Adam says. "He wasn't one of those actors who would change his name so it sounded less ethnic. He was a really strong proponent of promoting Canada."

He also began Al's Gym, where he mentored professional actors rehearsing a role or preparing an audition. Waxman gave advice and his time, and didn't ask for any money in return.

Adam says that despite his father's busy schedule, he was constantly available for him.

"He would fly home from Los Angeles to help me with my math homework or to watch my judo tournaments or my track meets," he says. "I'd hear him shouting my name, and it would just ignite my spirit because he was there."

After finding fame on Canadian and American TV with *Kensington* and *Cagney and Lacey*, Waxman continued to be a mensch in his community. He was the national campaign chairman for the Canadian Cancer Society, as well as a spokesman for Israel Bonds and UJA.

Waxman was named to the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario. There is also a statue of him, appropriately, in Kensington Market. However, he is not on the Canadian Walk of Fame, a point of some controversy.

Late in his career, he put a lot of focus on stage performances. His performance as Willy Loman in a Stratford Festival production of *Death of a Salesman* in 1997 earned him rave reviews. He lost close to 80 pounds for the play.

Waxman also directed for the stage (*Lost in Yonkers* in Toronto, *The Diary of Anne Frank* in Stratford) and television, earning an Emmy nomination for the TV movie *Maggie's Secret*.

Waxman was slated to play Shylock in a Stratford production of *The Merchant of Venice* in 2001. However, he died during a bypass operation in January of that year.

"He said, 'I'm going to make everybody love Shylock,'" Sara told *The CJN*. "And he would have, if he had the chance."

After his father's death, Adam decided to move into acting. He went to the same theatre school his father attended in New York – a symbolic way to walk alongside his father's path, Adam says.

"Under the stage lights, he was a star. But in my eyes, he was so much bigger than that," he says. "He was the greatest man I'll ever know. He gave me enough love to fuel me for a lifetime."■

Jordan Adler is a frequent contributor to The CJN

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 30 2015

The Canadian Holocaust film that almost didn't get made

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Having survived the war disguised as a Christian child in Nazi-occupied Poland, Jack Kuper arrived in Canada in 1947 and soon began writing the story of his dramatic wartime ordeal in Yiddish. But the woman in the Jewish family that was taking care of him seemed disinterested in hearing it, so he stopped writing it.

Eventually Kuper mastered English, worked as a graphic designer at the CBC, made many TV commercials, formed the film company Kuper Productions, and wrote a bestselling biography, *Child of the Holocaust* (1967).

Remarkable for appearing at a time when commercial publishing houses were taking on relatively few Holocaust-themed manuscripts and the subject was widely regarded as taboo, *Child of the Holocaust* received wide distribution across the English-speaking world and was translated into eight languages. A postwar sequel, *After the Smoke Cleared*, came out in 1994.

Turns out that Kuper had told much the same story in an earlier, all-but-forgotten teleplay, *Sun In My Eyes*, which the CBC produced in 1959 and aired – twice, in response to popular demand – in early 1960. Directed by Harvey Hart and featuring a young Al Waxman in one of his earliest starring roles, *Sun In My Eyes* is being given a free public screening at this year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival. (Innis Town Hall, May 9, 1:30 p.m.)

During a recent interview in his Forest Hill home, Kuper explained that he wrote *Sun In My Eyes* after he had commented at a CBC meeting that so many productions were "just frivolous plays about nothing," and someone dared him to write a better play. "I said, 'I will,' and I went home and began writing," he recalled.

The initial response to his script was anything but warm. The first CBC producer he told about it dismissed him and the script without even looking at it. He had a breakfast meeting with CBC drama critic Nathan Cohen, who was equally dismissive. Others were more sympathetic, "but nobody wanted to do it," Kuper said. "This would have been about 1955. Everywhere I went, people said, 'We've already done *The Diary of Anne Frank* and the war is over, so get on with it."

***Sun In My Eyes*, featuring a young Al Waxman, aired on CBC in 1960.**

Kuper had no trouble getting other teleplays produced at the CBC. For his play *Lost in the Crowd*, he changed the Jewish characters to non-Jewish characters – Polish Christians living on Toronto's Queen Street – and it sold without a problem and was well received. "Paddy Chayefsky was doing exactly the same thing at the time. You simply changed the Jews to non-Jews, because you could sell only so many Jewish stories."

But another script that featured Jewish characters, *It Happened in Kensington Market*, was also summarily rejected. "They got back to me, and they said, 'We already have a play for Passover,'" Kuper said. As for *Sun In My Eyes*, one producer seriously urged him to change the locale so that it takes place among the Eskimos in the Arctic, thereby making it a Canadian subject. Kuper even adapted the script for radio, only to be told, "The war is over, it's time to forget and move on.

"People didn't want to talk about the Holocaust – it was like talking about cancer. It made people very uncomfortable, and all I wanted to do was talk about it."

Fortunately, a producer who was impressed with Kuper's other works asked to see a copy of the script, loved it, and bought it the next day. Production ensued within a few months. Because of restrictions in videotape editing capabilities, the play was shot in a studio with several cameras, interiors as well as exteriors, one scene after another as though it was a live production.

"You couldn't go on location somewhere. Everything was done in the studio," Kuper said. "You'd have to write it like that, too, so it would work. You couldn't have a character dressed in a certain way, and in the next shot, he's dressed differently. There wasn't enough time. You'd have to write another scene in between to give him time to change costumes."

Kuper admits he altered the story to suit the medium.

"Although it says at the beginning that the story you are about to see is true, I took liberties," he said.

"The true story is in my book; that's how it happened and I didn't have to play with it. But in a play, you need the dramatic curve, the dramatic angle to it."

How does he feel now that TJFF is presenting a public screening? "It feels wonderful, especially when I think back on the struggle that I had producing this," said the veteran producer-director, who has agreed to provide an introduction to the screening.

Presented as part of a series of Waxman films, *Sun In My Eyes* also ties into the TJFF's "archival film" track. Other titles include director David Troster's 1984 documentary *Spadina*, about Toronto's famous downtown Jewish district in its last throes; the Rod Serling series, which features *The Twilight Zone's* creator's rarely screened works, including *In the Presence of my Enemies* and *Requiem for a Heavyweight*; *Laura Adler's Last Love Affair*, which is being screened in memory of the late Israeli director Avraham Heffner, and several others.

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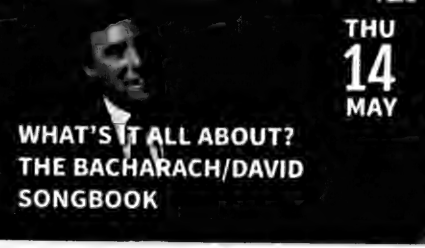

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 30, 2015

When 'Zionism' becomes a dirty word

Gil Troy

To Israel activists, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's cancellation of Valentina Lisitsa's piano solo earlier this month is worrisome.

Lisitsa, a Ukrainian, attacked Ukrainian nationalism so passionately and crassly that the organizers deemed her intolerant. A Ukrainian nationalist online newspaper, *Euromaidan Press*, focused on her posting "photos of spear-carrying, half-naked African villagers juxtaposed with Ukrainians," with the caption "New school year begins in Odessa with teachers forced to wear Ukrainian tribal dress, a truly European custom." Beyond this, the article accused her of being snide, mean-spirited and a propagandist for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Mea culpa, I'm out of my depth. I have a rough sense of what's going on in Ukraine, and sympathize with Lisitsa's critics rather than with Putin's totalitarian bullying. So, first valuable lesson for Israel activists: we assume most non-combatants understand the subtleties of the Israeli-Arab conflict as we do. Next time you start talking to someone about Israel, think how little you know about Ukraine, and proceed accordingly, hopefully becoming more humble, clearer, and making fewer assumptions about what people know and how they should feel.

Meanwhile, I am outraged that Lisitsa's words outraged people when more outrageous attacks on Israel have become acceptable. Making the ugly apartheid accusation against Israel, charging Israel with genocide, segregation and oppression, are all as untrue and offensive as Lisitsa's tweets.

I don't believe a far left or Palestinian concert pianist would lose a gig over similar anti-Israel tweets. This summer, Steven Salaita did lose a tenured position in Illinois over tweets but they were much harsher. He condoned murder by tweeting: "I wish all the f…ing West Bank settlers would go missing. He justified Jew hatred by tweeting: "Zionists: transforming 'anti-Semitism' from something horrible into something honourable since 1948."

This outrage gap is a serious problem. On campus, super-sensitive, politically correct students complain about "micro-aggressions" they perceive in body language or nuanced words, yet many of these same students commit macro-aggressions against Israel and the Jewish People. They worry about scholarly books, articles and lectures analyzing racism, sexism, homophobia, sexual assault, being "triggering," while often being the most likely to launch offensive salvoes against Israel and Zionism.

These double standards lead to a most un-Canadian conclusion. Precisely because of the power of political passions and the relativism of political judgments, I condemn the Toronto Symphony Orchestra for cancelling the performance. Given my disappointment in so many establishment judges, especially on campus, I would rather trust free speech and the free marketplace of ideas. Better to trust most people to ignore Lisitsa's ugliness than empower modern elites to determine whether her politics make her suitable for performing Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concerto*.

This analysis particularly applies regarding a concert pianist or mathematician whose political words are irrelevant to their performing or problem-solving. It is trickier with humanists or social scientists. If a colleague showed such poor judgment as to tweet offensive and intolerant words, I would fear a similar inability to be suitably restrained when teaching controversial subjects or properly tolerant when facilitating student discussions. Still, the repressive alternative is worse.

I write as a proud liberal democrat championing free speech – as well as an embattled Zionist. I know – and regret admitting this – that in too many elite circles today, especially in academia, Zionism is so despised that simply calling yourself a Zionist can be seen as offensive and "racist," let alone micro-aggressive and triggering.

Zionism is already politically incorrect on too many campuses, among too many Middle East scholars. What happens if Zionism goes from being not PC to "verboten"? If we have tolerated all kinds of other assaults on free speech, we will have few allies left and no foundation left on which to stand. And so, with full contempt for Ms. Lisitsa's tweets, tone and tolerance for totalitarianism and terrorism, I say, nevertheless, let her play Rachmaninoff, so those of us with politically incorrect opinions can still express ourselves. ■

The magic of Israeli movies

Sara Horowitz

There's something about the experience of going to the movies that makes magic. The darkened room, the fellowship of audience, the larger-than-life screen all combine to transport us to a different time or place, and to make us believe, at least for the time we sit in the theatre, in the world the director, actors and cinematographer have conspired to create for us.

Today, of course, we see movies not only in grand movie palaces, but in multiplex venues with tiny screening rooms, at home on TV screens, computers and tablets, and even on our phones at the beach. The easy access to movies anywhere and the smallness of many screens has made viewing films less of an occasion than it was decades ago and perhaps also diminished that sense of magic that struck early moviegoers. But the ability to watch films over and over, to replay certain scenes and to zoom in on details can also give us a stronger sense of how movies are put together, what makes them work and how they can be in conversation with one another.

But the ability of a well-made film to make us think and feel in unanticipated ways remains. At the same time that movies bring us out of ourselves and our ordinary lives, they also press us to think about our inner lives, our society, our politics, and to imagine our way into other people's lives. If this is true of movies generally, it is stunningly true of Israeli movies, a longtime fascination of mine.

For many years, I made it a priority to frequent the wonderful Jerusalem International Film Festival, the special project of the late Lia van Leer, held annually at the Jerusalem Cinematheque with the support of the Jerusalem Foundation. The festival features a dizzying array of films from all over the world, responding to the Israeli thirst for virtual travel and cultural diversity. But for me, the appeal was always the ability to see new Israeli films, many of which would have their world premiere there.

In addition, whenever I am in Israel, I make it a practice to stop at a favourite Jerusalem DVD store whose amazing staff know their stuff. They have pointed me to sleepers that deserve a wider audience, as well as promising new directors and remastered early gems. Back in Toronto, the movies are a way to stay connected to contemporary Israeli culture, up to date on slang and connected to the pulse of the country. And, of course, Jewish film festivals across Canada bring fine Israeli (and other) films to us.

This fascination impelled me to offer a new two-semester course at York University that focuses on the vibrant Israeli film industry. We looked primarily at feature films produced since Israel attained sovereign statehood. All in all, my students and I viewed, discussed and analyzed more than 40 movies.

Putting the course together provided me the impetus to look back on almost seven decades of movies. And listening to my students talk about the films often made me see them new ways. It was interesting to think about which age well and which don't, in view of the changes in cinematic styles, esthetic sensibilities and social norms. What impresses me most is the sheer talent and daring of the Israeli film industry, from its early years until today. Israeli cinema has functioned as an important vehicle through which to explore questions of identity, immigration, conflict, war and peace, gender, ethnicity, the Holocaust, and the tensions between individual and collective values, offering a valuable – and often critical – window on Israeli society. Israeli directors have been willing to tackle difficult, controversial and complex issues, and Israeli audiences have been eager to see themselves in these challenging cinematic reflections. Perhaps the most magical aspect of Israeli movies is their place in reflecting and also maintaining a diverse and open society. ■

Why Netanyahu's victory should please Canadian Jews

Michael Taube

Benjamin Netanyahu's stunning re-election victory in last month's Israeli elections was the best result that all western nations, including Canada, could have hoped for.

Sure, there are some obvious reasons why I make this statement.

I'm a small "c" conservative on fiscal and social issues. I share Netanyahu's support for smaller government, lower taxes, the free market and private enterprise, and fighting the war on terror, among other things. I had also predicted a Likud victory in a few places, including this newspaper, so, it's a pleasure to be proven right!

Most importantly, I believe it.

Besides the positive virtues of his right-leaning political and economic views, Israel's prime minister tends to be a straight-shooter. Netanyahu doesn't sugar-coat his language and ideas with meaningless platitudes. He doesn't propose goals that are impossible to achieve. Rather, he takes strong positions and vigorously defends them on a principled basis.

You may not like what he says. You may not like the way he says it. At the same time, he means what he says – and he says what he means.

When Netanyahu spoke to the U.S. House of Representatives on March 3, for example, he noted that Iran, once "one of the world's great civilizations," had been "hijacked by religious zealots" in 1979. He worried that the Iranians "could soon be armed with intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear bombs." He opposed President Barack Obama's contrived deal because it "doesn't block Iran's path to the bomb; it paves Iran's path to the bomb."

Moreover, his comparison between Iran and the Islamic State was direct and powerful: "Iran and ISIS are competing for the crown of militant Islam. One calls itself the Islamic Republic. The other calls itself the Islamic State. Both want to impose a militant Islamic empire first on the region and then on the entire world. They just disagree among themselves who will be the ruler of that empire. In this deadly game of thrones, there's no place for America or for Israel, no peace for Christians, Jews or Muslims who don't share the Islamist medieval creed, no rights for women, no freedom for anyone. So when it comes to Iran and ISIS, the enemy of your enemy is your enemy."

In other words, Netanyahu will not accept peace for peace's sake. He wants it to be a lasting peace that is realistic, beneficial for Israel, and without restrictions and conditions.

The same principle applies to peace in the Middle East.

Netanyahu supports the theory of a two-state solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most rational thinking people do.

Yet, the Israeli PM won't cede land, stop the West Bank settlements, divide Jerusalem and deal with the Palestinian right of return while the terrorist group Hamas continues to wield power and influence. Meanwhile, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' repeated calls for the removal of the Israeli military presence would leave the Jewish state incredibly vulnerable. As well, bringing down the security wall between Israel and the Palestinians would be impossible at this stage when the latter continue to engage in suicide bombings and other attacks.

That's why most small "c" conservatives, including U.S. Republicans and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Tories, support Netanyahu and Likud. We believe he's looking at these difficult situations (and others) in a realistic manner, and is handling them to the best of his ability.

Some on the political left, including security-conscious Liberals, would surely agree with this position.

As for Canadian Jews, they should be pleased that a strong leader like Netanyahu remains in power. He will always work hard to ensure the safety and security of Israelis, oppose totalitarian nations, rogue states and terrorist groups, and always fight for a Jewish homeland.

That's what Israel needs. That's what western democracies desire. That's what Canada should always support. ■

Michael Taube is a Washington Times contributor, political commentator and former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Shivah visitation: a modest proposal

Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka

One area of life that Judaism gets a great deal of admiration for is the way it approaches death and beyond, including the seven-day mourning period usually referred to as shivah. Shivah creates a time and space for mourners to grieve, cry and contemplate, then "get up" and resume life.

Alas, the plan does not always pan out. Having been a rabbi for close to 50 years, I can attest to the slow attrition of the intent behind the shivah. Today, more people tend to look at shivah with dread, as something to endure, an unwelcome imposition. On occasion, mourners decide to skip shivah altogether or shorten it to a day or two. Those who choose to go the full seven days often severely curtail visitation times.

Sometimes, there are health-related factors behind the decision to reduce the shivah sitting time. Those sitting may not be well enough to sit the entire time, if at all. For some, the period leading up to the passing of a family member is emotionally draining, and the surviving family feels wiped out and unable to engage in any conversation. When death is imminent, but the dying person holds on for a few days, with the family literally on a death watch, I often hear family members say, "We have already been sitting shivah for more than seven days."

Much of the shivah problem is related to the changing manner in which people die and the physical, spiritual and emotional impact this has on family caregivers. The net result is that for too many people, shivah is a distortion of what it was intended to be. Visitors to shivahs who experience the noise levels there sometimes make a subconscious decision that if they're ever in such a circumstance, they'll forgo the shivah route.

Recapturing the "magic" of shivah is not easy. It will take the collective community asking itself, "Why exactly am I going to this shivah house? What is my goal? What is my obligation?"

My own answer to this is that the goal should be that as a result of the visit, the mourner or mourners feel a bit better. This can be achieved through conveying, when appropriate, praise for the mourners as caregivers or as loyal family members. Another way is through sharing stories about the deceased with the family. Helping with logistics is also important.

But there's one more shivah-related matter to contemplate, which I call the post-shivah syndrome. This is the empty feeling of the day after, when family returns home and gets back to "normal," and the house where the deceased lived, which had been full to overflowing for seven days, is now empty and eerily quiet, even scary.

This is a vulnerable time when friends are almost desperately needed. Unfortunately, the mindset that has crept into shivah visitation, almost to a fault, is that once it's over, it's over. But it's not. Mourning goes on even when the shivah is done. The pain doesn't disappear with the removal of the chairs.

So my modest proposal, one that's perhaps not very original, is that we introduce, on a more formal basis, the idea of post-shivah visits – one-to-ones, absent the cacophony of sound during shivah and more likely to bring real comfort. It's certainly great for rabbis to do this regularly. It's likewise helpful for close and moderately close friends to do this.

It may sound sacrilegious to say that 15 minutes of meaningful conversation post-shivah is usually more comforting than an hour during shivah spent just contributing to the decibel count. But it's true. ■

Rabbi Bulka is the rabbi of Congregation Machzikei Hadas in Ottawa and author of Turning Grief into Gratitude: Reflections and Recommendations on Mourning and Condolence, *among other volumes.*

News

Speakers panel praises Israel's dynamism and diversity

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A Yom Ha'atzmaut event featuring an eclectic panel of Israeli speakers drove home the message that Israel is dynamic, unique and successful across a range of fields.

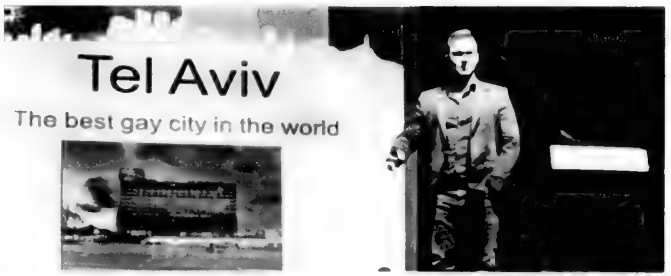
"Talking Tachless: Israeli Speakers Night," held April 22 at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre's Al Green Theatre, was co-ordinated by Irit Stopper, Israel's deputy consul general in Toronto; Eran Shafir, regional representative of the Jewish Agency for Israel; Lee Mes, director of Israeli-Canadian outreach and engagement at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and Dan Horowitz, federation's editorial director and senior writer.

Attended by more than 200 people, the event was part of an initiative led by the Jewish Agency, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Israeli Consulate to mark Yom Ha'atzmaut in an innovative and comprehensive way across the Toronto Jewish community.

To highlight the unique character of the country, the organizers selected three diverse speakers: IDF Maj.-Gen Orna Barbivai, the highest-ranking female officer in the history of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF); Raphael Hofstein, the Israeli-born CEO of Toronto's MaRS innovation; and Yaniv Waizman, a Tel Aviv city council member and founder of the organization Israel Gay Youth (IGY).

Barbivai spoke in glowing terms about the IDF, characterizing it as highly progressive and diverse.

Having served in the IDF for 34 years, she described leaving her small hometown in northern Israel for the IDF's human resources corps and working her way up to becoming the army's first female major general.



Yaniv Waizman is the adviser to the mayor of Tel Aviv on LGBTQ issues.

This opened up doors for other women in the country, Barbivai said, and further set the IDF apart from other, less progressive national armies.

"The IDF reflects all the Jewish people – it's a meeting ground for young people all over the country and even the world," she said, adding that it "encourages each individual to find a position that's suitable for them."

The army works to help ultra-Orthodox soldiers, lone soldiers and Ethiopian immigrant soldiers integrate as best they can.

"We pride ourselves on our wonderful military – it's one of the best in the world," Barbivai said.

Hofstein focused on Israel's forward-thinking mentality where technology and innovation are concerned.

He spoke about the country's invaluable investment in incubation programs in the 1980s and '90s and how that has nurtured entrepreneurs and contributed to a highly successful start-up culture.

He described how, for about 20 years after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the country was suffering "a king of communal post-traumatic stress disorder." This was partly alleviated, he said, by the surge of new life and new ideas that came from the million or so Soviet Jews that Israel let in after the lifting of the Iron Curtain in 1989.

"Between absorbing Russian talent and supporting innovation, this was the shock treatment that we as a country needed [to cure our sense of trauma]," he said.

Waizman, who discovered that he was gay while serving in the army and is now the adviser to the mayor of Tel Aviv on LGBTQ issues, said Tel Aviv has come to be known as "the best gay city in the world," and he outlined his journey to promote it as such internationally.

He talked about the difficulty of being in the closet and feeling he didn't have many LGBTQ role models to look up to.

After leaving the army, he visited San Francisco and came across an LGBTQ youth centre, inspiring him to start something similar in Israel.

He teamed up with a local journalist to build the centre, and the two developed Israel Gay Youth (IGY), a non-profit that promotes tolerance and opposes discrimination against the LGBTQ community, as well as encouraging LGBTQ teenagers and young adults to lead the way in building a more tolerant society.

"People from all over the world should come see how this city treats the gay community," Waizman said, citing as examples the municipality putting up money to build a Gay and Lesbian Association centre and the city's immense Gay Pride Parade.

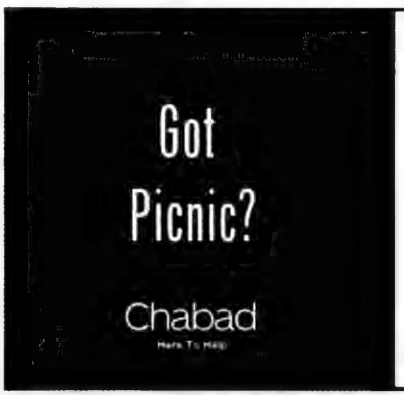
When he decided to enter city politics and was elected to city council, Waizman asked to oversee "the gay issue and the tourism issue."

He ultimately linked the two, creating successful campaigns to draw tourists to the city in order to experience its rich gay culture.

He invited bloggers and "opinion makers" from all over the world to visit the city, he said.

Waizman's efforts appear to have paid off: while the first Pride Parade in 1997 drew roughly 1,000 tourists, he said, last year brought about 20,000.

"I discovered that when people come to Tel Aviv they fall in love with the city and become ambassadors of it," he said. ■



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BRINGING THE LIGHT OF TORAH AND WARMTH OF MITZVOT TO JEWS EVERYWHERE

Petah Tikva, local shuls partner for Yom Ha'atzmaut

Music included for the first time as organizers aim to make annual celebration a community-wide event

SHERI SHEFA
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For Petah Tikva Anshe Castilla Congregation, this year's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration – which was organized in partnership with a number of other North York shuls – was bigger than ever.

Jack Benaim, co-chair of the April 23 event, which included a heated tent with a petting zoo, camels, live entertainment, a barbecue dinner, and more, said one of the main goals was to make the celebration a community-wide event.

Although there have been Yom Ha'atzmaut events organized at Petah Tikva in the past, Benaim guessed that there hasn't been an event to this scale in at least 20 years.

One of the main differences from last year's event is the inclusion of music. Benaim explained that last year, the leadership was concerned about playing music during the Omer (the quasi-mourning period between Pesach and Shavuot), which is forbidden, but this year, they agreed to add Israeli music to the festivities.

Petah Tikva vice-president and event organizer Jacob Benarroch said that in the past, the shul has always held a ceremony to commemorate Yom Ha'atzmaut, but hasn't hosted a party on this scale in recent memory.

"Last year, there was a carnival – there was a barbecue, there was a photo booth and kids activities, but no music and not in partnership with other shuls," Benarroch said.

"This year we wanted to make it a community event, so we reached out to multiple Moroccan shuls in the area and two – Magen David [Sephardic Congregation] and Tiferet [Israel Congregation] – partnered up with us, so that was something new. It doesn't happen often that we have these kinds of events that are run by multiple synagogues."

Benaim added that this event was also the first time that Petah Tikva partnered with Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue, a Conservative shul located west of Petah Tikva.

While Beth David had its own event with live music, a DJ and catered food, the two congregations came together at the end of the evening in Beth David's large parking lot for an impressive professional fireworks display.

Jonah Oziel, left, and Noah Benarroch celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut at Petah Tikva.

Cari Kozierok Bahar, Beth David's executive director, said that in the past, many shuls in North York didn't plan huge celebrations for Yom Ha'atzmaut, because there was an event held at the JCC on Bathurst Street, north of Sheppard Avenue.

"For us, it used to be that everyone went to the JCC and participated in the UJA event, but now, they moved it so far north," she said, referring to UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Yom Ha'atzmaut event at the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan.

"Having a program like this, we felt was a good way of creating something in our neighbourhood so that we could celebrate in a big way, the way it should be done," she said.

Benarroch said he was committed to organizing an event that would give the kids in the community a way to celebrate the State of Israel.

"While my kids go to [Joe Dwek Ohr HaEmet Sephardic School] and will learn about the impact of Yom Ha'atzmaut there, I think it is important that kids realize the miracle that is the State of Israel and what it means for us as Jews and the security we have because of it," he said.

"The same way that we celebrate Purim with a huge carnival and the kids associate Purim with something fun, I want them to have that same association with the creation of the State of Israel and know that it is something important and something they can look forward to every year celebrating it. For the kids, we want to ingrain it in them that the State of Israel is something to be proud of and it is a great occasion." ■

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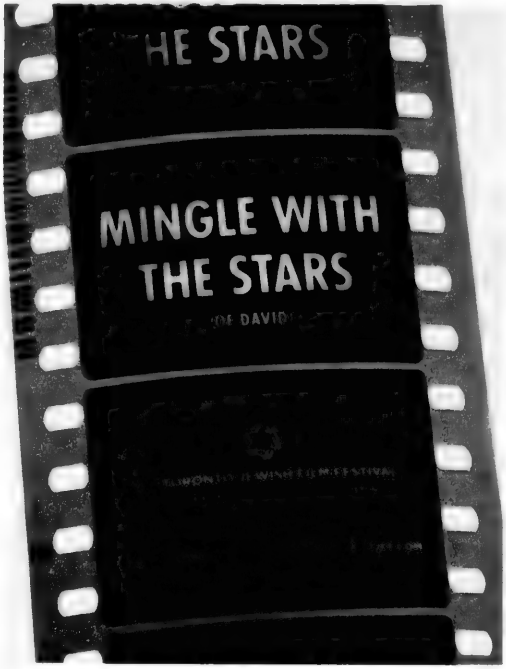
City Hall flag raising

Mayor John Tory, right, speaks at a flag-raising ceremony hosted by Councillor James Pasternak at City Hall on April 23 in celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut. The event was attended by Israeli Consul General DJ Schneeweiss, city councillors, and representatives of local Jewish organizations.



THURSDAY APRIL 30

DANCING ARABS

Young Eyad navigates the complexities of being an Arab Israeli citizen attending an Israeli preparatory school. Directed by Eran Riklis (The Syrian Bride, Lemon Tree).

FRIDAY MAY 1

HOSTAGES (PART 1)

In this new addictive Israeli TV series, a surgeon and her family get caught in the middle of a political conspiracy to assassinate the Prime Minister.

LET'S GO!

Director Michael Verhoeven's *(The Nasty G)* emotional drama about a Jewish family trying to resettle in postwar Germany.

TO LIFE

A tender and funny drama set in the sunny sixties about the reunion of three Jewish women who met in Auschwitz and haven't seen each other since.

THE POLGAR VARIANT

An insightful documentary that vividly traces how three Jewish-Hungarian sisters took the male-dominated chess world by storm.

SHOAH, THE FORGOTTEN SOULS OF HISTORY

Examines rarely-seen footage that brings to light a little known but significant piece of history - how the Soviet chronicling of Nazi atrocities erased the Jewish identity of the victims. Winner of the 2015 David A. Stein Award.

THE VOICE OF PEACE

A fascinating portrait of former fighter pilot turned political activist, Abie Natan, who established a pirate radio station in 1973, broadcasting from "somewhere in the Mediterranean".

SATURDAY MAY 2

SPADINA FREE

The 1984 chronicle of the rise and decline of Spadina's Jewish community.

ROD SERLING: THE BOY, THE MAN, THE WRITER, THE FATHER

FREE TALK Using a combination of readings, film clips and slides, writer Anne Serling presents an intimate portrait of her father, Rod Serling.

KING OF KENSINGTON

FREE Presenting three episodes, TJFF offers a chance to revisit the TV comedy series that made actor Al Waxman into a Canadian icon. Followed by a discussion.

IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES

FREE A rare screening of the controversial *Playhouse 90* production of Rod Serling's teleplay set in the Warsaw Ghetto.

CLOSER TO THE MOON

An absurdist dark comedy about convicted Jewish Romanian Communists forced to re-enact their crime for state propaganda material.

UP THE WRONG TREE

An offbeat and endearing comedy about a restless slacker simply trying to win back his ex, but gets sent on a life-changing journey.

CARTOONISTS: FOOT SOLDIERS OF DEMOCRACY

A timely documentary about 12 political cartoonists from around the world revealing how their work often tests the limits of freedom of expression.

MAGIC MEN

A father-son journey of reconciliation set against the stunning backdrop of Greece.

LEMON POPSICLE

A raunchy, and at times surprisingly poignant, teen comedy that was one of Israel's first commercial hits at home and abroad.

SUNDAY MAY 3

BELLE AND SEBASTIAN

During World War II, the resourceful young Sebastian and the giant sheepdog he tames help members of the French Resistance ferry refugees across the border. For audiences of all ages!

A STORM IN SUMMER

Rod Serling's poignant and little-known drama starring Peter Ustinov as an elderly Jewish deli owner who befriends a 10-year-old black child from Harlem.

TITO'S GLASSES

Stopping in Italy, Serbia and Montenegro, writer and actress Adriana Altaras takes us on an entertaining road trip, exploring the complex history of her parents—Jewish partisans who fought for Tito.

CODE OF SILENCE

An emotional documentary about a family and community affected by reported cases of child sexual abuse in an Australian Ultra-Orthodox yeshiva.

CENSORED VOICES

In the aftermath of the Six Day War, Amos Oz and Avraham Shapira interviewed soldiers about their experiences in combat. Director Mor Loushy unearths these previously censored interviews.

THE MUSES OF ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

An enchanting portrait of the famous Yiddish writer, as told through the eyes of the more than 40 women he hired as both translators and muses.

AN UNTOLD DIPLOMATIC HISTORY: FRANCE AND ISRAEL SINCE 1948

Filmmaker Camille Clavel explores more than a half-century of shifting relations between Israel and France.

ENCIRCLEMENTS

Lior Ashkenazi *(Footnote)* stars in this touching and complex portrait of an Israeli family and the working class community that it inhabits.

IRWIN & FRAN

A hilarious portrait of standup comedian and political satirist, "Professor" Irwin Corey and Fran, his chain-smoking wife of over seventy years.

SOFT VENGEANCE: ALBIE SACHS AND THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

An inspiring documentary about lawyer and freedom fighter Albie Sachs who fought for decades to see black South Africa emancipated.

AUF DAS LEBEN! TO LIFE!

An aging ex-cabaret Yiddish performer finds an unlikely friendship with a young German drifter, as the two save each other from their worst fears.

HOSTAGES (PART 1)

See Friday May 1 12:00PM EW1

DOUGH

A funny and endearing comedy about an unexpected interfaith friendship set in London's East End. Starring Jonathan Pryce *(Game of Thrones, Brazil)*.

HEBREW SUPERHEROES

In this entertaining and cinematic treat filmmakers Shaul Betser and Asaf Galay trace the little-known history of Israeli comix.

HAVEN

During the Second Lebanon War a young religious couple from the north is taken in by a secular Tel Aviv couple, leading to unexpected tension.

MONDAY MAY 4

NICHOLS AND MAY: TAKE TWO

TJFF honours the late Mike Nichols with this tribute to the brilliant comedy team of Nichols and Elaine May, who revolutionized the comedy landscape of the '50s and '60s.

WRITE DOWN, I AM AN ARAB

An intimate portrait of Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish told through interviews with his Israeli Jewish lover and his first wife, using his poetry, love letters and archival footage.

THE POLGAR VARIANT

See Friday May 1 3:30PM AF

CLOSER TO THE MOON

See Saturday May 2 9:00PM CS2

REQUIEM FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT

FREE Written by Rod Serling, this episode of *Playhouse 90* features Jack Palance as a washed up prizefighter struggling to start a new life.

BIALIK – KING OF THE JEWS

Filmmaker Yair Qedar chronicles the life and work of famed poet Chaim Nachman Bialik.

FAMOUS NATHAN

The story of Jewish immigrant Nathan Handwerker and his establishment of the iconic Coney Island eatery Nathan's Famous.

THE CRITIC

An uptight film critic finds his life starting to resemble the American movies he loathes when he takes on a free spirit. Highly improvised with laugh-out-loud moments.

NEXT TO HER

A tribute to Cannes Directors' Fortnight Chiara Gamis, one of her mentally disabled sister Gaia by. When Chiara pursues a romantic relationship, the co-dependency of the two sisters is tested.

THE ART DEALER

In this beautifully shot thriller set in modern-day Paris, a Jewish woman embarks on a journey to recover family paintings stolen by the Nazis.

BULGARIAN RHAPSODY

Bulgaria's submission to the recent Academy Awards®. During the summer of 1943, two teenage best friends fall in love with the same girl, while the Nazis press Bulgaria to deport its Jewish population.

THE PRICE OF SUGAR

Set in 18th century Suriname, this riveting melodrama reveals the history of the Dutch Jews who were among the slave-owning plantation owners.

SUICIDE

The first action thriller to come out of Israel, *Suicide* is a tense ride filled with unpredictable plot twists that brings *The Usual Suspects* to mind.

THE DOVE FLYER

A dramatic adaptation of Eli Amar's novel. Kabi works as an underground Zionist movement member who helps ready the Baghdadi Jewish community for its exodus.

TUESDAY MAY 5

SOFT VENGEANCE: ALBIE SACHS AND THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

See Sunday May 3 5:30PM EW5

TITO'S GLASSES

See Sunday May 3 1:00PM AF

DO YOU BELIEVE IN LOVE?

An award-winning documentary from producer Barak Heymann *(Life in Stills)*. The funny and heartwarming story of a successful matchmaker who specializes in finding mates for those who are deemed difficult to match.

THE MUSES OF ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

See Sunday May 3 3:30PM EW6

THE ZIONIST IDEA

A chronicle of the rise of Zionism from its late 19th century European origins to the consequential political waves it sent throughout the world.

EW5 5:30 PM **BECAUSE I WAS A PAINTER**
A sublime meditative documentary looking at the artworks created secretly in Nazi concentration and death camps.

M **CHAGALL-MALEVICH**
Painter Marc Chagall returns to his hometown of Vitebsk on the eve of the Russian Revolution to marry his childhood love and found a modern art college. A visually dynamic drama filled with magic realist touches.

ENCIRCLEMENTS
See Sunday May 3 4:00PM ROM

ONCE IN A LIFETIME
The lives of a group of troubled inner city students are changed when their teacher enters them in a competition on the theme of what it meant to be a teen in a Nazi concentration camp. A powerful and inspirational drama. Winner of the 2015 Micki Moore Award.

YOU MUST BE JOKING
Twenty something New Yorker Barb Schwartz has a life she hates. When she's reunited with her childhood BFF, Billy she's long missed, turn her life around by revisiting her first love: comedy.

SELF MADE
After Michal receives a defective DIY kit from an Ikea-like company, a bizarre chain of events culminates in her switching places with the Palestinian factory worker responsible for the error. From Camera D'Or winning Shira

W5 5:45 PM **THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER**
One of the most internationally celebrated films of 2014. A kindergarten teacher discovers the poetic talents of one her students, but her guidance and protection leads to dangerous consequences.

MAGIC MEN
See Saturday May 2 9:30PM CS1

WEDNESDAY MAY 6

M **ABOVE AND BEYOND**
Director Roberta Grossman *(Hava Nagila: The Movie)* honours the Jewish World War II pilots, mostly from America, who volunteered to fight for Israel in the War of Independence.

M 1:00 PM **SHOAH, THE FORGOTTEN SOULS OF HISTORY**
See Friday May 1 3:30PM EW6

EW5 3:00 PM **CARTOONISTS: FOOT SOLDIERS OF DEMOCRACY**
See Saturday May 2 9:15PM AF

1:30 PM **BELLE AND SEBASTIAN**
See Sunday May 3 12:30PM EW5

ROM 3:30 PM **HAVEN**
See Sunday May 3 8:30PM EW6

4:00 PM **THE GO GO BOYS: THE INSIDE STORY OF CANNON FILMS**
The wild story behind the Israeli movie moguls who created the legendary Cannon Films production company.

W5 5:30 PM **WRITE DOWN, I AM AN ARAB**
See Monday May 4 1:00PM ROM

CODE OF SILENCE
See Sunday May 3 1:30PM EW6

M **THE DOVE FLYER**
See Monday May 4 8:45PM BC

THE OTHER WAR
An intimate drama about a lesbian couple trying to survive under the pressures of Israeli wars and traditional

DOUGH
See Sunday May 3 8:00PM EW1

ATLIT
A and heart warming story about three French sisters who meet in Israel to sell their parents' house, set against the backdrop of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination.

VALLEY
An introverted teenager moves to a new school and is picked on by an arrogant bully. However, an unlikely friendship forms between them. An award winning and deeply touching film.

THE PRICE OF SUGAR
See Monday May 4 8:30PM EW6

SUICIDE
See Monday May 4 8:30PM ITH

THURSDAY MAY 7

BECAUSE I WAS A PAINTER
See Tuesday May 5 5:30PM EW1

FAMOUS NATHAN
See Monday May 4 5:30PM EW5

EW5 3:00 PM **AN UNTOLD DIPLOMATIC HISTORY: FRANCE AND ISRAEL SINCE 1948**
See Sunday May 3 3:30PM AF

M **THE FAREWELL PARTY**
Award winning feature about a group of septuagenarians who invent a machine for the purposes of self-administered suicide. A touching and compassionate film with wry humour.

ROM 3:30 PM **THE VOICE OF PEACE**
See Friday May 1 4:00PM EW5

EW6 4:00 PM **MY ITALIAN SECRET: THE FORGOTTEN HEROES**
Narrated by Isabella Rossellini and directed by Academy Award® nominee Oren Jacoby, this documentary tells of how cycling legend Gino Bartali and others helped Jews escape to safety.

EW5 5:15 PM **CHAGALL-MALEVICH**
See Tuesday May 5 6:00PM ITH

ROM 5:30 PM **NEXT TO HER**
See Monday May 4 6:00PM EW6

TH 6:00 PM **FORBIDDEN FILMS**
Filmmaker Felix Moeller explores the films made in Nazi Germany that are still banned due to their propagandistic and incendiary content.

RAISE THE ROOF
A stunning documentary following the work of an international team of students and artisans as they rebuild the exquisite roof of a razed Polish wooden synagogue.

THE ART DEALER
See Monday May 4 6:30PM BC

HOSTAGES (PART 2)
See Friday May 1 12:00PM EW1

ORANGE PEOPLE
Traditions clash with modernity for three generations of Moroccan Israeli women in this funny and moving film.

AUF DAS LEBEN! TO LIFE!
See Sunday May 3 6:00PM EW1

THE CRITIC
See Monday May 4 6:00PM ITH

YOU MUST BE JOKING
See Tuesday May 5 8:00PM EW1

FRIDAY MAY 8

ONCE IN A LIFETIME
See Tuesday May 5 6:00PM BC

BULGARIAN RHAPSODY
See Monday May 4 8:00PM EW1

PM **SACRED SPERM**
This witty and sensitive documentary by Haredi filmmaker Ori Gruder explores the religious restrictions on the spilling of seed.

THE ZIONIST IDEA
See Tuesday May 5 3:30PM ROM

THE ANARCHIST RABBI
A meditative documentary about German born anarchist Rudolf Rocker who campaigned with London's East End Jewish immigrants over 100 years ago.

PM **LITTLE WHITE LIE**
An intimate journey by a Jewish American who documents her confrontation with family secrets and discovers just how "white" she actually is. Selected for Sundance's Film Forward program.

PM **LOOK AT US NOW, MOTHER!**
"Delightful, heartbreaking and real" *(AP News)*, this personal documentary follows one woman's quest to get closer to her overly-critical mother.

SATURDAY MAY 9

ITH 12:00 PM **FREE TO BE YOU AND ME FREE SENSORY SENSITIVE** This upbeat, humour-filled and pioneering film starring Marlo Thomas and Friends remains as enjoyable now as it was upon its debut over 40 years ago.

PM **SUN IN MY EYES**
FREE The 1960 CBC production based on Jack Kuper's adaptation of his autobiographical play.

IMAGINE... PHILIP ROTH: UNLEASHED FREE
A comprehensive and compelling portrait of the life and work of the celebrated American writer, which Roth insists will be his final television appearance.

M **THE WINNINGS OF FRANKIE WALLS**
FREE This 1973 CBC drama features one of Al Waxman's most critically acclaimed performances, a he plays a laid off middle-aged labourer in search of new jobs.

ATLIT
See Wednesday May 6 8:00PM EW1

THE GO GO BOYS: THE INSIDE STORY OF CANNON FILMS
See Wednesday May 6 4:00PM EW6

M **THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER**
See Tuesday May 5 8:45PM EW6

TRANSPARENT
Four episodes of the award winning TV series about a retired male professor transitioning to become a woman and her relationship with her three self absorbed children.

THE FAREWELL PARTY
See Thursday May 7 3:30PM ITH

THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN
The awesome 80s teen sex , that is Golan and Globus' remake of their Israeli hit *Lemon* Featuring a kick ass soundtrack.

SUNDAY MAY 10

M 12:00 PM **DELI MAN**
A heart-warming and hilarious insider look into a sacred North American Jewish institution the deli.

M **LAURA ADLER'S LAST LOVE AFFAIR**
Rita Zohar *(Mrs. Moskowitz and the Cats)* plays Laura Adler, the beautiful middle aged star of an obscure Yiddish theatre troupe in Israel. An enchanting love letter to Yiddish theatre.

EW5 12:00 PM **SECRETS OF WAR**
A deeply moving coming-of-age film set in Nazi-occupied Holland. Tuur and Lambert are best friends, until they begin vying for the affection of Maartje.

ITH 1:00 PM **LITTLE WHITE LIE**
See Friday May 8 3:30PM EW5

EW6 1:00 PM **LOOK AT US NOW, MOTHER!**
See Friday May 8 3:30PM ROM

BC 2:30 PM **THEODORE BIKEL: IN THE SHOES OF SHOLOM ALEICHEM**
An inventive documentary weaving together portraits of two beloved icons Yiddish writer Sholom Aleichem and actor/performer Theodore Bikel.

M **HOSTAGES (PART 2)**
See Friday May 1 12:00PM EW5

LET'S GO!
See Friday May 1 1:00PM AF

ORANGE PEOPLE
See Thursday May 7 8:00PM EW1

TO LIFE
See Friday May 1 1:00PM EW1

ROSENWALD
The incredible little-known story of philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, founder of Sears Roebuck, who actively sought to nurture and fund African-American talent.

ROM 5:00 PM **BIALIK – KING OF THE JEWS**
See Monday May 4 4:00PM EW1

6:00 PM **A FULLER LIFE**
A unique documentary celebrating the adventurous life and unconventional work of American Jewish filmmaker Samuel Fuller, made by his daughter.

MR. KAPLAN
A 76-year old Jacob Kaplan desperately wants to achieve greatness in his life. When he hears about an old German bar owner jokingly referred to as "the Nazi," he embarks on a fool's errand full of comic twists.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 30, 2015

Ottawa, province fund Baycrest brain health initiative

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Baycrest is spearheading a new national network that will develop innovative products and services focused on brain health and seniors care, thanks to funding announced in last week's federal and provincial budgets.

The Conservative government in Ottawa said April 21 it will be investing $42 million over five years to help establish the Canadian Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation. Two days later, the Liberal government at Queen's Park announced a grant of $23.5 million.

The idea for the centre, developed by Baycrest in consultation with 40 industry, academic, public and not-for-profit sector partners, was proposed by Baycrest to the federal government several months ago, said spokesperson Kelly Connelly.

Partners include the Ontario Brain Institute, the Alzheimer Society of Canada, MaRS Innovation, IBM, Johnson & Johnson Inc. and Facebook.

In addition to the government investments, a further $25 million is coming from Baycrest Foundation and another $33 million from partner organizations, bringing the total investment in the centre to $123.5 million.

William Reichman

The initiative, set to launch in the fall, will focus on what Baycrest described in a statement as "optimizing the cognitive, emotional and physical well-being of older adults" by developing products that meet an aging population's increasing demand for aging and brain health technologies.

Though not a physical entity, the centre will function as a network, led by Baycrest from its Bathurst Street campus. Work on affiliated projects will take place at Baycrest or the sites of partnering organizations.

"This is one of the largest investments in brain health and aging in Canadian history, and likely the largest of its kind involving the long-term care sector anywhere in the world," said William Reichman, president and CEO of Baycrest.

He noted that the government investment is of particular value, because a rapidly aging population means dementia-related disorders, such as Alzheimer's, are "presenting daunting health and economic challenges across Canada and around the world."

He added: "This investment helps lay the foundation that will enable us to accelerate the innovation cycle of great ideas, from initial concept through testing, evaluation and market penetration."

Connelly said that over time, the centre plans to develop more than a dozen products including a "facial recognition device," a software application to aid people with memory disorders by retrieving names and personal information; and a "mobile medication monitoring" application that, through a partnership with the Rexall pharmacy chain, will help seniors monitor and stick to medication regimens using tablets and smartphones.

> "[redacted]"

Baycrest is a leader, both nationally and globally, in the field of aging and brain health services and technology, particularly as a result of research and academic work being done at its Rotman Research Institute, Reichman said.

Two examples, he noted, are its "Virtual Brain" project, which allows physicians to test rehabilitation strategies on a digitally simulated model of a person's damaged brain, as well as the online memory test Baycrest launched to help people determine if they're experiencing memory problems. ■

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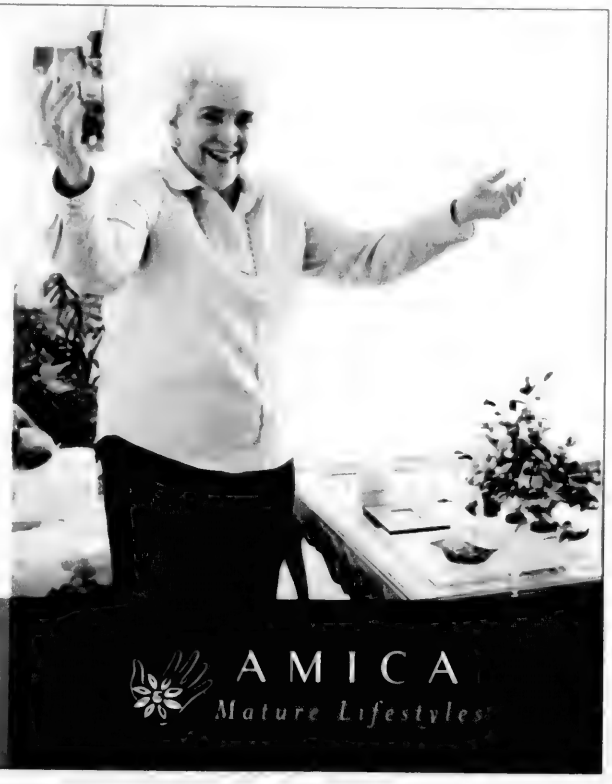

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CHAT students to hold casino night for Beit Halochem

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Though they're still too young to gamble, Oriel Cohen and his friend Jared Hyde figured a casino night was a good way to raise money for Beit Halochem Canada, a non-profit organization that helps disabled Israeli veterans and victims of terrorism.

Students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Vaughan campus, Cohen, 17, and Hyde, 16, were asked to co-ordinate a fundraiser for a cause of their choice by their mentors at the Jewish Professional Alliance (JPA).

The JPA, a program made available through NCSY Canada, connects high school students to successful business and medical professionals, and this is Cohen's second year participating and being responsible for organizing a charity event.

"Last year, Jared and I organized a scotch-tasting night for Zareinu [an education centre for children with special needs] and we raised around $10,000."

Jared Hyde

Oriel Cohen

Cohen said. "This year, we chose Beit Halochem, because Israeli soldiers give so much to Israel and Jews in our country, and this is a way of us giving back to them." He added that the cause is one he's sure many in the Toronto Jewish community would likely be happy to support.

The casino night, which will take place May 3 at the Lipa Green Building, will involve both a poker tournament and games including roulette, craps and blackjack.

Poker players must pay a buy-in fee of $500 to join the tournament and will compete for a grand prize of 160,000 Aeroplan flier points, which were donated by the company.

For those not playing poker, the general entrance fee is $180 and prizes – all of which were donated by corporate sponsors – include tickets to Toronto Raptors and Toronto Blue Jays games, formal dress shirts and short-term memberships to the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre.

"Our goal for the night is to raise around $20,000," Cohen said, "and we hope to get at least 32 people for the poker tournament and between 20 and 30 for the general casino."

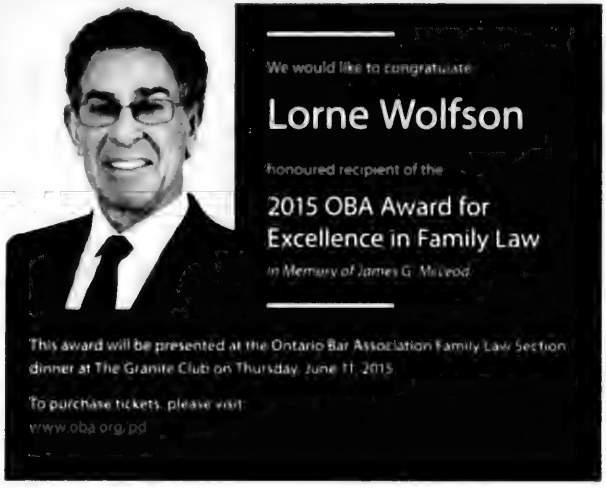
Cohen and Hyde, who both plan to study business at the post-secondary level, have been spreading the word about their event through emails, Facebook and personal calls to potential donors.

Cohen stressed that everyone is welcome, regardless of prior experience. ■

The casino night for Beit Halochem Canada begins at 7 p.m., Sunday, May 3. For tickets and information, contact Oriel Cohen at orielcohen123@hotmail.com

Correction

An item in the April 23 Trending ("Facebook apologizes for removing picture... Photo flagged as insensitive") incorrectly stated that Facebook removed a picture posted by Julian Ciss, Canadian executive director of Jews for Judaism, of his daughter holding an Israeli flag at the entrance to Auschwitz. In fact, while the social media site did ask him to consider removing the picture, he didn't, and neither did Facebook, which only tagged the picture as being "insensitive." Facebook issued an apology to Ciss on Yom Hashoah. ■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Panel ponders whether Israel is fulfilling promise

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Karen Mock

Is the idea of Israel as a Jewish state incompatible with it being a contemporary western democracy, or is it simply a nation state the way many European countries are?

That was one of several tough questions raised at a panel discussion April 20 entitled "My Promised Land – Have We Fulfilled the Promise?" hosted by UIA Federation of Greater Toronto and held at the Prosserman JCC.

The talk, moderated by Michael Dobner, a partner at Pricewaterhouse Coopers and an adjunct law professor at the University of Toronto, featured Karen Mock, human rights consultant and spokesperson for JSpace Canada; Berl Nadler, GTA co-chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA); and Rabbi Michael Stroh, rabbi emeritus at Temple Har Zion, looking critically at Israel's democratic, moral and Jewish character.

Dobner posed four questions to the panel, each of which was briefly opened up to the audience of about 100 people.

The first, whether Israel is "a Jewish state or a state for the Jews," generated a discussion about how Israel compares to other countries, specifically with regard to the treatment of minorities.

Dobner noted that many Israeli intellectuals consider a Jewish state and a western democratic state to be mutually exclusive concepts.

Rabbi Stroh countered that Israel shouldn't be singled out for having a unifying national identity, as there are two kinds of countries: those that, like many European countries, have a national identity and those, like Canada and the United States, that don't.

The question, he said, is, "Should Israel be a western democracy like Canada and the U.S. and not have a national identity or be a western democracy that does have one?"

Nadler said that "all western European democracies are nation states," and all, like Israel, face the challenge of how to deal with minorities.

"I think Israel deals with minorities not perfectly or even optimally, but better than some," he said. "For example, as a Muslim, wouldn't you rather live in Israel right now than in the slums of Paris?"

Mock emphasized that the Zionists who created the Jewish State of Israel wanted to ground the country in the values of freedom, justice and peace, and to ensure equality for all inhabitants, regardless of race or religion.

Still, she said that Israel, like other democracies – including Canada – grapples with "the question of insiders and outsiders – those with power and those without" – and those who feel their land was taken.

The second question was what, if anything, are unique Jewish values, given that many that were once seen as Jewish values such as social justice – are now considered mainstream.

Rabbi Stroh argued that Judaism has a rich tradition and contemporary Jews must decide which values to highlight.

Mock returned to the issue of minority groups, noting, "[On this issue], we Jews might want to hold ourselves to a higher standard – this isn't the same as the world holding us to a different standard in an anti-Semitic way – just as [consul general of Israel to Toronto] DJ Schneeweiss [has] said, 'Israel is a work in progress,'" and should continuously strive for better.

An audience member asked how Israel can balance equal rights for minorities with security.

Mock said this is extremely difficult, and Israel must implement systemic changes, through education and policy, to promote understanding and compassion between Israel's different groups.

The third question was whether Israel still serves as a cultural and spiritual centre for Jews and whether Diaspora Jews are entitled to try to influence Israeli policy.

Mock said for Diaspora Jews to give advice is one thing, but, "if we as Jews really want to influence Israel, we've got to vote with our feet – make aliyah," though she said she doesn't expect all Jews to do so.

The final question was whether Israel serves as a light unto the nations.

Mock said this idea applies not to Israel the "nation state," but to "the people of the covenant," who have made major contributions to the world in terms of civil rights, education, etc.

"Yes, it's tough to be *or lagoyim* – a light unto the nations – when your security is threatened and you're threatened by anti-Semitism, but we must continue to strive for it, and to find a path that ensures peace for everyone," she said. ■

Winnipeg CJA drive falls short for 2014-15

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

Adam Bronstone

For 16 years, Winnipeg's Combined Jewish Appeal campaign has annually reached or exceeded its ever-growing fundraising targets – but all winning streaks must come to an end at some point, and for the Winnipeg CJA, unfortunately, that turned out to be the 2014-2015 campaign.

The 2013-2014 drive raised $5.8 million, an increase of about $150,000 over the previous year. The goal for the 2014-15 drive was $5,950,000. The final tally, however, was $5,647,806 – more than $300,000 short of the goal and almost $150,000 less than last year.

In an update in early February, longtime CJA campaign director Elaine Goldstine conceded that the pace of gifts was slower than in the recent past.

"It has been a tougher year," she said at the time. "But we remain optimistic."

In an email sent out March 18 in an effort to pick up the pace of gifts, Adam Bronstone, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's CEO, issued a challenge to the community on behalf of campaign co-chairs Bob Silver and Daniel Friedman.

Silver and Friedman had pledged to give an additional $28,000 to the CJA campaign if another 150 donors came forward before March 31.

The appeal fell short, however. Goldstine said the campaign did attract 380 new donors overall, including another 136 new pledges in response to the appeal. She also said the campaign did well from the 2,800 pledges received. The major reason for the overall shortfall was that several major donors from previous years had passed away, she said.

"We are already planning the 2015-2016 campaign," she added. "We are hoping to get more new donors."

The new campaign chair is lawyer Bryan Klein, a longtime CJA canvasser.

The new women's philanthropy campaign chair is Elana Schultz, who has been a CJA canvasser since she was a teenager and has been very involved in the women's campaign for the last few years, Goldstine said.

Jared Akman and Baillie Chisick are carrying on as co-chairs for a second year as the young adult division campaign co-chairs. "We are putting more focus on our young adult division campaign," Goldstine said in an interview last year. The young adult division raised $347,866 from 531 younger adult donors during the 2014-15 campaign, a figure that is included in the $5.6 million total.

Goldstine said about 20 per cent of the funds raised are earmarked for overseas initiatives such as the March of the Living, Birthright, Israel advocacy and support for programs in Israel and some of the countries of the former Soviet Union.

The campaign itself and the federation's overhead costs account for nine per cent each of the funds raised, with the remainder being designated for local beneficiary agencies.

While planning has already begun for the 2015-16 campaign, Goldstine said no dollar target figure has been set yet. ■

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N.S. immigration program for Russian Israelis on hold

JOEL JACOBSON
ATLANTIC CORRESPONDENT

A successful immigration program that brought more than 120 Russian Israelis to Nova Scotia since 2008 has been temporarily halted due to federal policy changes that no longer give weight to the Jewish community's support for newcomers when their applications are assessed.

As part of efforts to revitalize a dwindling Jewish community, the Atlantic Jewish Council (AJC) attracted Israeli Jews, mostly with Russian roots, to Halifax, where they found jobs, bought homes and cars, and placed hundreds of children in schools.

Yet the changes in federal immigration standards, which filtered down to affect the AJC's program, have caused a halt to the migration.

"The province made changes in 2014 and 2015 in consultation with the federal government and has left us little opportunity to continue our program," said a disappointed Edna LeVine, director of community engagement for the AJC. "We were successful, but because of the federal government's revised policies, support from the AJC won't help new immigrants gain entry. It's been more than a year since we've interviewed new candidates."

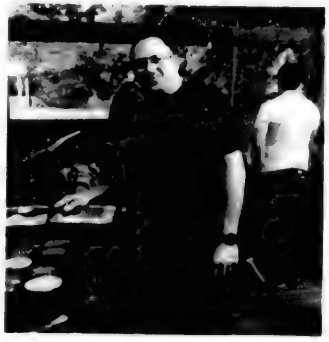
The AJC program in Nova Scotia, which was also running in neighbouring New Brunswick in Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton, has helped a shrinking Jewish population in the region revive itself and create some enthusiasm for the future.

"We've been told by the province's department of immigration that they'll discuss with us the next steps," said LeVine.

That was confirmed last week by Suzanne Ley, executive director of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration.

"In 2013, the federal government said to close the stream whereby communities could identify and support applications. In Nova Scotia, we started a new program last January, a pilot called Nova Scotia Demand Express Entry, but it does not give any weight to support from community groups such as the AJC. And we can't make any changes to our programs without negotiating with the federal government."

She said "the strength of the new system was purported to be that it would be fast, flexible and responsive to a changing labour market. It also aimed to cut processing times. Under the old system, every application had to be assessed in the order it was received, even as backlogs grew. Under Express Entry, only those with a strong chance of qualifying for permanent residency need further assessment."



Mark Shvartzman handles the barbecuing at a community event in Halifax. The Russian-born Israeli immigrant arrived in Halifax a couple of years ago as part of the Atlantic Jewish Council's newcomer program.
EDNA LEVINE, ATLANTIC JEWISH COUNCIL PHOTO

Ley stressed that the AJC "still plays a role" but it's different.

The province will continue to work with the AJC and ensure that it supports and welcomes new immigrants, she said. "The bottom line today is the AJC is still promoting Nova Scotia as an immigrant destination, but it's not part of the application process."

She added: "The federal government has the final say [on who is admitted to Canada], and we have to follow its legislation. They make the final decision on all nominations."

LeVine stressed that the AJC-supported program "was a success because we facilitated settlement. We welcomed these families and provided a community connection. We had a very high retention rate, with most of the candidates we identified remaining here in Halifax, settling into homes and jobs, which is exactly what the provincial government is looking for."

Ley added, "We're hoping the Express Entry program works. We're continually assessing our streams and will make adjustments if necessary."

LeVine concluded, "The big question is how can [the province] find a way to create criteria so we can continue our program." ■

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Canadian Embassy to move to new location in Tel Aviv

PAUL LUNGEN
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From the outside, the Canadian Embassy in Israel looks like a typical commercial building on a narrow street in a section of east Tel Aviv.

At 3 Nirim St., an address the embassy shares, you can also find a Georgian restaurant as well as several other small eateries. Across the street is a shop called Banana, which appears to sell swimwear and footwear, and one of the embassy's neighbours just down the street is a car repair shop.

It's not particularly glamorous, but that's about to change.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) confirmed last week that it "is looking to replace [the current embassy] with a more suitable, modern building consistent with our current standards."

The embassy in Tel Aviv's Yad Eliyahu district has been located in a leased space in a multi-tenant office building since 1996. Before that, it was located in a residential neighbourhood, at Havarkon and Jabotinsky streets, only minutes from the beach.

The building that houses the current embassy at 3 Nirim St. GOOGLE STREET VIEW PHOTO

The ambassador's official residence is in Herzliya Pituach, an upscale community north of Tel Aviv.

The federal government is looking to acquire a 26,000-square foot facility that will double as an embassy and the ambassador's residence.

"No decisions have yet been taken with respect to site selection, design, scope or cost," DFATD stated in response to *CJN* queries.

DFATD officials did not respond to a *CJN* question about whether the government considered moving the new embassy to Jerusalem, which Israel designates as its capital but whose status isn't recognized as such by most countries, including Canada.

"Canada values its strong relationship with Israel and will ensure its diplomatic presence is reflective of this relationship," said DFATD spokesperson Bianca Healy.

"[The 2012 federal budget] committed the government to replace certain diplomatic properties with more appropriately located properties," she added.

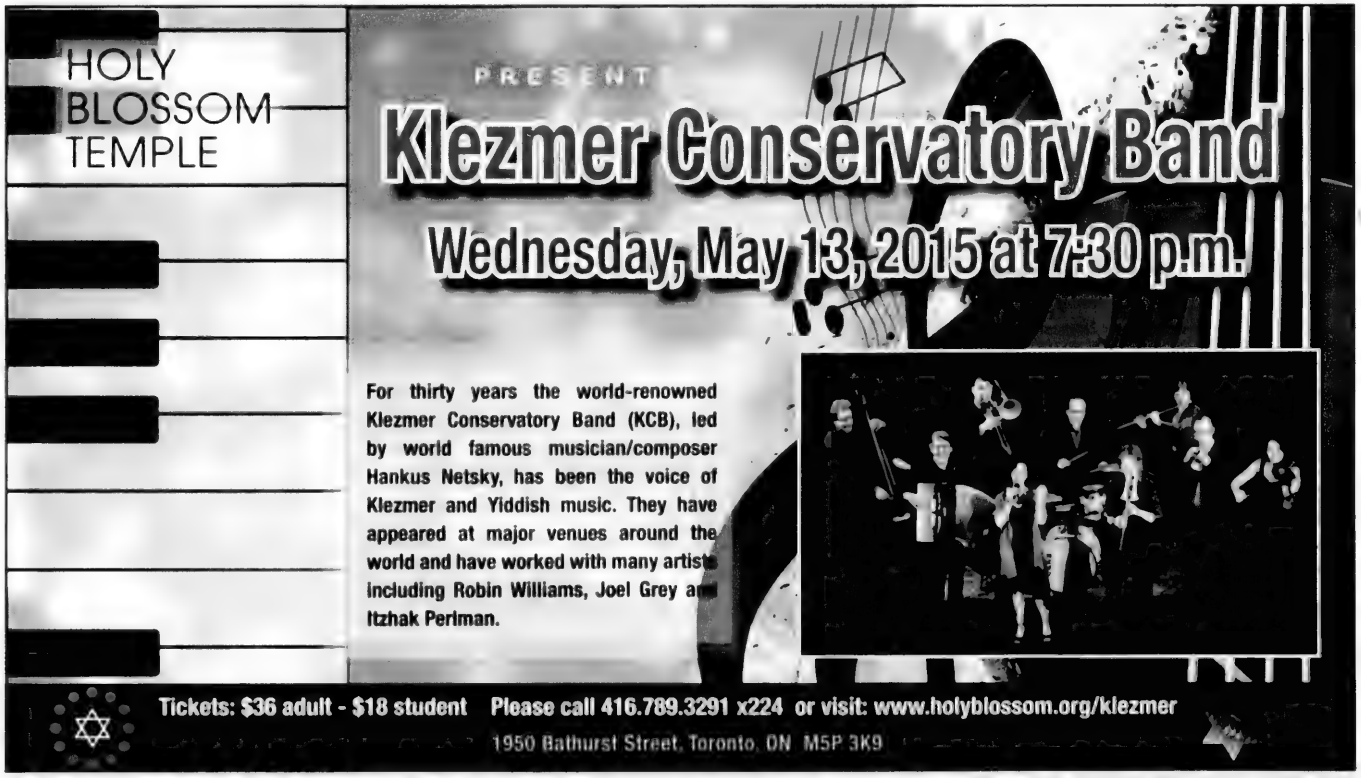
The embassy currently employs 62 staff in all, 47 locals and 15 who it describes as "Canada-based."

"The new embassy will provide better access to services for Canadians in the country, as well as Israeli visitors, and will support Canada's trade agenda in this dynamic country," DFATD stated.

Canada and Israel entered a free trade agreement in January 1997 and since then, merchandise trade has more than doubled. According to DFATD data, it exceeded $1.4 billion in 2013.

In January 2014, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met in Israel and announced the two countries would take steps to modernize and expand the Canada Israel Free Trade Agreement.

Vivian Bercovici currently serves as Canadian ambassador to Israel. A Toronto lawyer, she was appointed to the position by then-foreign affairs minister John Baird in January 2014. ■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Tories choose Libman as candidate in Mount Royal

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

The party's evident support for Pascale Déry was not enough for her to win the Conservative nomination in Mount Royal.

Robert Libman will be the Conservative candidate in the Montreal riding in the federal election scheduled for Oct. 19.

At the April 26 nomination meeting held at the YM-YWHA, party officials announced that 1,668 ballots were cast. The breakdown was not disclosed, but Déry later told the media that it was "tight."

The party said it now has 3,000 members in Mount Royal, an all-time high in this riding that has been Liberal for 75 years.

That record is thanks to the vigorous campaigns conducted by both Libman and Déry.

The result means Libman, 54, the former mayor of Côte St. Luc, will face off against the current mayor, Liberal candidate Anthony Housefather, 44.

Mount Royal, whose population is about 35 per cent Jewish, has been represented by Irwin Cotler since 1999.

This was the first contested nomination by either major party since a Liberal one in 1984.

Lawyer Neil Drabkin suddenly withdrew his nomination on April 22 at a closed-door meet-the-candidates meeting and threw his support behind Déry.

Drabkin, who served as chief of staff to two Harper cabinet ministers, entered the race just before the March 26 deadline. He said he had been asked to run by longtime riding members because they were concerned by what they saw as an unhealthy Ashkenazi-Sephardi split between Libman and Déry's supporters.

He said his decision to support Déry was "a gesture I believed to be in the best interests of the party."

A fourth would-be candidate, *Suburban* editor Beryl Wajsman, bowed out just before the deadline. He did not endorse anyone.

Libman, an architect, launched his campaign back in the summer. Déry, 38, a political newcomer with a 15-year career in television journalism, entered in January.

It was clear the Conservatives' Quebec wing favoured Déry. Cabinet ministers Steven Blaney and Maxime Bernier and Senator Jacques Demers campaigned for her.

Young, attractive and francophone, she was a media personality they thought could change the Conservatives' image in Quebec.

She clearly also enjoyed strong support from her Sephardi community, and momentum appeared to be on her side.

Libman was still perceived by some as an English-rights militant because of his leadership of the Equality Party in the late 1980s and early '90s.

Robert Libman, left, and Denis Lebel speak to the media after Libman was chosen as the Conservative candidate for Mount Royal.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Federal Infrastructure Minister Denis Lebel, the Conservatives' Quebec lieutenant, after Libman's victory, quickly tried to dispel that, saying his experience and wide recognition are assets.

The riding association's nomination chair Gary Shapiro told *The CJN* that the drama surrounding this nomination speaks well for the Conservatives' fortunes. That four people at some point sought to carry the party banner is a watershed in a riding where in the past "we had to twist somebody's arm."

The campaign unofficially began with Lebel disparaging Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau as "not having the judgment to be prime minister."

Libman said Housefather lacks his experience as a member of the National Assembly and of the Montreal executive committee. He is confident he has support "in all corners and layers of the riding," not just Côte St. Luc.

Asked about any party bias, he said, "The party did not interfere or take sides, from my perspective."

Libman stressed the need for unity and said "there is an important place for Pascale in the centre of the party."

Déry, who made no concession remarks, told the media she thinks the assumption she was the party's official pick can now be put to rest after the result.

She was indefinite about a future role in the party or election. "I just want to take some time off. It's too soon to say what role I might have."

Libman sounded confident. "In 1989, I won in the safest Liberal seat in the province [D'Arcy McGee]. This time I will win in what has been called the safest Liberal riding in Canada."

While the Liberals' popularity in Mount Royal has been dropping, especially in the last two elections, that trend may be reversing. The website threehundredeight.com, which tracks polling, estimated on April 24 that the Liberals will get 67 per cent of the vote and the Tories just 20 per cent in the election. ■

Garin Tzabar helps lone soldiers in Israel

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Maj.-Gen. Orna Barbivai

When you're a parent and your child decides to move away from home to live in another city, it can make for a stressful time. But when they decide to move to a different continent, join the army and put themselves in harm's way, it makes for an especially trying time.

It was with a measure of relief that a handful of parents of children serving or about to serve in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) were able to meet the highest ranking female general in IDF history, voice their concerns and get her feedback.

In the back seating area at United Bakers Dairy Restaurant April 23, Maj.-Gen. Orna Barbivai (Ret.), answered questions, dispensed advice and offered to help parents navigate the often inscrutable pathways of the military chain of command, to provide some assistance when their cases warranted.

As a mother of three herself, Barbivai said she understood parents' concerns. But she advised them to remember that their children made a choice to serve in the IDF, and that they shouldn't be surprised that the groundwork they laid, through their children's education and the values they imparted to them, led them to join.

Speaking through an interpreter, Barbivai said in reference to her own daughter, "Her decisions are the reflections of our education."

"Trust their decisions," she advised.

She said their children had taken on responsibilities, they chose to join a cause bigger than themselves, and they will come out of the experience more mature, responsible, self-confident and with friends for life.

Israel benefits from the choices made by Diaspora Jews. By accepting recruits from abroad, "It makes the army stronger… It is not just the army of Israel. It is the army of the Jewish People," she said.

Barbivai's presentation was arranged by Gonen Hollander, director of the Canada region of Tzofim Garin Tzabar. Garin Tzabar is a program for lone soldiers operated by Friends of Israel Scouts, Inc. – Tzofim. It arranges the military service of Diaspora Jews and prepares them for the experience by placing them with other recruits in groups of 20 to 30 young soldiers.

Barbivai said Garin Tzabar provides "a strong support system" for Diaspora volunteers.

Jacob Ladovsky is a Canadian lone soldier who was aided by Garin Tzabar to join the IDF and whose family runs United Bakers.

His father, Philip, said Jacob, 24, came back from a year studying in Israel eager to enlist in a particular IDF unit.

After researching what it would take, Jacob sought out Garin Tzabar to facilitate his enlistment. With a group of other recruits, he travelled to Israel in August 2011 and was placed in Moshav Regba, in the north of the country.

Jacob eventually joined "an elite naval unit."

"It's a worrisome situation," Philip acknowledged, "but no different than any Israeli family."

But, "the self-fulfilment is obvious" along with the maturation.

"He's in the right place," Philip said.

Anat Zilberman, 23, served in the IDF and is now back in Toronto. A native of Israel, she moved to Canada with her family when she was 14, but always expected to serve in the army.

Garin Tzabar smoothed the way for her induction, she said. It arranged five seminars in New York City in the year before her service. There she met other (mostly American) recruits.

In August 2010, she and 300 young people flew to Israel. Her particular unit of 30 was sent to Kibbutz Yiftach, in the north, where they became acclimatized to Israeli life. They worked in the kibbutz factory and toured the country. "We did everything together," she said.

A few of the 30 withdrew from the program before they were inducted into military service. Zilberman served as an infantry instructor for her two years.

As a lone soldier, she'd return from the military base to the kibbutz each weekend and hang out with the other recruits.

Though now back in Canada, she still keeps in touch with the friends she made. Twenty-six of the 30 young people in her group remained in Israel. Eight of them live together and attend Ben-Gurion University in Be'er Sheva.

"We're all friends and we will be forever," she said.

Hollander said there are about 10 Canadian kids in the Garin Tzabar program this year, part of a larger group of 300 worldwide. Given the limited size of the Canadian recruits, they have been paired with a U.S. midwest group and attend meetings in Chicago. They fly to Israel in August.

That's when their parents can begin worrying in earnest. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 30, 2015

Panellists disagree over the future of European Jewry

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Charlie Hebdo, Hyper Cacher, Toulouse, Copenhagen, Belgium – all scenes of recent terrorist attacks in which many of the victims were targeted as Jews.

For many, those and other incidents raise the question, are Jews safe in Europe or is it about time for them to pack their bags and leave?

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made his views known: he thinks French Jews should move to Israel. He said so in the immediate aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* and kosher grocery killings.

Several speakers at a panel discussion on the future of European Jewry took Netanyahu to task for raising the provocative suggestion at a moment when French society was rallying behind the slain shoppers and murdered journalists who had been killed by Islamic radicals.

About 150 to 200 people gathered at Beth Tikvah Synagogue on April 26 to hear the views of a panel discussing the future of European Jews. Speaking from Europe via Skype were Rabbi Jair Melchior, chief rabbi of Denmark, and Jonathan Arfi, vice-president of the Council of French Jewish Institutions (CRIF). On hand at the synagogue were TV personality and commentator Michael Coren, Consul General of France in Toronto Jean-Francois Casabonne Masonnave, Avi Mayer, a spokesman for Natan Sharansky of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and Robert Kenedy, a professor of sociology at York University who has done research into French Jews living in Quebec.

Rabbi Jarrod Grover moderated the afternoon event.

Concern over the fate of French Jews is being overdone, Arfi said. In fact, he said, Jewish life "is flourishing," and Jews, who have lived in France for more than 1,000 years, are involved in all aspects of public life.

Anti-Semitism, he acknowledged, is increasing. There were 852 "actions" recorded last year, and France's 600,000 Jews, who make up only 1 per cent of the population, suffered 51 per cent of all racist attacks.

But "we do not live in a period that can be compared to the prewar period," he continued. There is no state-sponsored anti-Semitism, and in fact, "we have strong support from public authorities."

He pointed to the support by government officials following the March 2012 attacks in Toulouse in which a rabbi and three schoolchildren were killed. Following the more recent incidents, there is broader support from across French society, he said.

French Jews will remain in France, he predicted. "We really feel part of French society."

Rabbi Melchior said North Americans have a misguided view that Danish Jews are living in a place like Kosovo or Hebron. Copenhagen, he said, is a wonderful city. People are free to wear a kippah and go about their business without fear.

Danish society is accepting of Jews, and the biggest problem Jews face is retaining their Jewish identity.

Coren said North American Jews look at events in Europe and "panic." They see Europe as a terrifying place for Jews, and it's not, he said.

European anti-Semitism has never been lower, with the exception of Spain, he said.

From left, French Consul General Jean-Francois Casabonne Masonnave, Jewish Agency spokesperson Avi Mayer, Michael Coren and Prof. Robert Kenedy

As for European Muslims, Coren said not all Muslims hate Jews, but almost all the attacks on Jews have been by Muslims.

Many in the Muslim community are poor and live in difficult circumstances. In such conditions, the worst comes out of people, and it's expressed as anti-Semitism, he said.

In France, government officials have been vocal in reassuring the Jewish community of their support. Jews have a future in Europe, and Netanyahu "should be ashamed for what he said," Coren stated.

Casabonne Masonnave, the French consul, suggested that when Prime Minister Manuel Valls said Jews play a central role in French society, he was repeating the views held by civil society.

French society showed tremendous solidarity with the country's Jews, he said.

Valls, who is married to a Jewish woman, said, "If 100,000 Jews leave, France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure."

Valls is also quoted in the *Atlantic* magazine as saying, "There is a new anti-Semitism in France. We have the old anti-Semitism, and I'm obviously not downplaying it, that comes from the extreme right, but this new anti-Semitism comes from the difficult neighbourhoods, from immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa, who have turned anger about Gaza into something very dangerous. Israel and Palestine are just a pretext. There is something far more profound taking place now."

Casabonne Masonnave acknowledged that violence in France has escalated by a factor of 10 since 2000. The government responded by adding 10,000 soldiers, enacting laws and measures to discourage terrorist attacks, punishing acts of anti-Semitism and increasing education.

Mayer, a spokesperson for the Jewish Agency, said immigration to Israel from France has jumped from around 2,000 immigrants a year prior to 2013, to 3,800 in 2013 and 7,300 in 2014.

"This is troubling on a number of levels," he said, adding the number of inquiries about aliyah from French Jews has tripled.

He said he has visited France four times in the last year and a half, and "each time I felt less and less comfortable."

He said that while he was riding the Paris Metro, a woman warned him he should remove his kippah, because "it's not safe."

"The voices I'm hearing from young people I'm speaking to are very distressing." They are planning to leave France, and many are planning on moving to Israel.

Mayer said he attributes the rising immigration figures to a "feeling of community insecurity."

Kenedy said that from 2005 to 2009, he interviewed 30 to 40 French Jews who had settled in Montreal.

Most are Jews of North African origin who moved to France as "a safe haven." They love France and would move back if they felt secure. They referred to the 2006 Halimi incident, in which Ilan Halimi was kidnapped and tortured over 24 days before dying from his injuries.

"That had an effect on a lot of them," Kenedy said.

They were also unhappy that Yasser Arafat had been given a state funeral, asking, "What sort of message is that?"

Kenedy said "it's up to governments" to set the tone of public attitudes and to make Jews feel welcome.

In a question and answer period, Rabbi Melchior insisted that it is safe in Denmark to walk the streets wearing a kippah. And he disputed suggestions that Jews are moving out. Two thousand Israelis have moved to Denmark in the last 10 years, and there are 20,000 living in Berlin.

Mayer applauded the public statements by French government officials against anti-Semitism. That's "a tremendous step forward." Nevertheless, he continued, there is "a rising feeling of insecurity." A survey reported that 74 per cent of French Jews said they would at least occasionally not identify openly as Jews.

Coren disputed the suggestion that Jews are insecure in Europe.

"Europe is still a very safe place for everybody… This is not the Armageddon of European society," he said. ■

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue

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Rabbi Howard Morrison

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BlackBerry buys Israeli hub with WatchDox purchase

PAUL LUNGEN
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Intel does it. Siemens does too. Companies from across the industrialized world have looked to Israel as a source of high-tech research and development.

Now, for the first time, a Canadian company, BlackBerry, will, too.

Last week, BlackBerry announced it had acquired WatchDox, a data security company and a leader in "enterprise file sync and share" (EFSS) software. Although BlackBerry did not disclose terms of the deal, online sources pegged the value at between $100 million and $150 million (US).

WatchDox, founded in 2008, has its formal headquarters in Palo Alto, Calif., but has a 100-person R & D team in Petah Tikvah, Israel. It boasts a client list of more than 150 Fortune 1000 companies, as well as U.S. government agencies, private equity firms and most major Hollywood studios.

News of the acquisition was first broken by the business media in Israel. BlackBerry subsequently issued a news release acknowledging the purchase, saying, "The addition of WatchDox will extend BlackBerry's commitment to help organizations securely connect employees with each other and with corporate information across all mobile and desktop platforms."

Moti Rafalin
WatchDox CEO

John Chen
BlackBerry CEO

> *Israel is already home to more than 350 multinationals from all around the globe*

Moti Rafalin, WatchDox's CEO and founder, said, "Enterprises require secure mobile solutions that enable users to more easily collaborate and increase their productivity. WatchDox meets this need by uniting data-centric security with a user-friendly experience that is highly valued by our customers."

Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak said he was pleased with the acquisition. Beyond the immediate business implications, Barak said the purchase "marks an important landmark in Canada-Israel bilateral ties."

"Israel is already home to more than 350 multinationals from all around the globe, including Intel, Apple, Facebook, Google, Walmart, Coca-Cola, IBM, Microsoft, Oracle, Philips, Siemens, Samsung, LG and Huawei, who have established R&D centres, many following the acquisition of an Israeli start-up. This week, Israel can proudly add the first Canadian company to this list and we look forward to even more collaboration between Israeli and Canadian firms."

Barak told *The CJN* that while the embassy did not play a role in the WatchDox deal, it has made it its mission to bring Canadian and Israeli firms together. The WatchDox deal shows that Israeli companies often possess solutions to Canadian business challenges, particularly in cyber-security, life sciences, the environment and satellite technology.

"Israel has the engineering creativity and ingenuity," he added.

The acquisition comes as the use of cloud-based services to store files continues to grow. That has led to concerns that as more mobile devices are used to access sensitive information, data breaches will ensue.

"BlackBerry is constantly expanding the potential of data security so that it enables more collaboration and sharing rather than creating limitations," said BlackBerry CEO John Chen. "This acquisition represents another key step forward as we transition BlackBerry into the premier platform for secure mobile communications software and applications, supporting all devices and operating systems. Together with last year's Secusmart acquisition, Samsung partnership, our own internal development efforts, and now the acquisition of WatchDox, we now have capabilities to secure communications end-to-end from voice, text, messaging, data and now enterprise file-sync-and share."

High-tech entrepreneur Shlomo Kramer provided the seed investment in WatchDox. He currently serves as chair of its board. He is also co-founder of Imperva and Check Point Software, which provide data security products. ■

GUEST VOICE

Eshet Chayil *offers a template for modern Jewish women*

Ashira Lapin Gobrin

As a modern religious woman, I often find myself reflecting on the wisdom of our sages, especially when I read ancient texts that remain so relevant and meaningful many thousands of years later. Every Friday night, I have one of these moments when my family sings *Eshet Chayil*, the alphabetical acrostic poem found in the closing chapter of Proverbs and traditionally chanted at the Shabbat table.

Some say King Solomon wrote *Eshet Chayil* about his mother, or perhaps his wife. The *Midrash Tanchumah* says it was Abraham's eulogy to his beloved wife, Sarah. Either way, to me *Eshet Chayil* stands as an ode to Jewish women through the generations.

But not everyone would agree. *CJN* columnist Lauren Kramer recently argued (April 16) that *Eshet Chayil* depicts woman as "a selfless slave," that its lyrics are "utterly outdated and hav[e] no meaning in the context of our present-day reality." Kramer says the poem "doesn't describe her or anyone else she knows, nor does it present a realistic set of goals for anyone to aspire to."

I beg to differ. *Eshet Chayil* contains references that are both allegorical and literal. Many commentaries suggest the female protagonist of the song is a symbol of the Divine Presence, or of Shabbat itself. But the poem also has a practical layer, describing the female head of the household as a role model for her family and for future generations – a universal image of a woman and a mother eloquently reflected in a song. Whenever *Eshet Chayil* was written, the concept of a working woman was not modern – it was nothing less than revolutionary. But then Judaism has always placed a high value on the female role, both inside and outside the home.

Eshet Chayil speaks in images that are ancient and at the same time very modern. It demonstrates a woman whose husband entrusts everything to her. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks refers to this woman as "active, practical, a businesswoman as well as director of the household." She is an entrepreneur who is industrious, capable, charitable, wise, empathetic and intuitive. She builds an extensive network and "travels far to earn her livelihood" and at the same time nurtures her family, looks after her staff and "reaches her palm to the poor and extends a hand to the needy." She pays attention to detail while "she makes elegant coverings, her clothing is fine linen and purple wool." She gives care to how she looks and dresses – "she is clothed with strength and dignity." She is wise and kind and hard working, and she has a sense of humour – "she can laugh at the days to come."

Smart, sexy and genuine – what a woman! No wonder the first verse of *Eshet Chayil* asks: "A woman of valour, who can find?"

In fact, Jewish history is full of such women. Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah were *eshet chayils*. Both my grandmothers and my mother are *eshet chayils*. All three of my beloved sisters could be perfectly described as *eshet chayils*. How lucky I am that my husband thinks this of me, too, and that he expresses that sentiment every Friday night so my children can hear and acknowledge it, and hopefully see themselves as part of a long line of strong Jewish role models, leaders and contributors who all upheld the same ideals and values. *Eshet Chayil* offers my children a template to work from when they start their own families – how to be strong female presences in their homes, their communities and their workplaces. ■

Ashira Lapin Gobrin is a proud wife and mother of three. She sits on the board of Bnei Akiva Schools and is senior executive of a global software company. She would proudly describe herself as a modern, relevant eshet chayil.

INTERNATIONAL

Israel deploys rescue and aid workers to Nepal

JTA

An Israeli rescue team saved four Israelis from Mount Everest, where they had been trapped by the earthquake that has devastated Nepal.

A rescue team sent to Nepal by Harel, an Israeli insurance company, brought the Israeli hikers, who are in good health, to safety on Monday, the *Times of Israel* reported.

Approximately 100 Israelis were still missing Monday in the earthquake zone, a popular travel destination for young Israelis after finishing their military service, down from 150 the day before. More than 4,800 people are believed to have died in the 7.8 magnitude earthquake, Nepal's worst in 80 years, which occurred last Saturday morning.

An Israeli army jet bound for Kathmandu carrying 250 medical and rescue personnel and supplies, including a field hospital, departed from Israel on Monday afternoon. Earlier in the day, an army plane brought 90 rescue workers and supplies. A third plane was scheduled to take off on Monday night, once a safe runway was confirmed at its destination.

Three Israeli families with babies born to Nepalese surrogate mothers returned to Israel late Sunday night. There reportedly are 23 more such babies, several born prematurely, who are expected to arrive in the next few days following the relaxing of bureaucratic procedures in light of the emergency situation. Four Nepalese surrogate mothers pregnant with Israeli families' babies may also come to Israel, the *Times of Israel* reported.

Meanwhile two Jewish-American men who are longtime friends and were planning to hike part of Mount Everest had not been heard from on Monday.

Danny Cole, 39, a father of four from Crown Heights, N.Y., and Mendy Losh, 38, originally from Crown Heights and now living in Los Angeles, likely were on a trail that leads to the Everest base camp when the earthquake struck, triggering avalanches in the area.

When the first Israeli IDF jet arrived in India, half the Israeli team was scheduled to set up the field hospital – including operating rooms, X-ray equipment and pediatric care – to provide emergency medical services to the wounded. The other half will be conducting search-and-rescue missions in collapsed buildings.

Workers load an IDF aircraft with rescue equipment at Ben-Gurion International Airport as an IDF aid delegation prepares to depart for Nepal. FLASH 90 PHOTO

IDF spokesperson Lt.-Col. Peter Lerner expected Israel's field hospital to be the first in operation in Nepal. In the past, the IDF has set up field hospitals following natural disasters in Haiti, the Philippines and Japan.

"It's one of the missions the IDF sees itself prepared for and willing to do," Lerner told *JTA*. "The Home Front Command is ultimately built to carry out evacuation-type scenarios in Israel, so they are planning and preparing and executing for buildings that have collapsed here. If we can take that knowledge and help people across the world who are in desperation, it's the right thing to do."

A separate, private mission organized by three Israeli emergency response organizations – United Hatzalah, Zaka and First Israel – left for Nepal on Sunday afternoon and aims to stay two to three weeks.

Along with search-and-rescue operations, the mission will provide basic medical care to far-flung villages near the quake's epicentre whose health clinics are either destroyed or saturated with wounded. IsraAid, which has sent aid missions to 28 countries, and Magen David Adom are also sending delegations.

In Kathmandu, Chabad Rabbi Chezki Lifshitz was in the middle of Torah reading on Saturday when he felt the ground shake. It was "as if a small windmill was underground and was moving the entire area," the rabbi said.

That night, by the end of the first phase the earthquake, hundreds of Israelis were crowded into Rabbi Lifshitz's courtyard, huddled in their tents and sleeping bags. Local hospitals were saturated with patients, so Rabbi Lifshitz recruited local doctors to treat lightly injured Israelis at his home.

"All the Israelis got here quickly and just stayed here in shock," Rabbi Lifshitz told the Israeli radio station Reshet Bet on Saturday night. "People were frightened and scared. The buildings here are swaying as if they're a leaf in the wind."

In Israel, friends and relatives of the missing hikers have shared photos and contact information on Facebook while coordinating an extensive grassroots search online. A Facebook page, Earthquake in Nepal, Updates and Search for Israelis, went live on Saturday evening, while a public Google spreadsheet is tracking information on the missing. The Kathmandu Chabad's Facebook page is also filled with photos and updates on missing Israelis.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Oren Rozenblat estimates many missing Israelis are "out of touch" on hikes in remote regions, rather than wounded or killed.

"Hikers in Nepal don't call mom every day," Rozenblat said. "They may be in a place without reception, without a phone. That doesn't mean they have a problem. We don't know of any Israelis that need help, are wounded or need to be rescued."

For many Israelis, Nepal and other destinations in south Asia have been a place to unwind after military service and enjoy a more relaxed pace of life.

"It's recreation and leisure – it doesn't have the intensity that Israel has," said Chaim Noy, a professor of communications at the University of South Florida who wrote the 2007 book *Narrative Community: Voices of Israeli Backpackers*. ■

New attack on Syria blamed on Israel

JTA
JERUSALEM

An attack on the Syrian-Lebanese border blamed on Israel was the work of Syrian rebels, Israeli media reported citing unnamed Israeli defence sources.

The early Monday attack, which mimicked a Saturday night attack alleged to have been carried out by Israel, was blamed on Israel in Arab media reports on Monday morning, including by *Al-Jazeera*.

The second attack came several hours after four terrorists placing a bomb on Israel's border with Syria in the Golan Heights were killed in an Israel Air Force strike.

Arab media had reported over the weekend that Israel was responsible for an attack on Syrian territory, reported to be a convoy of long-range missiles in Syria that were intended for Hezbollah in northern Lebanon.

The IDF Spokespersons Unit neither confirmed nor denied any of the reports, saying it does not comment on foreign media reports.

Syria is in the midst of a more than four-year civil war between armed rebels and government forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar Assad. ■

Coalition near as Bennett drops Foreign Ministry demand

Netanyahu reportedly has already reached deal with Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu to join new government

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looked set to have the pieces needed to cobble together a new governing coalition, after Jewish Home leader Naftali Bennett reportedly dropped his demand for the Foreign Ministry Saturday night, likely removing a major stumbling block in coalition talks.

With just over a week to go for Netanyahu to form his coalition, Bennett will ask Likud for control of the Education Ministry instead of the highly coveted Foreign Ministry, which will reportedly stay in Yisrael Beitenu Leader Avigdor Liberman's hands.

The move will pave the way for the right-wing parties Jewish Home and Yisrael Beitenu to both join a Likud-led government, giving Netanyahu the last pieces he needs to form a coalition.

The prime minister has already all but formalized deals for Kulanu and ultra-Orthodox factions Shas and United Torah Judaism (UTJ) to come aboard, giving him a total of 67 seats.

Bennett and Netanyahu met April 24, with the prime minister reportedly offering up a raft of appointments. Netanyahu reportedly offered the Strategic Affairs Ministry, as well as the Economy Ministry, which he currently holds.

Jewish Home's No. 3, Ayelet Shaked, was said to be headed to the Ministry of Culture and Sport, and Uri Ariel was to receive the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The office he currently holds, the Ministry of Construction and Housing, was said to be earmarked for Kulanu member Yoav Galant.

The Orthodox-nationalist Jewish Home was also offered the role of deputy minister for one of its members in an unnamed ministry, and the chairmanship of a major Knesset committee, most likely the influential constitution, law and justice committee, Channel 2 reported.

While the Education Ministry was not among the posts offered, Netanyahu is thought to be open to giving Bennett the post in lieu of a more senior one.

A major stumbling block in talks has been Jewish Home's wrangling with Shas over the Religious Affairs portfolio, according to the TV report. Jewish Home held the office in the outgoing government, but Netanyahu's reported promise to now deliver the ministry to Aryeh Deri's ultra-Orthodox party had enraged Bennett.

According to Israel Radio, the Likud has offered a compromise by which the religious affairs minister will be from Shas, while his deputy will be a Bennett appointee.

Yisrael Beitenu has also presented Netanyahu with a problem, due to its staunch opposition to rolling back legislation on universal national service for the ultra-Orthodox and reforms of the state conversion and marriage registration systems, matters which Shas and UTJ seek to change. If Netanyahu concedes these issues to Shas and UTJ, party officials told *Ynet* that Yisrael Beitenu has no qualms about joining the opposition.

Likud negotiator Ze'ev Elkin called on Jewish Home and Yisrael Beitenu to compromise in order to form a government.

"We are on the home stretch, and if parties of the national camp [right-wing parties] want a government from the national camp to be formed, they need to move forward in the negotiation process," he told Israel Radio.

The prime minister had an easier time negotiating with Moshe Kahlon's Kulanu party, as an agreement between the two is reported to be all but finalized.

Netanyahu and Kahlon reportedly reached an agreement – just before Yom Hazikaron – on Kulanu joining the coalition. Kulanu will receive three ministries – Finance, Construction and Housing, and Environmental Protection. The prime minister is also said to have conceded to Kahlon's demand to shelve legislation that would restrict the powers of the Supreme Court, laws that Kahlon opposes.

The prime minister is facing a May 7 deadline to form a new government. Under Israeli election rules, if he fails to form a coalition by then, President Reuven Rivlin can ask another party leader to try. ■

Yisrael Beitenu Leader Avigdor Liberman

Jewish Home Leader Naftali Bennett

> *We are on the home stretch, and if parties of the national camp want a government to be formed, they need to move forward in the negotiation process*

Israel in the World's Media: The Problems and the Solutions

Israel is faced daily with challenges in the world media.
Bias and lies in the media about Israel are rampant, turning the world's opinion against it. We can blame the world, but Tazpit News Agency has decided to fight back.

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The presentation will be held at Beth Torah Congregation, 47 Glenbrook Avenue, Toronto, ON M6B 2L7 on May 2nd after the morning service, which begins at 8:45AM

OPINION

The state of Israeli independence – 2015

Gerald Steinberg

Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day) is always an emotional roller-coaster, even after 67 years. For many Israelis, particularly the generation of founders, the restoration of Jewish sovereign equality among the nations is still a modern miracle.

At the same time, Israelis of all ages are reminded of the costs that we continue to bear in the face of irrational hatred, double standards and terror, which continue regardless of borders. This Memorial Day (Yom Hazikaron, April 22, this year), which is held on the day before Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israelis remembered and paid tribute to the 116 members of the security forces and more than 20 civilians who were killed in the past year. The recent war in Gaza, with the 4,560 rockets and mortars aimed at Israelis (each a war crime) and terror tunnels, remains firmly etched in Israel's collective memory.

But in some important ways, we have made progress in securing our freedom, particularly in pushing back against the political war based on demonization and BDS campaigns (boycott, divestment and sanctions). Recently, the Israeli High Court confirmed the validity of Knesset legislation making it possible to sue the promoters of discriminatory boycotts for damages. The majority opinion cited the evils of BDS, which outweigh the arguments based on free speech.

There has also been progress outside of Israel. On university campuses in North America, pro-Israel groups train students to stand up against the pro-Palestinian bullying. Through old-style newspaper articles and newer social media, particularly on Facebook and Twitter, the counter-attacks are hitting their targets.

The past year has seen the downfall of a main pillar of demonization. Until recently, the prestigious British journal *The Lancet* specialized in promoting false medical-related allegations under the façade of "scientific research." These allegations were then copied blindly by journalists and quoted in BDS resolutions.

In July 2014, editor Richard Horton published a scurrilous "letter to the people of Gaza" whose authors included blatant racists and anti-Semites. This time, the response, particularly from a number of the world's top doctors, was strong, demanding a retraction and apology. Under intense pressure, Horton and his circle of obsessive anti-Israel activists launched an awkward counterattack that erased the moral violations. This has highlighted Horton's failures and, most importantly, ended *The Lancet's* central role in demonization and BDS.

In the United Nations, where Israel is demonized by the 55-member Islamic bloc (including human rights stalwarts Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia), BDS and demonization campaigns are also stalling. After the 2014 Gaza war, the farcical Human Rights Council appointed William Schabas (originally from Canada), who has a long record of venom, to lead another attempt to find Israel guilty of "war crimes." But Schabas was caught hiding PLO links from his application to the United Nations, and was forced to resign. Although he boasted that his report has been completed, the new chair recognized that anything Schabas touched was tainted. As a result, yet another element in the BDS campaign was blunted.

In parallel, by naming and shaming key funders behind BDS, such as "human rights" groups in western European governments and unsupervised church aid frameworks, the amount of money available for this dirty war against Israel is gradually decreasing. Ten years ago, Canada set the precedent by cutting some $15 million in government grants to groups that used moral-sounding language to discriminate against Israel. The tens of millions still funnelled through German foundations, British "development aid" programs, a European human rights "secretariat" administered by a Palestinian BDS hub, among others, are being exposed and slowly cut-off.

Like the fight against terror, the political war that seeks to deny the rights of the Jewish People is difficult and complex, with successes and setbacks.

But we are getting much better at countering these forms of political warfare that single out Israel for attack. The emotional roller-coaster continues, but with more confidence in the future. ■

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Jewish Life

Performers include, from left, the Klezmer Conservatory Band, Aviva Chernick, and Julius: Yiddish Barbershop Quartet.

Toronto Jewish Music Week keeps on growing

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jewish Music Week is back this spring with larger daytime venues and new community partners. The popular annual festival, running this year from May 10 to 17, presents free daytime programs, including films, lectures, a panel discussion and concerts, and ticketed evening events, at venues in downtown Toronto and North York.

"We keep outgrowing our daytime venues, so we had to find places that are larger," said Aliza Spiro, who founded Jewish Music Week (JMW) in 2011 with her husband, Cantor Simon Spiro.

This year, the festival is presenting several events with some new partners. As well, five of the seven evening events are presented in partnership with synagogues. Zoomer Media, which partnered with JMW this year, will broadcast a live performance.

In partnership with the Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre, JMW presents Toronto composer and singer Charles Heller performing his song cycle *Tramway Lider* (*Street Car Songs*), a musical setting of Yiddish poems written by the poet Shimen Nepom, who was a College Street streetcar conductor until his death in 1939.

Included in this event, at 10 a.m. on May 11 at First Narayever Congregation, is a slide presentation by the OJA about Jewish sites on College Street.

With the Azrieli Music Project (which has launched a competition for composers of Jewish orchestral music, with two $50,000 prizes), JMW is presenting, at noon on May 11 at Columbus Centre, a panel of Canadian musicians and musicologists discussing Jewish orchestral music, from Mahler and Mendelssohn to the current millennial composers.

In partnership with Zoomer Media, JMW presents Canadian millennial composer and pianist Adam Sherkin, performing classics and his own solo piano music at noon on May 14 at Zoomer Hall. The concert will be broadcast live on the radio station The New Classical 96.3.

"We realize that many people who love music are not mobile, so they can tune in and hear the entire event," Spiro said.

To complement the exhibit *Photos from the Lodz Ghetto*, JMW partners with the Art Gallery of Ontario, on May 17 at 2 p.m., to present vocalists from HaKol Ha'Ivri performing songs that would have been known and sung by the Jews living in the ghetto.

> *We make it a point not to schedule musical programming on Shabbat*

JMW opens this year with a tribute to the prolific Jewish composer Milton Barnes at 7:30 p.m. on May 10 at the Glenn Gould Studio. The composer's sons, Daniel and Micah, will share memories of their father at the concert.

The Wonderful World of Moishe Oysher, at 7:30 p.m. on May 12 at the St. Lawrence Centre, features Cantor Simon Spiro performing songs from Oysher's movies (he starred in a 1937 Yiddish movie called *The Cantor's Son*), his concert appearances and his jazzy cantorial albums.

On May 15 and May 16, JMW's musical Shabbat events will be held at Temple Har Zion, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, Beth Tzedec Congregation and Beth Sholom Congregation, where musicians, singers and singalongs will be featured. At Beth Emeth on May 15, Cantor David Edwards leads the service with musicians until Shabbat, when the instruments stop but the singing continues.

"We want to make sure that religious people can enjoy Jewish Music Week," said Aliza Spiro. "We make it a point not to schedule musical programming on Shabbat."

And after Shabbat ends, JMW presents a community melaveh malka and Banter with the Cantor at 10:15 p.m. on May 16, at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Benjaimin Maissner, Tibor Kovari, Simon Spiro and Aaron Bensoussan, cantors from around the world who are now based in Toronto, will speak about their backgrounds, sing and lead a singalong. People are welcome to send any cantor/Jewish-music questions in advance to info@jewishmusicweek.com.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Also featured will be, from left, guitarist Stan Samole, guitar-bass duo Lev-Yulzari and flutist Suzanne Shulman.

Art contest received 250 student submissions

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

JMW isn't only about music, though. It's also about visual art. In 2011, when JMW launched its art contest, the festival received four submissions, Aliza Spiro said. This year the contest, called the Bogoroch Art Contest, received some 250 submissions from students in day and public schools, whose assignment was to draw the music of the Jewish holidays. The winning submissions will be exhibited from May 5 to 18 at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre gallery.

A new category, artists of note, was created on the JMW website this year to acknowledge artists not included in the Miles Nadal exhibit. Grade 8 Bialik Hebrew Day School student Robyn Beallor received an award of excellence for her stark grey-and-white drawing of Jews in concentration-camp bunks.

"I was thinking about how music can help people through the worst of times and we always find a way to celebrate the holidays," Robyn said. "I would like the viewer to notice that this is during the Holocaust where they are celebrating Shabbat with potatoes as candles."

The winning artworks were, for grades 6 and 7, by Billie Wilner, left, and by Matthew Kalman, right, for grades 1 and 2.

Other Jewish Music Week highlights:

• Sefarad – three cantors, Ramon Tasat, Natasha Hirschhorn and Tibor Kovari, perform liturgical, Ladino, folk and modern Mizrachi-style songs at 8 p.m. on May 11 at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

• The Klezmer Conservatory Band plays at 7:30 p.m. on May 13 at Holy Blossom Temple.

• Jazz guitarist Stan Samole, who draws upon modern jazz, swing, folk, pop, reggae and blues, entertains at noon on May 13, in the main floor atrium of Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. Cantor Tibor Kovari and singer Kati Kovari lead a singalong, with dancing, to celebrate the anniversary of the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel, May 14 at 2 p.m. at the Miles Nadal JCC.

• What's It All About, The Burt Bacharach and Hal David Songbook, is on at 8 p.m. on May 14 at Hugh's Room.

• Ruth Lowe's son, Tom Sandler, gives a presentation about his mother, who wrote the hit song *I'll Never Smile Again* for Frank Sinatra, at 10 a.m. on May 15 at the Barbara Frum Library.

• *Mahler on the Couch*, a movie about the composer, his wife, her lover and Sigmund Freud, will be shown at 10:30 a.m. on May 17 at Hang Loose Media.

• Julius: Yiddish Barbershop Quartet made up of Josh Dolgin (Socalled), Anthony Russell, Mitch Smolkin and David Wall, performs at 7 p.m. on May 17 at Temple Sinai. ■

For more information, visit www.jewishmusicweek.com

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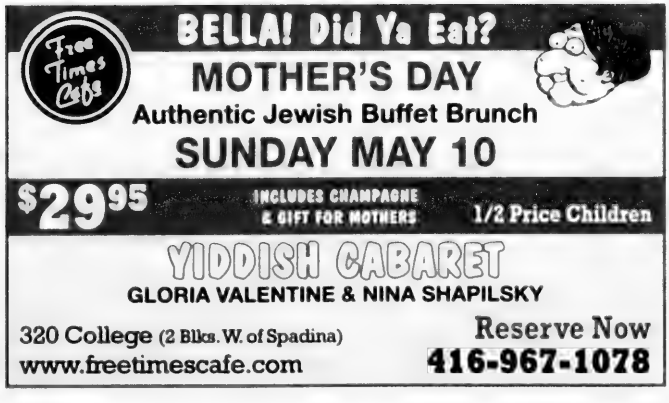

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

CANTOR SIMON SPIRO SALUTES MOISHE OYSHER & BARRY SISTERS

Beth Tzedec **Cantor Simon Spiro** pays musical tribute to **Moishe Oysher** "gypsy, entertainer, movie star and cantor" – whose upbeat career and jazz style changed the world's perception of what Jewish music could be. Performed as part of Jewish Music Week, *The Wonderful World of Moishe Oysher* is a new show also featuring the 22-piece **Moishe Oysher Big Band** and a special tribute to the **Barry Sisters**.

Tickets $36, $55, $75, $125 with some tax receipts available. St. Lawrence Centre, Jane Mallett Theatre, 27 Front St. E. Tuesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m. www.beth-tzedec.org, 416-781-4511.

• • •

Jewish Music Week

• **Deborah Staiman** performs *The Big Four of Second Avenue – The Lives and Music of Rumshinsky, Olshanetsky, Secunda and Ellstein*. Between them, these major composers of the American Yiddish theatre created such hit songs as *Abi Gezunt, Oy Mame bin ikh Farlibt, Sheyn vi di Lvone, Belz* and *Bei mir bistu Sheyn*. Cantor Staiman sings these and other gems of yesteryear in Yiddish and English, accompanied by pianist **Mark Camilleri** and violinist **Liam Ritz**. Free admission, everyone welcome. Terraces of Baycrest, Assembly Room, 55 Ameer Ave. Monday, May 11, 2 p.m. www.jewishmusicweek.com

Deborah Staiman

• Co-presented by Ashkenaz and Friends of Yiddish, the **Julius Yiddish Barbershop Quartet**, with **Josh Dolgin**, **Anthony Russell**, **Mitch Smolkin** and **Dave Wall**, performs at Temple Sinai, 210 Wilson Ave. $20; $18 in advance. Sunday, May 17, 7 p.m. 416-487-4161, www.templesinai.net

• Guitarist **Brian Katz** performs a concert of jazz standards, original music and klezmer selections. $8. Mezzetta, 681 St. Clair Ave. W. Wednesday, April 29, 9 to 11 p.m. Reservations, 416-658-5687.

• **Micah** and **Daniel Barnes**, **Russ Boswell** and **Michael Shand** perform a concert with **Jackie Richardson** in an evening celebrating the release of Micah's new CD, *New York Stories*. The title track has already hit number 1 on the iTunes jazz chart and earned Micah the 2014 Indie award for Best Jazz Artist in Toronto. $32, $42. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Sunday, May 3, 7:30 p.m. www.micahbarnes.com

• **Klezmer Conservatory Band**, led by **Hankus Netsky**, performs at Holy Blossom Temple, 1950 Bathurst St. $36, students $18. Wednesday, May 13, 7:30 p.m. 416-789-3291, ext. 224. www.holyblossom.org/klezmer

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Film critic **Adam Nayman** discusses "The **Coen Brothers** in Nayman's Terms" in a series of eight lectures with film clips (*Blood Simple* and *Raising Arizona* on May 4). Miles Nadal JCC. Runs Mondays, May 4 to July 6, 7 to 9 p.m. Series $90, drop-in $12, students $6.

• Actor-playwright **Julie Tepperman** leads Playwriting for Beginners in six sessions. $150; pre-registration required. Miles Nadal JCC. Thursdays, May 7 to June 11, 7 to 9 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival and the Toronto Workmen's Circle co-present a screening of *The Anarchist Rabbi*. **Adam Kossoff**'s documentary about Jewish anarchist **Rudolf Rocker**, who campaigned in London's East End over a century ago. Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Ave. at St. George. Friday, May 8, 3:30 p.m. Tickets, www.tjff.com, 416-324-9121. This year's festival runs April 30 to May 10 and features 110 films from 18 countries.

• *Jewish Daily Forward* editor and author **Sigal Samuel** reads from her new book, *The Mystics of Mile End*, at a book launch. Published by Freehand Books, Samuel's debut novel focuses on a dysfunctional Montreal family obsessed with climbing the Kabbalah's "tree of life." Free admission, everyone welcome. Another Story Bookshop, 315 Roncesvalles Ave. at Grenadier, Wednesday, May 13, 7 p.m. 416-462-1104, www.anotherstory.ca

• • •

At the Galleries

• Art educator **Osnat Lippa** discusses "Emotion & Primitivism in the Landscape Paintings of Emily Carr and Vincent Van Gogh." Drop in, $14. Miles Nadal JCC. Monday, May 4, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

• *Yiddish Fight Club*, an exhibition that opens this week at the YIVO Institute in New York, counters the stereotype that Jews don't know how to fight, with images of Jewish brawlers from the past as well as a lexicon of now-forgotten slang Yiddish fighting terms. Center for Jewish History, Constantiner Gallery, 15 W. 16th St., Manhattan. ■

Soul of Israeli music scene to perform in Toronto

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Israeli pop star Shlomi Shabat, known as the *neshamah*, or soul, of the Israeli music scene, is coming to Toronto in May to both entertain and give the Jewish community an opportunity to connect to Israeli culture.

On May 7, Shabat, accompanied by a 12-piece ensemble and special guest, Toronto-based duo Scarlett Jane, will perform at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

The event, put together by Motek Cultural Initiative, a non-profit organization that has been showcasing contemporary Israeli music in Toronto since 2009, lands on Lag b'Omer, the only night during the *Sefirah* when music can be enjoyed.

"This is an opportunity for many to experience the way we in Israel celebrate this holiday and to bring the Jewish and Israeli communities of Toronto closer together," said Ravid Dahan, founder of the Motek Cultural Initiative.

She said part of her mission is to bring talented Israeli musicians to Toronto's multicultural community to foster an appreciation for Israeli culture and to use music as a tool to present Israel in a more positive light.

"Motek has two goals leading its mission the reason why I go to work every day. First is to reveal a positive image of Israel," Dahan said.

"It doesn't make sense to me that knowledgeable people in Canada don't see Israel with the same eyes that I see Israel. It doesn't make sense to me."

The second part of her mission is to help the next generation of Israelis in Toronto develop a connection to Israel.

"For example, with the ISROCK Festival in 2013, Motek brought Tel Aviv to Toronto. This time around, Motek saves you another trip to Israel, by bringing the soul of Israeli sound to your doorstep."

Dahan said she wanted to bring Shabat to Toronto because he represents the soul of Israeli music.

"He is the *neshamah* of the Israeli music. His songs, people grew up on them for, like, three generations. I will enjoy it, my kids will enjoy it, and my father will enjoy it. Everyone will know the songs."

Sixty-year-old Shabat, who has been entertaining Israelis for three decades, produced 18 rock albums influenced by Mediterranean, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, Turkish, and Ladino music.

Shlomi Shabat

Shabat, who serves as a mentor on the Israeli version of the show, *The Voice*, said he's excited to perform for Israelis living abroad.

"Each song and each lyric takes on a stronger meaning and significance," wrote Shabat in an email, which was translated from Hebrew.

"This puts me in a position where I want to put on a better show, because I know that they won't be able to see me as often as those who live in Israel."

"My music really speaks to people of all ages – children, teens, young adults and older people," said Shabat, whose rise to fame began in the 1980's, when he pioneered a new fusion of Mediterranean rock, blues, and Spanish music.

"I also know how to connect to the younger generation in regards to my sound and new style. I think it's a blessing that I can learn to adjust and not to give up my musical inspirations, and on the other hand, also connect to the younger generation and deliver what they want to hear... I think that is why the audience feels it's easy and fun to connect with me and for me to connect with them."

He said he hopes that the people who come to see him perform will be left with a feeling of longing for Israel.

"I have performed before in Toronto and I very much enjoy performing here, because this community is very warm and welcoming," he said. ■

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Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to **stephanie@darcheinoam.ca** *by June 5. Only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.*

Tarragon production blends Bollywood and the Bard

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Shakespeare and Bollywood aren't often thought of in tandem. But Tarragon Theatre's adaption of *Much Ado About Nothing* blends the two together.

"The essential relationships from Shakespeare's play are all there. And the wonderful fireworks of wit are as present as ever," says Alon Nashman, who plays Benedict (or Benedick in the original Shakespearean text). Instead of taking place in Italy, the piece has been relocated to Brampton, Ont., and it's filled with Bollywood-style music and dancing.

"Everything has this extra little lustre," says Nashman, "and a kind of new cultural and societal meaning." For Nashman, it acknowledges the diversity of Toronto and the distinct cultural groups that call this city home.

"The mixing and melding of those is what makes us so rich and so fascinating," he says. "It absolutely works here. It makes the play richer, it makes the play funnier and in a certain sense, better."

Along with the Bollywood elements, some of the show's text reflects its new setting. "We're not being precious about maintaining references to medieval dancing or Latin jokes or that kind of thing. We're trying to make it absolutely current." Much of the text is still Shakespearean, but parts of it have been translated into Hindi and the show will have surtitles. Many characters, such as Benedict's love interest, have also been renamed.

Nashman describes his character as a "confirmed bachelor" and a "rationalist" who rejects the concept of marriage – until he falls in love with Thara, or Beatrice in the Bard's version. "He has a change of heart," says Nashman. "And it's one of the most incredible transformations perhaps an actor would ever have a chance to play."

Beyond playing Benedict, Nashman never thought he'd be part of a production such as this. "When director Richard Rose first offered it to me, I wrote him back and said, 'do I get to sing and dance Bollywood style?'" Rose said yes and Nashman was in. For an actor used to working with Jewish subject matter – he's well known for his solo shows *Hirsch* and *Kafka and Son*, among many other theatre credits – Nashman says that for once, he didn't feel like the expert in the room.

Alon Nashman

Much Ado About Nothing's reimagined production is directed by the award-winning Richard Rose, who's also the artistic director of Tarragon Theatre. Ravi Jain is the consulting director and the show features original music by Ed Hanley and Suba Sankaran – both part of the Juno-nominated group Autorickshaw – and choreography by Nova Bhattacharya. "We're awash with experts," says Nashman, referring to how he learned to perform in the Bollywood style.

After his run with Tarragon Theatre, Nashman is taking *Hirsch*, co-written with Paul Thompson, and *Kafka and Son* co-created with Mark Cassidy – to the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, South Africa and the 969 Festival in Johannesburg.

Meanwhile, Nashman hopes audiences will reflect on the unique wonder that is multicultural Toronto when watching Tarragon's *Much Ado About Nothing*. "There is an immense power to being in a room together," he says of theatre. And he knows this play will let Torontonians celebrate who they are. ■

Much Ado About Nothing *runs at the Tarragon Theatre Main Space from April 29-May 31. For tickets visit tarragontheatre.com*

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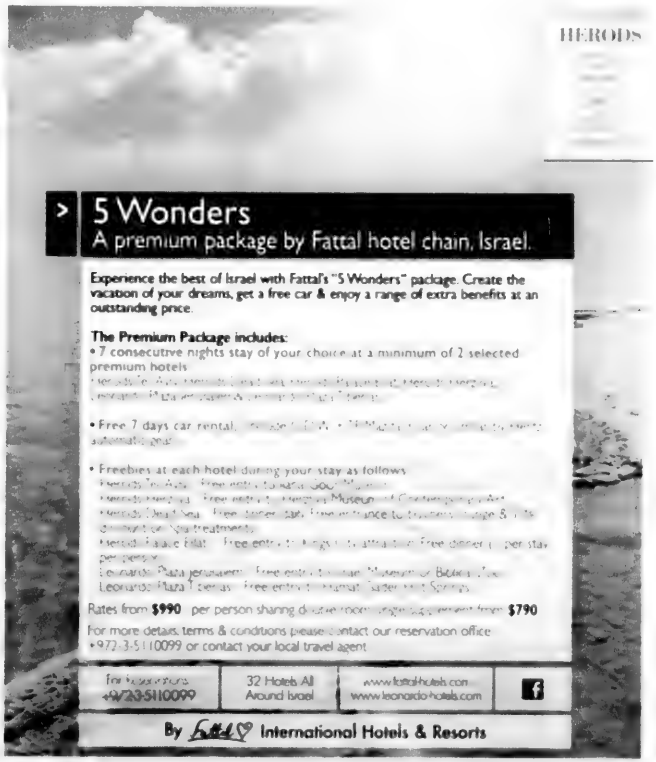
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Memoir traces European art world in early 20th century

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Born in New York in 1948, the prominent French-Jewish journalist Anne Sinclair says that while the heroic stories of her paternal grandparents, who had stayed in France during wartime, had always resonated deeply within her, she was never drawn to the same degree to the experiences of her maternal grandparents, who had fled to New York in the same perilous period.

But all that changed after her mother died in 2006, and Sinclair delved into several boxes of her mother's letters, documents and photographs that had lain untouched for decades. The contents included an unfinished autobiography of her maternal grandfather, Paul Rosenberg, who had owned an influential art gallery in Paris and had been one of the most important art dealers in Europe until the Nazis rolled into Paris in June 1940.

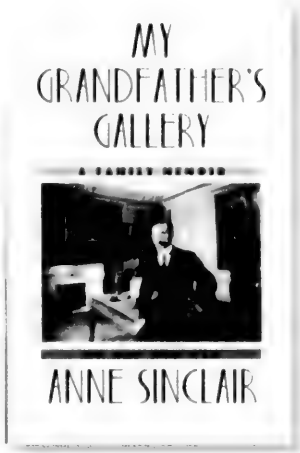
In *My Grandfather's Gallery: A Family Memoir of Art and War*, Sinclair pays homage to this pivotal figure in the art world of the early 20th century, who was on intimate terms with some of the leading artists of the early modernist period. She also traces the Nazi's atavistic campaign against "degenerate art" and their brutish pillage of Europe, especially their looting on a massive scale of artworks belonging to Jews.

The notion that art could be "degenerate" had been circulating in European culture at least since 1893, when Jewish social critic Max Nordau used the word "Entartung" or "degeneracy" in reference to art. In his famous critical work *Degeneration*, Nordau observed that modern art at the end of the 19th century was a mirror in which one could see clear signs of the breakdown of traditional social values as well as the various mental diseases, neuroses and hysterias of European society. The modernist trend, of course, became greatly magnified after World War I.

As early as 1909, Kaiser Wilhelm may have been one of the first to apply Nordau's ideas to the real world when he fired the director of a major gallery for buying impressionist paintings. The concept of "degenerate art" gained renewed currency in the 1920s when a group of philosophers invoked the phrase in protest against modernism. After 1933, the Nazis took the next logical step by banning "degenerate" works and expropriating them wherever possible. Artists were forbidden not only to show or sell their works, but even to buy brushes, canvases or paint; many went into exile.

Widely considered the epicenter of the Paris avant-garde, the Galerie Rosenberg at 21 rue La Boetie was famous for its displays of paintings by Picasso, Braque, Derain, Matisse, Leger, Laurencin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Ingres, Cezanne, Seurat, Rousseau, Monet and Renoir.

Both born in the same year (1881), Rosenberg and Picasso were extremely close and saw each other as "spiritual brothers." Picasso sketched portraits of members of the art dealer's family; Rosenberg picked canvases straight from the artist's studio and personally hung them in his gallery for each of the many solo Picasso exhibitions he organized over the years. "If Picasso's painting took off in the 1920s, it did so not least because Paul knew how to promote the painter and guide him in directions other than cubism," Sinclair writes of her grandfather.



My Grandfather's Gallery: A Family Memoir of Art and War
Anne Sinclair
Farrar Strauss & Giroux

In 1939, just weeks before the outbreak of war, the Germans held an auction in Lucerne of 126 paintings and sculptures that had been confiscated from museums and private collections in Germany. "Many collectors, unable to resist the temptation to buy outstanding works of art at low prices, attended," Sinclair writes. "Paul warned potential buyers that any currency the Reich harvested from this sale 'would fall back on our heads in the form of bombs.' "

It was another, unrelated Rosenberg – the Nazi propagandist Alfred Rosenberg – who led the National Socialist campaign against degeneracy, which included any form of physical distortion of the human being in art. Alfred Rosenberg took over Paul Rosenberg's well-appointed gallery and used it as headquarters for the anti-Semitic Institut d'Etude des Questions Juives, the Institute for the Study of Jewish Questions. Alfred Rosenberg also set up the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, the chief organization in the looting operation against Parisian art dealers and Jewish owners. The booty was taken to the Louvre and another museum where it was photographed, evaluated, and wrapped for shipment to Germany.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

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Dancing Arabs and The Kindergarten Teacher

Unique students at the centre of two very different Israeli dramas

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Two of the hottest, most anticipated titles at this spring's Toronto Jewish Film Festival deal with unique students and their tumultuous experiences at Jewish schools.

Dancing Arabs, based on a bestselling novel by Sayed Kashua, tells the story of a brainy Palestinian teen who gets a scholarship to a prestigious Israeli academy. *The Kindergarten Teacher*, from award-winning director Nadav Lapid, is about a lonely teacher and the prodigal pupil she yearns to nurture and inspire.

While *Dancing Arabs* opens the festival on April 30, *The Kindergarten Teacher* (playing May 5 at Empress Walk and May 9 at Innis Town Hall) is more of a must-see. Regardless, both are strong Israeli dramas that are well worth your time.

The dancing Arabs of the former's title are a reference to how Arab citizens in Israel must constantly dodge social and political obstacles. The drama focuses on the teenage Eyad (Tawfeek Barhom) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. His father, Salah (Ali Suliman), is proud of his son for being accepted into a top Israeli high school.

"I want you to be better than them," Salah tells his son, referring to the Israelis, "in every way!"

Soon after his arrival at the academy, though, Eyad realizes he is the only Arab in his class. He tries to hide his past in an attempt not to offend or attract unwanted attention. Tension arises when he begins a romantic relationship with Naomi (Danielle Kitzis), a Jewish student whose parents would never approve of Eyad.

Dancing Arabs is the latest film from director Eran Riklis (*Lemon Tree*, *Zaytoun*), and the drama benefits from a uniformly terrific cast. Barhom, a relatively unknown, anchors the film. He is especially magnetic in the scenes when Eyad directly confronts the school's stereotyping of Israel's enemies.

Kashua, who based the novel on some of his own experiences in Israel, also penned the screenplay. The film benefits from his sharp observations of how alienated Arabs feel in the land. Some of the best scenes in *Dancing Arabs* are between Eyad and Jonathan (Michael Moshanov), a Jewish friend with muscular dystrophy. The two boys bond over their outsider status at school.

While the film has some pointed social commentary about Jewish-Arab relations, Eyad too rarely voices his anger. One gets the feeling that Riklis and Kashua dulled some of the novel's more provocative moments.

Regardless, *Dancing Arabs* is a well-acted drama that should resonate with audiences looking for an honest depiction of Arab-Israeli life.

Meanwhile, for Torontonians looking for something more daring, *The Kindergarten Teacher* will likely be one of the festival's most talked-about films. It deserves comparison with the best films from art-house directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne (*Two Days, One Night*).

***Dancing Arabs* tells the story of an Arab Israeli and his tumultuous experiences at an elite Israeli high school. The drama opens the Toronto Jewish Film Festival on April 30.**

A hit at the Cannes Film Festival last year, Nadav Lapid's drama focuses on Nira (Sarit Larry), a kindergarten teacher bored with her job and her husband. However, when she finds out that a new student, five-year-old Yoav (Avi Shnaidman), can recite original, startlingly good poetry, she tries to mentor the young prodigy.

Lapid's film begins as an inspirational drama and slowly morphs into an unsettling thriller. Larry gives a tour de force performance. Even though her character becomes increasingly hard to like, her layered performance ensures one can understand her sadness and sympathize with Nira's journey.

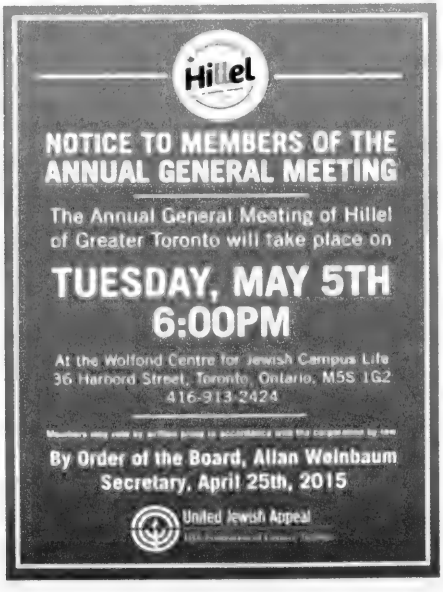
Meanwhile, the young Shnaidman is outstanding in his film debut: natural, nuanced and completely believable. Despite the kindergarten setting, the film contains nudity and sexual content, and is not suitable for children.

Much of the film's success is due to its realist esthetic. Cinematographer Shai Goldman shoots much of the film by placing the camera on the same level as the children in Nira's class. Told from this perspective, the story becomes more intimate. These close-up observations bottle up both the playfulness and the raw emotions in the classroom, making it difficult to look away.

At other times, we look at the world from Yoav's point of view. When he swings upside down in the playground, we notice the overwhelming beauty of the sky and trees he sees. The purity and innocence of these moments contrast with the stark realism of the scenes from Nira's perspective, showing the distance between the characters.

Lapid and his crew drain many of the sets — the classroom, Nira's apartment — of colour. This allows for Yoav's powerful poems to have more vitality, since he projects them in such sad, empty rooms.

Many will be disturbed and surprised by some of the plot turns in the film's second half. The ending should spark a lot of conversation. *The Kindergarten Teacher* is hypnotic, thought-provoking filmmaking. ■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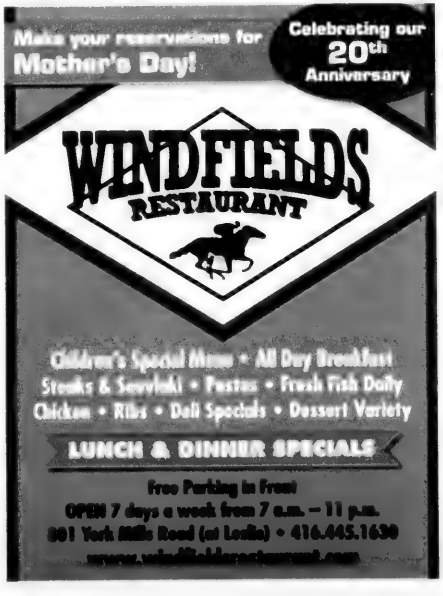
United Jewish Appeal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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 30, 2015

Jewish pioneers in the motion picture business

The Motion Picture Owners of Ontario rally in Toronto in September, 1926 ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE FONDS

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

One of the great stories of Toronto's Jewish community involves the large number of Jews who were pioneers in the Canadian film industry. That story is still largely untold, awaiting the right historian to fit all the pieces together. In the meantime, some key items that help to illuminate the tale are available at the Ontario Jewish Archives Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre.

Hye Bossin's 1956 booklet *Stars of David* might be a good place to start. Bossin's "very casual account of the Jewish element in the theatre history of Toronto" deals with the stage as well as the cinema, and records that the American actor Emanuel Judah may have been the first Jewish actor to play a leading role in Toronto. (The venue was Frank's Hotel and the year was 1826, when the city was still officially known as York.)

Some chapters later, Bossin turns to film and makes the following observation: "Perhaps the story of the Allens is the first Canadian one worthy of becoming a chapter in the motion picture industry's volume of great accomplishments."

The saga of the Allen's theatre empire began more than a century ago, when Bernard Allen of Pennsylvania sent two of his sons, Jule and J.J., northward to Ontario to find a commercial space suitable for a nickelodeon. The boys were 18 and 17 years old respectively. "They came up in [1906 or] 1907 and they opened a theatre in Brantford, Ont." recalled their sister-in-law, Bertha Allen, wife of Herbert Allen, in a 1975 taped interview. "They had rented a store and put in chairs and started running some films. The charge was five cents."

Soon the Allens opened another local theatre and the entire family moved to Brantford; then came a theatre in Calgary and the family moved out west.

Hye Bossin continues the story. "The progress of the Allens was astounding. In a decade and a half the fistful of nickels that marked the opening of the [Brantford] Theatorium in 1906 grew into a $20 million investment in about 50 theatres, including one each in Britain and Russia and several in the United States, as well as a film distribution organization.

"Not many years after they entered the motion picture business the Allen family settled in Toronto, where its members built the city's finest cinemas, among them the Tivoli, Parkdale, College, St. Clair, Beach and Hollywood."

But competition was stiff, especially after American-born entrepreneur Nathan L. Nathanson purchased the grand Majestic Theatre on Adelaide Street in 1916 and converted it into the Regent, Toronto's first deluxe movie palace. This was the first in the Famous Players chain of theatres that Nathanson and his associates built across the country. American film mogul Adolph Zukor was another shark who battled the Allens for film distribution rights in Canada.

Bossin mentions numerous other pioneers, including Manuel Gebertig, Jacob Smith, Abner Appleby, Charles and Hyman Rotenberg, Morris Mentel, Harry Alexander and Sam Lester. The latter two who were my father's uncles – and Mentel were in business together. "During the day they ran a little cloak-and-suit manufacturing business, with Harry, who had come from England in 1909, as designer and salesman," Bossin records. "Within a few years they were operating a half-dozen theatres."

Besides the taped discussion with Bertha Allen, the OJA holds interviews with Sol Gebirtig, Jennie Goldstein and other informed parties. It also holds historic photos such as a 1926 group portrait of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Ontario which had a predominance of Jewish members – among them the Lesters, Harry Alexander, Jake Smith, Isadore Stern, Sam Ulster, Abe Pollakoff, Irving Field, Joe Cohen, Arthur Cohen, probably an Axler or two, and Samuel Bloom of Bloom and Fine. (The formidable B&I chain, which arose in the 1920s, included the Carlton, Century, Christie, Donlands and Vaughan theatres.)

Also among the OJA's holdings are numerous photos of theatres, the Eglinton among them, designed or renovated by the architectural firm of Kaplan & Sprachman. Other items relate to later generations of film-industry entrepreneurs such as Nat Taylor and Garth Drabinsky. These and other artifacts will certainly be of use when the right historian comes along to tell the important story of the Jewish pioneers who helped to build the motion picture business in Canada. ■

This is the fifth in a series of articles to be published periodically about Toronto's Jewish institutions, funded by the J. B. & Dora Salsberg Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto. This series is in partnership with the Ontario Jewish Archives, Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre and draws on their collections: www.ontariojewisharchives.org

Story mixes family saga with insider view of art world

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

By then, Paul Rosenberg had already put some of his artworks into storage under the name of his non-Jewish chauffeur, and had sent other pieces abroad. He also helped to prepare the first big Picasso retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and a Picasso exhibition at the Art Institute in Chicago in 1939 and 1940. "Paul loaned more than 30 canvases" to these exhibitions, Sinclair writes, "which meant these paintings had escaped the clutches of the Nazis."

More importantly, Rosenberg and his family also escaped the Nazi's clutches, having fled to Portugal as refugees. Here's how he described the experience in his diary: "Imagine a man who has everything in life ... and who, a week later, has lost his business, his fortune, his friends. I was sitting on a stone wall with a boiled egg and a crust of bread and I couldn't help laughing." Eventually the family made it to London and then New York.

With the topic of looted artworks and restitution central to the current film *Woman in Gold* and numerous other recent books and movies, *My Grandfather's Gallery* appears at a time of heightened interest in the subject. (The book was originally published in French in 2012, and came out in English translation in 2014.)

The story, which combines a Jewish family's dramatic wartime saga with an insider's view of the art world, bears parallels with Edmund de Waal's 2010 family memoir, *The Hare With the Amber Eyes*.

Sinclair's book also bears comparison with a biography of Edna Ferber that I once read in which the author decided to tell her subject's life in backwards order; it was an experiment that did not work. Sinclair doesn't exactly follow that plan but, in my opinion, she undercuts the power of her narrative significantly by not telling the story in chronological order. For this reason, I turned a lot of pages before warming to the story – the heart of which is the relationship between Rosenberg and Picasso. ■

WRY BREAD

Encountering GCGs – Genuinely Curious Gentiles

David Levine

"Are you Jewish?" a random stranger asked me recently. When I said yes, he pumped his fist in victory. "I can always spot you guys. Don't worry," he said. "I like Jews." And that was the *least* awkward part of our conversation, for I had just encountered a GCG: a Genuinely Curious Gentile.

GCGs are good people, the kind who make friends on airplanes, bring gifts for receptionists and have never sent back a meal. Under different circumstances, you might even enjoy their company, but, as the name suggests, their genuine curiosity also frees them from the strictures of polite conversation. This guide to your next GCG encounter is designed to help you navigate the process with maximum grace and politeness.

Stage 1: the approach

GCGs aren't generally subtle. You'll be able to tell when one has awkwardly set his or her gaze on you.

She will attempt to communicate (from a distance) that she "just" wants something. "Just a second," he will say, or "I just wanted to ask…" If ignored, the GCG will reinforce the urgency of his breeziness through pantomime and/or wildly inappropriate vocal volume.

There's not much you can do here. Escape is tricky and not always an option (e.g., with co-workers, extended family). If your GCG sees you eyeing the exit, he'll decide he simply must catch you before you leave, picking up his pace, and – because he's still staring at you – plowing enthusiastically through everything below eye level as he approaches, sweaty and grinning at the thought of meeting Jew – I mean you.

Stage 2: "...right??"

Brace yourself – the real awkwardness starts now. First, your GCG will need to confirm your (Jewish) status –plowing into "You're Jewish, right?" before doubling back, concerned, with "Is it OK to ask that?" and "I don't mean it as a *bad* thing."

You'll be so unable to hide your discomfort that your GCG may actually notice. Never fear! You'll be reassured that your GCG "knows a lot of Jews" and has "been to synagogue," so all is well.

Stage 3: the "point"

Now that your GCG has thoroughly embarrassed you (not himself – he's immune to that) and confirmed that he is speaking to a Jew, your GCG will (attempt to) arrive at his point. Invariably, these comments break down into four broad categories: aggressive hatred, geopolitical insight, unidentifiable ramblings, and vaguely racist compliments.

Can you spot the GCGs in *your* life? Use the real-life examples below to practise:

"You Jews have done great for yourselves."

"My friends and I figured out how to have peace in the Middle East."

"Is it true about the sheets?"

"I tell everyone: always use Jews as your doctors and lawyers. They fight, fight, fight for you."

"Is it true about the horns?"

"I heard William Shatner is Jewish. Have you met him?"

"I think it's great how you control the media."

Stage 4: the reply

Your GCG has been talking at you for so long the room is empty. You can't remember how (or when) the conversation started. You've been nodding and agreeing so much it feels like a visit to your grandparents. Suddenly, there's a lull, and you notice your GCG has stopped talking and is looking at you, expectantly, awaiting a reply.

This will surprise you: the GCG has rambled so wildly and at such length that the concept of dialogue has slipped from your mind. What to say? Your GCG has covered Jewish physiology, 9/11 conspiracy theories, recipes for hummus and the short-lived 90s sitcom *Phenom*.

You might now be telling yourself: "Just focus on the dumbest thing they said and correct it. Maybe you *can* start somewhere. However, your GCG isn't likely to care. He's already started mentally retelling the story to a friend ("Guess who I just met!").

Reply politely, but don't engage. Make your way to an exit while using platitudes such as "I never thought of if that way," "It's a really complicated situation," "Who can say?" and "Hindsight is 50/50" before running to safety. ■

Family Moments

Happy 106th birthday! Miriam (Margaret) Kamen-Zysman on May 16. Warm wishes and love from family and friends at the Baycrest Apotek and Na'amat Toronto.

Mazel tov to Great-Zaide Dany Dankoff on his 90th birthday, pictured with his great-grandson David Andrew Wolofsky, born on March 20.

David & Marilyn Aisen wish to announce the engagement of their granddaughter Kylie Dorfman, daughter of Bev Dorfman, to Craig Schandler, all of Florida.

Leana Margolis, Michael Chernoff and big brother Eli and sister Rose are thrilled to announce the birth of Lily Maya, born March 26, in Toronto.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

What's New

APRIL 30 - MAY 7

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, April 30

BOOK REVIEW
Janna Nadler reviews *Radiance of Tomorrow* by **Ishmael Beah,** 1:30 p.m . Temple Emanu-El. $10

THE PROBLEM OF JERUSALEM
Daniel Seidemann discusses the future of Jerusalem, 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple. Sponsored by Canadian Friends of Peace Now

JEWISH HISTORY IN POLAND
Moshe Rosman, professor of Jewish history at Bar-Ilan University, is the scholar this weekend at Beth Tzedec Congregation Tonight, "Poland and Ukraine: New insights into Jewish civilization," 7:30 p.m

THINKERS YOU NEVER HEARD OF
Rabbi Michael Stroh discusses "Two Jewish thinkers you never heard of – **Herman Cohen** and **Lev Shestov,**" 7:30 p.m . tonight and May 14. Temple Har Zion

Saturday, May 2

SHABBAT ITANU
David Lepofsky, lawyer and advocate for disability issues, is the guest speaker at Adath Israel's Shabbat morning service

Sunday, May 3

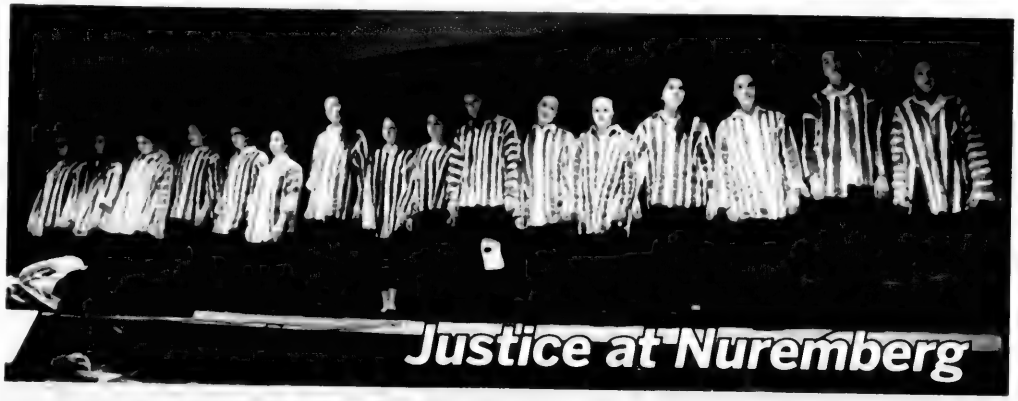
KAVANAH GARDEN
Help Shoresh prepare the Kavanah garden. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.,18 Lebovic Campus Dr. Shoresh is also looking for volunteers for a variety of jobs. Call **Risa** 416-805-8382.

INTERFAITH EVENING
A panel of three women scholars will discuss, "Do Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions promote diversity and inclusion?" 7:30 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam. $10

Monday, May 4

MEDICAL SPEAKER SERIES
Dr. Vivien Brown discusses "Healthy aging," 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $15 in advance/$20 at the door.

INTERMARRIAGE DISCUSSION
Paul Golin, Jewish Outreach Institute, discusses "Intermarriage: optimism and opportunity," 7:30 p.m., University of Toronto Multifaith Centre, 569 Spadina Ave.



Grade 8 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School presented *Justice at Nuremberg* last week to parents, grandparents (many of whom are Holocaust survivors) friends and family. ALI MARTELL PHOTO

$10. Sponsored by Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism. RSVP 416-385-3910

THE NUCLEAR AGE
Daniela Monaldi discusses "Marie Curie, Robert Oppenheimer and the dawn of the nuclear age," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $12.

Tuesday, May 5

MAXIMIZING BRAIN HEALTH
Beth Tzedec presents part 2 of a series on "Maximizing brain health and reducing the risk of dementia," 1:30 p.m.

LUNCH & LEARN
Karen Liberman discusses "Mental health – despair, hope and recovery," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15 p.m. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

TORAH THROUGH FEMALE EYES
Loretta Tanenbaum teaches "Torah through female eyes," 10-11:15 a.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation to May 26. $55/$65.

CHUG HATANACH
Laura Wiseman teaches chapters 28 and 30 of the Book of Psalms, 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

FASHION FOR THE HEART
Save a Child's Heart holds a fashionable philanthropic evening at Holt Renfrew, 50 Bloor St. W., 7 p.m. RSVP 416-324-9113 or fashion@saveachildsheart.ca.

TORAH STITCH BY STITCH
Textile artist **Temma Gentles** discusses her project of cross-stitching the Torah, with volunteers, 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

ISRAEL LEARNING SEMINAR
Sally Zerker discusses "Israel and the world: contemporary issues," with the Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, Toronto Zionist Centre, 788 Marlee Ave. 6:30 p.m. RSVP cijr@israelnet.org

MELANOMA FUNDRAISER
The David Cornfield Melanoma Fund holds a fundraiser, 6:30 p.m., at The Ballroom Bowl, 145 John St. For tickets, visit www.dcmf.ca.

Wednesday, May 6

BIBLICAL DAY TRIPS
Hana Werner discusses "Joshua: a man of his season," Beth Tzedec Congregation Dessert at 1:30 p.m., lecture at 2 p.m. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511.

MORASHA CLASSES
Barrie Wilson teaches "Jewish books that did not make it into the Bible," May 6-27, 10 a.m.; **Jerry Fink** teaches "Classical music and the Jews," May 6-27, 11:15 a.m. Classes at Beth Emeth Synagogue. **Loretta** 416-789-7400.

CONRAD BLACK
Conrad Black discusses his new book, *Rise to Greatness, The History of Canada from the Vikings to the Present,* 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $15 in advance/$20 at the door

OPEN HOUSE
Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School holds an open house, 10 a.m. RSVP **Sheri Rapp,** 416-928-3537, ext. 136 or sherie djds.ca.

ELDER ABUSE
National Council of Jewish Women, Toronto section, hosts a panel discussion on "The elder abuse crisis," 7:30 p.m., Council House, 4700 Bathurst St. RSVP 416-633-5100.

Thursday, May 7

YIDDISH VINKL
Ralph Wintrob discusses the works of Lord Byron and his influence on Hebrew and Yiddish writers, noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20, includes lunch RSVP: yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

HAGGAI AND THE SECOND TEMPLE
Rabbi Wayne Allen discusses "Haggai: the unknown hero of the Second Temple," tonight and May 14, 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of May 14 is May 4. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

DAVID ANISMAN

Beth Emeth Synagogue holds a dinner and draw in honour of **David Anisman's** 100th birthday, 6:30 p.m. For tickets, 416-633-3838.

SPEED DATING

Canadian Hadassah-B'yachad Chapter holds a speed dating evening for women aged 26-35; 36-45 and men 26-37; 38-49. Honest Lawyer, 115 York Blvd., Richmond Hill, 7:15 p.m. $59.99. For tickets, go to www.chw.ca/toronto/events-and fundraisers or email byachad@hotmail com.

LAG B'OMER

Jewish Russian Community Centre holds a Lag b'Omer family celebration, Earl Bales Park, 6 p.m.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted.

- Beyond the chupah, becoming a couple: a 2-session group for couples who are going to be married next year. May 3, May 17, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.
- Effective Parenting: a 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-10. Starts May 5, 1-3 p.m. or May 28, 7-9 p.m.
- When you're about to separate – what to tell the kids: a workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. May 5, 6:30 p.m.
- Widows/Widowers over 65: A 6-session group for men and women over 65 who have recently lost a partner or spouse. Starts May 6, 1-2:30 p.m.
- One family, two homes: a 6-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Starts May 6, 6:30-8 p.m.
- Life skills for today's woman: a 6-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives, starts May 6, 7 p.m at Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St., or May 7, 1 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.
- The challenge of anger for women: a 6-session group for women to learn to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Starts May 7, 7:30 p.m.
- Living with teens: a 6-session group for parents of teens. Topics include setting limits, letting go, realistic expectations and the pressures of drugs, alcohol and dating. Starts May 7, 7:30-9 p.m.
- Adult children losing a parent: a 6-session group for adult children who have recently lost a parent. Starts May 12, 7:30-9 p.m.
- Mind, body connection for women: an 8-session group for women to learn meditation and mindfulness. Starts May 14, 1-2:30 p.m.
- High conflict divorce: a workshop for parents to develop strategies to deal with a high conflict situation. Not for individuals in an abusive situation. May 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: a 4-session group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. May 28, 7-9 p.m.

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC. Jack Gelbloom Quartet** performs *Something Familiar: A Musical Comedy Show*. April 30, 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; Balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. May 5, **Irine Dubinski** discusses "Colours in life," 10 a.m.; May 7, **Fern Teplitsky** discusses "Ageism," 1:30 p.m. Mondays, current events with **Harvey Skolnick,** 10 a.m.
- **VIP Club (Vision Impaired Seniors)** holds an evening of entertainment, May 4, 7 p.m., Bernard Betel Centre. RSVP **Bess,** 905-508-2892. $5/$7.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com. To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- Exercise classes, free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com.
- **Kitty Wintrob** discusses her memoir *I'm Not Going Back*, May 7, 7 p.m.
- The JCCs go to Stratford to see *Diary of Anne Frank*, May 20. June 25, JCCs go to see *Sweet Charity* at the Shaw Festival.
- **Bill Gladstone** presents, "Basics of Jewish Genealogy," May 14, 21, 7 p.m.
- **Kevin Courrier** presents "Jewish Sensibility in Hollywood Films- Part II," May 6-27, 1 p.m.
- Casual Yiddish conversation, Mondays, 1:30-3 p.m.
- Day and evening mah-jong courses start in June.
- Beginner bridge starts June 29, 10 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- *Romarising*, photos of Canadian Roma, is in the gallery until May 2.
- Playwriting for beginners with **Julie Tepperman,** May 7- June 11, 7 p.m. Must pre-register , ext. 0
- **Osnat Lippa** discusses the art of Emily Carr, Vincent Van Gogh, May 4, 1:30 p.m
- *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, presented by the Alexander Showcase Theatre April 30-May 3, Al Green Theatre. For tickets, www alexandershowcasetheatre.com
- **Adam Nayman** looks at the films of Joel and Ethan Coen, May 4-July 6, 7 p.m.
- Work toward losing 10 pounds in 8 weeks. Classes start week of May 4. Ext. 574
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, May 10, 1 p.m. Ext. 521
- Inclusive ballroom and Latin dance workshop, May 10, 2:15 p.m.
- MNJCC music ensembles recital May 12, 8 p.m. Featuring the daytime choir, open choir and klezmer ensemble. $10 Ext. 250
- Volunteers wanted for the downtown Tikkun Leil Shavuot, May 23. Volunteer orientation session May 14. Call ext. 250
- **Katherine Barber** discusses "Jewish contributions to the world of ballet," June 1, 8, 15, 1:30 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147
- Register for Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singers edition, seeking male voices, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17-21. Ext. 250
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein.** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- The JCCs go to Stratford to see *The Diary of Anne Frank*. May 20
- Beginner bridge starts April 30, 7 p.m.
- **Sara Angel** discusses "Stolen Art of the Holocaust," April 30, 7 p.m.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental mix media," May 20-June 10, 7 p.m.
- Drop-in for Israeli dance at Viva Thornhill Woods Retirement Community, Sundays starting May 3, 10:30 a.m.
- Intermediate mah-jong starts June 25. Beginner mah-jong starts June 23, 1 p.m.
- Join the Spirituelle Divas, May 7, June 4, 7:30 p.m. ■

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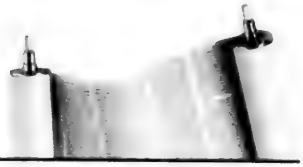
WEDDING GIFT REGISTRY

Parshah

Acharei Mot-Kedoshim | Leviticus 16:1 – 20:27



Rabbi Aaron Katchen explains the moral imperative that we build each other up
Rabbi Michal Shekel reflects on the various causes to which we dedicate our children
Rabbi Howard Morrison connects this week's reading to Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha'atzmaut

Aaron Katchen

Michal Shekel

Howard Morrison

"You shall not curse a deaf person. You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person, and you shall fear your God. I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:14)

Chapter 19 of Leviticus is one of my favourite sections of Torah to teach, especially to people learning Torah for the first time. It covers the gamut of how we should relate to God, to the land and to each other.

Verse 14 presents a deep statement on the literal level and an even more important lesson when unpacked. We are charged not to curse the deaf or trip the blind (*lifnei iver*) – sage advice not to mock people with disabilities.

But that is not the limit of our understanding of this verse. The rabbis teach us that an absent person is akin to a deaf person and cannot defend himself or herself. As well, we all suffer from our own "blindnesses," whether from lack of knowledge or from weakness. Having "blindness" is part of the human condition, and we are obligated not to take advantage of others' weaknesses by putting metaphorical stumbling blocks before them – whether for our own benefit or for the demise of others. It is a moral imperative to build each other up and not look for ways to tear each other down.

Although you will be reading this more than a week later, I am writing this on the evening of the passing of one of the most important rabbis in my life, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein. The world is greater for the Torah he brought in, but I already feel his absence. One of the earliest teachings of Rabbi Lichtenstein that I learned had to do with *lifnei iver* and Shabbat, and so I dedicate this piece in his memory. May his memory be a blessing. ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Among the instructions in this week's double parshah, one particular warning appears twice. Acharei Mot cautions us: "Do not allow any of your offspring to be offered up to Molech, and do not profane the name of your God." (Leviticus 18:21) Kedoshim takes the warning to another level: "Anyone among the Israelites or among the strangers residing in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall be put to death." (Leviticus 20:2)

The Hebrew verb n-t-n, "to give," used to describe offering the child, implies devoting or dedicating the child to the cult of Molech. In Hilchot Avodah Zarah 6:3, Rambam explains this not as a fatal sacrifice but a ritual where the child is handed back and forth between parent and priest. Though the action takes place under the direction of Molech's priest it is the parent who initiates it.

The thought of offering a child in any way is abhorrent to us. Still, these two verses force us to contemplate the causes to which we dedicate our children. How often do we zealously commit our offspring to attaining our hopes and dreams while claiming we are fulfilling their wishes? Is the higher-level sports league really that important? Is the big-name school such a good fit?

Acharei Mot-Kedoshim forms a powerful guide to moral adult behaviour and has repercussions for our offspring. Leviticus 19 gives numerous examples of ethical behaviour toward a variety of people: parents, the rich and poor, merchants, the elderly, the differently abled. Leviticus 18 and 20 deal with the boundaries of sexual encounters. Nestled among these are the admonitions about Molech.

Our double parshah can be summed up as "don't exploit." This includes not offering our children to the modern idols of dubious success and fleeting admiration we may mistakenly desire for them. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis.

The double portion of Acharei Mot-Kedoshim provides some of the most famous ideals in Judaism and has additional meaning in contemporary Jewish life.

The midpoint of the Torah centres around the golden rule of Judaism, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," and restates the Ten Commandments. These timeless observations are augmented by the fact that the double portion is read soon after the observances of Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut.

One interpretation takes three successive parshah titles and reads them as a sentence. "Acharei Mot, Kedoshim and Emor" literally mean "after one's death, one speaks of a person's holiness." We honour the memories of our holy ones who sanctified their lives through their deaths during the Shoah and on behalf of Israel.

We also recall the Hadrianic persecutions and the deaths of thousands of our people. The double portion is read during the same period that we count the Omer and observe restrictions in memory of that sad time in our history. A few days following Acharei Mot-Kedoshim and two days before Parshat Emor, we celebrate Lag b'Omer, the day the persecutions paused.

This season of the calendar can be seen as an emotional roller-coaster ride from the depths of despair to the heights of joyous celebration. At the centre of it is Acharei Mot-Kedoshim.

Toward the end of Kedoshim, we read, "I [God] will give [the land of Israel] to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." At the end of the Haftorah, we read, "I will restore My people Israel. They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine; they shall till gardens and eat their fruits. And I will plant them upon their soil, nevermore to be uprooted from the soil I have given them." May this be God's will in our time. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior rabbi-mara d'atra at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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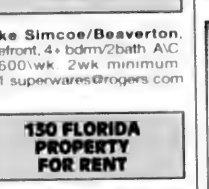

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
APRIL 30, 2015

Rabbi Deborah Waxman: Reconstructionism has an expansive view of Judaism

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Rabbi Deborah Waxman, who was appointed head of the Reconstructionist movement and president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC), the movement's seminary, last year, is both the first woman and the first lesbian to lead a Jewish seminary and a major Jewish movement.

Rabbi Waxman, who is based in Wyncote, Pa., was in Toronto last month visiting the Reconstructionist synagogue Congregation Darchei Noam, where she met with congregants and discussed the future of the movement. She also attended the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association's 40th annual convention, which was being held in Toronto.

The CJN spoke to her about social justice issues, intermarriage, the movement's challenges and her sense of responsibility as its leader.

Can you describe the process that saw you become head of the movement?

I was appointed president by the board of the RRC in October 2013, officially began in the role in January 2014 and was inaugurated in October 2014.

In June 2012, the Reconstructionist movement moved beyond the classical denominational model and combined the congregational union with the leadership training institution that the college is, so now it's one organization that works together as the agency responsible for promoting a Reconstructionist approach, fostering congregations and training leaders.

I read that you visited 14 congregations in your first nine months as RRC president. What's been your largest takeaway from that experience?

Now, 15 months in, I've been to 27 congregations, and by the end of the program year, I'll have been to over 30.

My biggest takeaway is the vitality, energy and deeply caring community I consistently find in congregations organized around Reconstructionism. I find the people who belong to these communities take a sense of joyful obligation around creating a Jewish community they want to live in.

These are communities that are always looking to increase opportunities to celebrate together, support each other through crises, learn and grow together and be change agents in the world – there's a strong tikkun olam component in Reconstructionism. My responsibility as leader of the movement is to make sure the resources gathered at the rabbinical college are able to support these efforts, to connect congregations and make it possible to share best practices among congregations at similar points in their life cycle – for example, for two congregations facing hiring their first rabbi to be able to speak to one another.

In what ways has Reconstructionist Judaism been a trailblazer for social justice issues like women's rights and LGBTQ rights?

On a national movement level, we're looking to make a contribution that isn't fulfilled by other Jewish organizations, such as promoting conversations about income inequality in North America and Israel. On a local level, many congregations are involved in things like building partnerships through multifaith or legislative-based organizations. And most Reconstructionist synagogues have some kind of tikkun olam committee. For example, in Portland, Oregon, they're working on environmental justice issues.

The movement has also been committed to trying to find ways for women to be included in Jewish life and leadership. There's a commitment to democracy and egalitarianism – to finding a way for all Jews to participate meaningfully in Jewish life.

We were the first seminary to admit gay and lesbian Jews to study for the rabbinate, and we developed protocols for welcoming queer Jews and acknowledging that children raised by one Jewish parent in an interfaith household can have an affirmative and positive embrace of a Jewish identity and a place in the Jewish community. Reconstructionism adopted a policy on patrilineal descent in 1966, meaning a child raised in a Jewish home with one Jewish parent is considered a full Jew. We have an expansive view of Judaism that aims to draw people in.

What's unique about the Reconstructionist approach to intermarriage?

I believe that in the modern era, where there's such an incredible embrace of Jews in North America and, on this continent, no particular barriers to our full participation in mainstream society – for sure, with some exceptions – any expression of Jewishness is a choice. And we have to help people understand all the opportunities and affirm that there are diverse expressions and practices of Jewish identity. We can take none of it for granted.

It's just so easy for Jews in North America to disappear into the mainstream. So I, and the movement as a whole, are most interested in building up rich expressions of all choices than we are in policing boundaries, in affirming people who embrace Jewish families and practices, even if they don't adhere to strict halachic categories. We should support their efforts to find a deeper connection. It's extraordinary the Jews and Jewish leaders that emerge from people who'd otherwise be excluded if we took the narrowest definition of Jewish.

Rabbi Deborah Waxman JORDAN CASSWAY PHOTO

> *I feel my work is about making the case not just for Reconstructionist Judaism, but for progressive Judaism and progressive religion at large.*

What are the biggest challenges currently facing Reconstructionist Judaism?

The openness of our movement is an extraordinary gift and has allowed for flourishing opportunities that Jews a couple centuries ago couldn't have imagined, but it also creates a challenging environment. There's a whole restructuring going on in all sectors of society, including the changing nature of religious structures. Where 50 to 100 years ago, Jews were Jews whether or not they wanted to be, now I think there's this moment of "Why belong to anything?" "Why should a synagogue belong to a denominational organization?" and for many people – especially young people – "Why be Jewish?" So I feel my work is about making the case not just for Reconstructionist Judaism, but for progressive Judaism and progressive religion at large.

In the United States, there's definitely an ever-increasing divide between radical secularism and fundamentalism, so it's a challenge to advocate for a progressive religious approach.

Have you noticed differences in Reconstructionist synagogues in the United States versus those in Canada?

I feel like in terms of the embrace of a Reconstructionist approach, there aren't tons of differences. The same types of people tend to be drawn to the movement across the border. I think communities in both places want to be flag-bearers for progressive Judaism and I see a lot of shared enthusiasm in both Canada and the U.S.

How does being both a woman and a lesbian enable you to be a strong role model in the movement?

Being head of the movement is a tremendous honour, and I'm keenly aware that I'm a role model. I aim to fulfil this with as much humility as possible. Otherwise, I don't see being a gay woman as having an impact. I'm aware that I'm the first, and people have been overwhelmingly excited and enthusiastic about my appointment. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Adam: male and female?

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN

In Genesis, we read that "God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." We also read that "on the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God; He created them male and female."

The image in the Torah of an ostensibly androgynous Adam – male and female appears problematic to say the least. I would like to suggest that this image may evoke the idea that it is the essential humanity of both that is paramount in the Divine scheme of things. God created one man so all future generations would – or should – understand that people are different, but that ultimately, we come from the same Source and should conduct ourselves in full awareness of this essential truth.

So, too, men and women are to live their lives aware that each has a claim to an essential and fundamental dignity that must be respected because it, too, emanates from the Divine Source. The Torah itself seems to be underlining the inherent integrity of each and every man and woman from the very inception of Creation.

Degradation of women violates in the most grotesque way the very essence of the Divine will. If this principle were understood and applied by religious and civil authorities, much suffering in the world would be alleviated.

Maybe there is an even greater point being made by this unique and enigmatic creation of a dual self. If Adam is the whole world in microcosm, male and female, then he is also the embodiment of all the future nations as well. If it is true that he represents the Torah's ideal of female as well as male dignity and integrity, then by extension he must also represent the right to dignity of all humankind, of all peoples.

When one people or one nation demonizes or dehumanizes another in order to subjugate it, civilized people refer to this as a primitive trait or primal urge, but perhaps it is the exact opposite. The Torah seems to be saying that the primal urge should be toward unity and brotherhood and that any deviation from that Divine model is an egregious perversion of the Divine will.

> *The Torah seems to be saying that the primal urge should be toward unity and brotherhood*

The history of the world is the history of war. Man is said to be an inherently aggressive being. Indeed, Genesis itself records murder, foretelling future events. However, it would appear that the Torah is saying that this is not the natural state, it is not inevitable, it is not condoned. The blood soaked history of the world is a hideous travesty of everything the Torah represents and strives to teach.

When we say *Shema Yisrael, HaShem Elokeinu, HaShem Echad* ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord is God, the Lord is One"), the last word we recite is *Echad* (One), the last word we hear is the call to the Oneness of God and implicitly the unity of His Creation.

The sad history of man's inhumanity has taken place throughout many centuries of supposed religious supremacy. However, the world is changing, especially in the West.

If the whole purpose and idea of Creation has been perverted throughout human history, in spite of the teaching of the Torah, what will happen now that society is becoming increasingly secular and throwing off the constraints and ideals of religious instruction?

Perhaps we need to understand a shocking truth – that the movement toward a secular society and the abandonment of religion is at least in part the *result* of religion's historical inability to communicate the basic truth of the human condition as taught in Genesis.

The lesson of Adam is there. It is subtle but accessible. Unity, dignity, integrity, brotherhood of all by all are essential to humanity because they are inherent in God's Creation. Will we ever learn this simple, basic, essential lesson? ■

Paul Socken is distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Waterloo.

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CLE for Lawyers & Accountants

100 Questions about a Will Challenge

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

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On June 2nd, 2015, B'nai Brith Canada's Estates & Trusts, Lawyers Division, will be presenting its seminar entitled 100 Questions About a Will Challenge. We will be using a combination of a moot court and panel discussion as an innovative presentation method. Since 2006, B'nai Brith Canada's Estates and Trusts Group has been providing seminars for lawyers and accountants on issues of interest. Our seminars have qualified for CPD hours. The format of the seminar will be a moot trial. The facts are drawn from several actual cases to highlight issues of interest in will challenges. In this hypothetical scenario, an illiterate elderly woman only speaks Russian and Yiddish makes a will. Her unemployed son persuades his mother to transfer her home to him and make a new will that disinherits his sister. At the time the will was made, the mother suffered from Alzheimer's. While under the care of her son, she drove her car into a pole resulting in irreversible brain damage. The Judge of the moot court will be Jordan Atin of Hull & Hull LLP. We will highlight issues including capacity, undue influence, solicitor's negligence and the feasibility of a will challenge while the testator is still alive.Whenever there is an issue of capacity, it is common to have a retrospective capacity assessment done. In our case scenario, Dr. Ken Shulman of the Dept. Of Psychiatry, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, did a retrospective capacity assessment. Brendon Donovan of Wagner Sidlofsky LLP will conduct the examination in chief and David Lobl of Dentons Canada will do the cross examination. This portion of the seminar has skilled estates litigators using a trial scenario to teach attendees about testamentary capacity, examination in chief and cross examination in an estate context. The event will take place on June 2nd, 2015 at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue at 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5N 1V8. Registration is at 7:30am and the moot court will begin at 8:00am. The event is open to lawyers and accountants. Those lawyers and/or accountants interested in attending may contact Elyse Gruenspan at B'nai Brith Canada at (416) 633-6224 or email at egruenspan@bnaibrith.ca. Charles B. Wagner, of Wagner Sidlofsky LLP, is a certified specialist in Estates & Trusts Law. He chairs the Estate and Trusts Group, Lawyers Division of Bnai Brith that created and runs this annual continuing legal education program for professionals dealing with estate and trust issues.

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The Silver Platter story

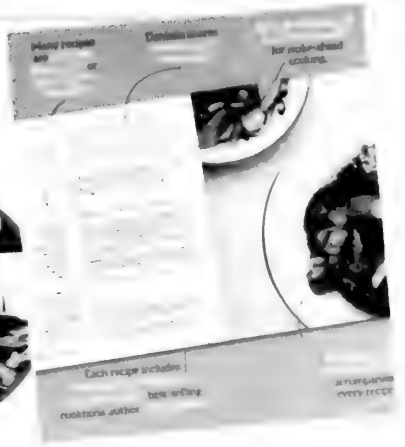
Daniella Silver is a young mom of three. Her family is a long string of artists, and she inherited that inclination.

Ever since she was a little girl, she always found that food was the best outlet for her bursting creativity. "I know that you eat with your eyes first and your mouth second." Her dishes have always used esthetics as an extra-special ingredient.

Four years ago, she found out that two of her daughters had severe food allergies. As a result, she had to rethink her entire culinary repertoire. But that didn't stop her from making beautifully delicious dishes. In fact, it gave her the creative push needed to develop a whole new roster of recipes using healthy ingredients and simple techniques to produce spectacular results.

Soon she had a binder full of hand-written recipes and realized that she wanted to share what she learned with other moms around the world. She wanted to write a book that could be shared from one generation to the next, grandmother to mother to daughter, like the cookbooks that her mother gave to her.

She turned to Norene Gilletz, the kosher culinary guru who had inspired her since childhood. She was familiar with Gilletz's recipes as her mom made them for her when she was a child, and the idea of working with her was an absolute dream.



Daniella Silver and Norene Gilletz

With the kind of passion-fuelled confidence that's born out of fear and nerves, she picked up the phone and gave Norene a call. She just had to share her story, her passion, and her cookbook dream.

Later, Norene told her that her enthusiasm and creativity reminded her of herself when she was a young cook. What really stuck with Norene, though, was Daniella's passion for passing down culinary knowledge throughout generations. Norene understood and shared this vision, and jumped onto the cookbook project without hesitation.

They spent endless days reviewing, editing, and tasting the fruits of their labour.

Two years of hard work and a good many pots of tea later, they're ready to present *The Silver Platter: Simple to Spectacular*, a wholesome, family-friendly cookbook with over 160 recipes for every occasion and every diet. It's the perfect addition to the bookshelves of aspiring cooks for generations to come. ■

Details of the book can be found at www.daniellasilvercooks.com

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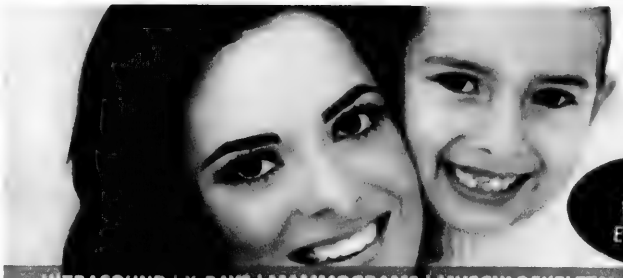

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Delmanor offers all-inclusive retirement communities

Seniors looking for an active and all-inclusive retirement community should consider one of Delmanor's five locations in the GTA.

These Tridel-inspired condominiums promise the high quality associated with the developer's name along with amenities and programs aimed specifically at seniors.

"The rental of the suite includes a continental breakfast, lunch and dinner service, weekly house cleaning and access to a health-care professional 24-hours a day," says Nikki Lewis, corporate manager of marketing and sales for Delmanor.

Included in the monthly price is a pendant with an emergency response system that has a built-in GPS so the staff know exactly where a resident is in case of an emergency, and are able to respond immediately.

The buildings are set up with rooftop terraces, shuffleboard courses, libraries, computer cafes and pubs.

It's doubtful seniors will ever be bored with the wide range of daily entertainment and activities offered, such as fitness classes.

Specific space is also set aside for religious services.

"Our community partners come and provide those services. For example, in the North York location, we have a South African Jewish community, so they host a Friday night Shabbat," says Lewis.

Although the menu is not kosher, there's always an alternative available to pork and shellfish products. They also accommodate other dietary requirements, like vegetarian and gluten-free.

One unique feature of the Delmanor groups is their LivingWell program – a coaching service which helps residents set their goals, come up with an action plan to achieve their goals and provides support throughout the process.

"It's a fantastic program," Lewis says. "It encourages [both] individual empowerment and building a sense of community, so we offer group programming and also one-to-one programming."

"Recently in Etobicoke someone wanted to stop using his cane and develop balance. Thanks to the LivingWell program, he's now been able to stop using his cane within the residence. He only uses it within his suite and when he leaves the residence," Lewis says. "That's a huge personal achievement for him."

Resident's can also use the LivingWell coaching program to achieve goals beyond those related to fitness.

"I personally know a lady who lost a family member and she went to our LivingWell coach as a confidante and talked to him about the grieving process, and he helped her find community resources as well."

Delmanor's programs and services seek to take care of the whole person – physically, mentally and socially.

"There's a feeling when you walk into our communities – it's such a warm welcoming feeling. It truly is a family feeling."■

Oy! I'm kvelling!

Living in a one or two bedroom retirement rental suite with full hotel style service changes everything for the better. No more household chores, which means lots of time for Bubbe and Zayde to spend with the Bubellah. They can teach you about computers in the internet lounge, you can teach them to putt on the putting green, or play piano, or all about gardening in the potting room. The list is almost endless and your family is always welcome for Shabbat dinner in our gracious private dining room with table service. Of course, your suite has a kitchenette so you can still say "Ess a bisel eppis, tatelleh". Gib a kick. Discover this grand Tridel inspired lifestyle. Come for a personal tour and nosh, or call to inquire about a free trial stay. Act now to enjoy full hotel style service, including meals and our renowned Living***Well*** lifelong health and learning programs.

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I've got hearing aids! Now what?

TRACY SAUNDERS

Getting hearing aids can feel like the end of a long journey for some. The average person will first suspect a hearing loss and then wait seven years before booking a hearing test. Seven long years of struggling with background noise, laughing at the wrong jokes, asking others to repeat themselves and pretending to hear.

Finally, you have made the decision to have your hearing tested. At that appointment you learn that you do in fact have a hearing loss and order a pair of state-of-the-art hearing aids. Now what?

While getting hearing aids may feel like the end of a journey, it actually marks the start of a new one. Luckily, this new journey is quite simple and easy to follow. Once a person is fitted with hearing aids, their homework is simple. Wear them. Wear them every day and all day long if you can.

Doing this allows your brain to become accustomed to your new, better hearing and you should actually forget you are even wearing anything at all!

We would call this phase of your hearing aid journey, the "maintenance" phase. During this time, we want to maintain your hearing aids and the hearing level you have.

Hearing Solutions offers drop-in cleaning services at all our clinic locations. Regular in-clinic cleanings allow our staff to use specialized equipment to clean debris that can build up in the hearing aids and check whether they are functioning well. No appointment is needed for a cleaning service.

So, when is your next appointment? Once you have gotten your hearing aids, we will assume you are wearing them and enjoying them! In other words, no news is good news.

All patients are encouraged to call and book a service appointment whenever they have any difficulty with their hearing or their hearing aids. If you have purchased your hearing aids from us, your appointments are always free.

Let's say that you love your hearing aids right off the bat. You will always be asked to come for a check-up two to four weeks after getting your new hearing aids. That is a standard policy. It allows us to evaluate your progress and ensure correct use of the hearing aids. After that, like previously mentioned, it is up to you to let us know if you are having difficulties. Otherwise, we won't call you until a year later for your annual checkup.

Congratulations are always in order for a patient who has embarked on the journey towards better hearing health. For some, it can seem like a daunting journey, but it is incredibly worthwhile both for you and those around you.

Most importantly, it is often much easier than anybody would expect. Partnering with a clinic like Hearing Solutions ensures you will be taken care of long after your purchase of hearing aids. While buying the hearing aids is an important step, it is only the start of a long but exciting journey. Trust us with your hearing and, in turn, you will always get sound advice you can trust. ■

Tracy Saunders is an audiologist registered with CASLPO, and Hearing Solutions' audiology manager.

SPONSORED CONTENT

Take charge of your aging at Pearl^{MD} Rejuvenation

The new science of aging is shedding light on the coveted fountain of youth. Our midlife represents both risk and opportunity. As we creep into our middle years we often begin to experience disruptive symptoms, notice rapid aging in our skin and changes in our body shape. At the same time we face increased risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer. And so our midlife becomes a critical window of opportunity to take charge of our aging.

Underscoring rapid midlife aging is the accelerated loss of vital factors: our hormones, our nutrients, our sleep and our telomeres, which are protective caps on the ends of our chromosomes that shorten as we age and place a finite limit on our lifespan. Rapid aging ensues: from the age of 40 to 50 years women age twice as fast as any other decade.

The menopausal loss of hormones contributes to the "cliff effect" of accelerated midlife aging in women as compared to men. But hormones are just one piece of the aging puzzle. A comprehensive proactive aging strategy must look to balance hormones while also addressing nutritional and lifestyle factors such as too much stress and not enough sleep.

While genetics and telomeres are critical, new science is revealing that our genes are not set in stone. But rather, our DNA is a road map that can be shaped by our lifestyle and life choices. And so a customized lifestyle plan can help us achieve ageless vitality, optimal health and peak performance now and for our long future.

Maintaining healthy skin, youthful facial contours, and a fit body are cornerstones of a comprehensive inside-outside approach to navigating the aging process. The external signs of aging–deepening wrinkles, sagging skin, jowls and pigmented spots are highly amenable to non-surgical effective technologies and treatments including natural dermal fillers to revolumize, neuromodulators such as Botox to lift and shape the brow, and medical grade skin care to retexture the skin and correct uneven pigment. The combined esthetic approach is vital to achieve natural meaningful results.

There will never be a magic bullet to the fountain of youth. Instead, a comprehensive inside-outside approach can keep us looking good and feeling great through the ages. ■

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Dr. Jennifer Pearlman is a certified menopause practitioner and attending staff physician at the menopause clinic at Mount Sinai Hospital. She is medical director at Pearl^{MD} Rejuvenation.

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Arab-Israeli women more traumatized by birth, study shows

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Giving birth is one of the most powerful experiences of a woman's life. Yet until recently, women's feelings about the event weren't given much consideration – despite long lasting and potentially serious consequences that could include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In Israel, although Jewish and Arab women give birth side by side, a recent study reveals disturbing inequalities in their perceptions.

According to the study, 32 per cent of Arab mothers reported that they had had a traumatic birth, compared with only 14 per cent of Jewish mothers. Arab mothers said they were more afraid for themselves or their babies, and that they'd received too much medical intervention. The study relied on self-reporting in the absence of any consistent scientific definition of "traumatic birth."

Lead researcher Ofra Halperin, a senior lecturer in the nursing department of Emek Izrael (Yezreel Valley) College, has spent a lifetime studying women's health and began this study, with two other Israeli researchers, out of a deep personal interest.

"We live in Israel," says Halperin. "The two main populations here are Jewish and Arab. I wanted to know if there is a difference, due to culture. Because when you're in the hospital, in the maternity ward... it [seems] like everything is the same, but it's not really the same."

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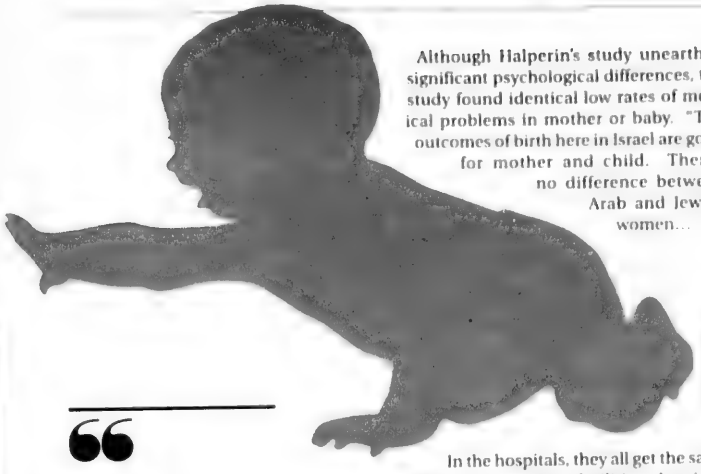

> *The outcomes of birth here in Israel are good for mother and child*

Although Halperin's study unearthed significant psychological differences, the study found identical low rates of medical problems in mother or baby. "The outcomes of birth here in Israel are good for mother and child. There's no difference between Arab and Jewish women...

In the hospitals, they all get the same treatment, the same facilities, there's no exceptions here."

So why does women's perception matter at all? "If you suffer more, if you see your birth as traumatic, it will have an effect for months afterwards."

The worst-case scenario is PTSD. Though this is a rare outcome, Halperin says "there are certain things that are not acceptable after birth." Her study identified only a very small group with PTSD, but most of those affected were Arab.

Trauma can also cause sleeping disorders, breastfeeding problems and difficulties in establishing a solid bond with the baby. And having had one traumatic birth experience, researchers found, was also a strong predictor for future traumatic experiences.

Jewish and Arab mothers prepare very differently for childbirth, says Halperin.

"Jewish women... are always questioning... they ask their friends, they go to professionals to get more information... Young people want a lot of information. They ask a lot of questions, they want to know more, they want to know all their options. They want to have control, they want to choose."

Arab mothers, on the other hand, "take things as they come. Especially women. They are still not independent enough, confident enough in themselves to take control. That's why they don't go to preparation classes, and they still count on their elders more than on professionals."

The differences are obvious when they come to the hospital. "Jewish women say, 'Why this, why that, why did you decide to do that?' The Arab women... take whatever is offered... They don't say, 'What are my other options?' ... They lean on the professionals with not much questioning.

"We have to be aware of the differences and take them into account when we take care of those women to help them get the best experience that they can have."

When she lectures internationally, Halperin says many people ask her "if [these differences are] because of the political situation here, that they receive less treatment, or different treatment. [But] it's not so."

"Israeli Arabs get the same opportunities and the same treatment as Jewish Israelis. Still, the culture and the background that you come from have an influence... If I asked Ethiopian Jews who gave birth here, I'm sure their experience is different from Israeli-born Jews, because of the culture that they come from."

Recruiting more Arab midwives will help erase cultural barriers and even linguistic ones, since many rural Arab women can't speak Hebrew.

At Halperin's college, in the Galilee, nursing students are about half Jewish and half Arab. "If some of [the Arab students] would like after they are finished studying to go and learn midwifery, I would be happy. I am encouraging a lot of them to come."

Transcending cultural differences means better experiences for all mothers, says Halperin. "Women who have control, especially in something as significant as birth, [find it] very empowering. It doesn't matter who you are and where you're from – you deserve it."■

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Living with brain cancer

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Heidi Wilk recalls her husband, Matthew's diagnosis with a brain tumour in 2008 as the saddest moment of her life.

"I thought, 'my husband is going to die young. We are not going to grow old together. Why was this happening?'"

Matthew, 32, had a seizure picking up their then one-year-old daughter, Brooke, from Chabad Day Care on June 27, 2008.

"When he awoke from his seizure, he said, "there was a rabbi looking over me. I thought I was in heaven."

Since then, said Heidi, "we have had a strong connection to Chabad. Matthew has put on tfillin every morning since that day."

After the seizure, a tumour the size of a baseball was discovered, and Matthew had surgery to have it removed.

"Two weeks later, we met with the team at Princess Margaret Hospital, and they told us it was glioblastoma multiforme. Dr. Warren Mason came up with the chemotherapy [treament] that has kept Matthew alive for a very long time," said Heidi.

> *"There was a rabbi looking over me. I thought I was in heaven."*

Both from Montreal, Heidi and Matthew moved in 2002 to Toronto, where Matthew was doing his residency in medicine. Heidi, a registered dietician at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, became the family's breadwinner.

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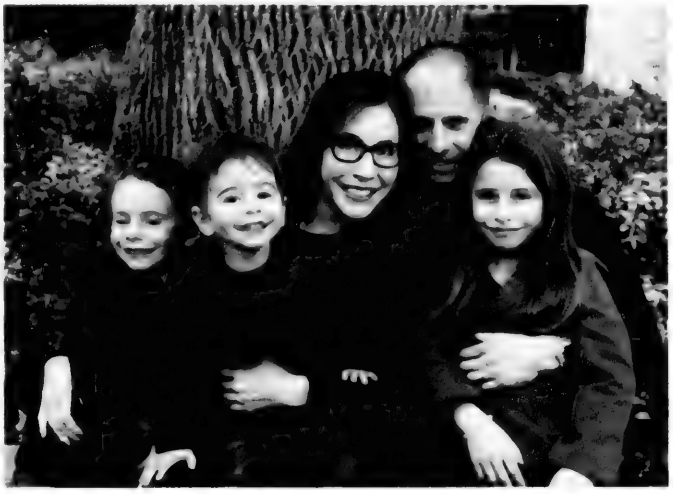

Heidi and Matthew Wilk and their children, from left: Zachary, Joshua, and Brooke

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As we age, our bodies go through many changes. Many people, over the age of 55, notice that their muscles become not as strong as they used to be. In such cases very often doctors diagnose **Sarcopenia**, which is in the most literal sense means the loss of muscle mass, strength and function. It happens due to change in hormone levels, alteration in protein requirements and sedentary lifestyle. Symptoms of muscle loss include, but not limited to: musculoskeletal weakness and loss of stamina.

The research done by A.M. Jette and L. Brach, showed that 40% of women aged 55-64, almost 45% of women aged 65-74, and 65% of women aged 75-84 are unable to lift 10lb weight holding their arm straight. Typically by the age of 75 sarcopenia accelerates rapidly and it may contribute to frailty and increases the likelihood of falls and fractures in older adults.

Although scientists keep working on drugs to help treat the sarcopenia, the **best known treatment** so far which has been medically proven is **regular exercising**. Specifically resistance training or strength training, exercising that increases muscle strength and endurance, has been shown to help prevent and treat sarcopenia. Resistance training has been reportedly showing a positive influence on the neuromuscular system, hormone concentrations and protein synthesis rate. Research has shown that a consistently progressive program of resistance training can increase protein synthesis in older adults in as little as two weeks. However, exercising routine should be very carefully balanced according to the needs and physical shape to be safe and avoid a risk of injury. For optimal results a fitness specialist should create a plan and oversee the the proper number, intensity, and frequency of resistance exercise.

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Chai Lifeline played a big role in the Wilk family life

"We were told he had 18 months – maybe three years – to live, if we were lucky," she said.

Matthew responded well to the chemotherapy and radiation. The family made life adjustments, and went on to have two more children, Zachary, now age four, and Joshua, age two.

Post diagnosis, Matthew continued to complete his medical fellowship at St Michael's hospital and then got hired as staff obstetrician at Mount Sinai Hospital. But then, life threw the family another curve.

After four years, the tumour came back in the same spot. Joshua was then four months old.

Matthew had surgery again and was started on a new treatment called Avastin which had been recently approved in Canada, but not funded for brain cancer.

"The problem with Avastin is that it is extremely expensive and the government does not cover it. However, my insurance does cover it so that's why I have to work full time. It's not an option," said Heidi.

Matthew needs treatment every two weeks.

After the recurrence of the disease in November 2012 his clinical privileges were largely restricted to that of a surgical assistant.

Keeping busy was Heidi's therapy.

"I didn't have time to sit and think about everything that was going on. The stress most working moms experience on a daily basis increased 10-fold for me. My work-life balance also included surgeries, hospital visits, chemotherapy, radiation treatments and juggling insurance claims to cover Matthew's expensive medications.

Chai Lifeline played a big role in the Wilk family life.

"Matthew would come home tired from his treatments. I would come home from work with three young kids running around. Everything was put on me. Chai Lifeline helped me by picking up the kids and taking them to programs. Big Sisters would come take the kids out, and they provided us with counselling services," says Heidi.

Every three months, Matthew has an MRI. "Before he gets his MRI results he meets with the rabbi because it gives him comfort and hope.

"Between visits, life is normal but around the MRI time it all comes back," she said."

For five years I didn't say a word. People didn't know what was going on and then I just said I am ready. After the recurrence I was so full of emotion I had to let it out. I had so much to say.

"Matthew is teaching the kids how to ride bikes, and he plays with them every moment he can. He gets around the city by TTC, he bikes, and every Saturday takes the kids to Chabad service.

"Matthew has unfaltering appreciation and compassion for everything I accomplish in a day. We are best friends. We love each other. We laugh. We don't need much to be happy together. We appreciate life's little things and don't lose sight of what's important.

"I hate cancer but I love how it's changed me. I now appreciate what I have more than I long for what I don't. I hope to teach my kids these important life lessons so they can grow up to cherish what they have and live every day to the fullest," says Heidi. ■

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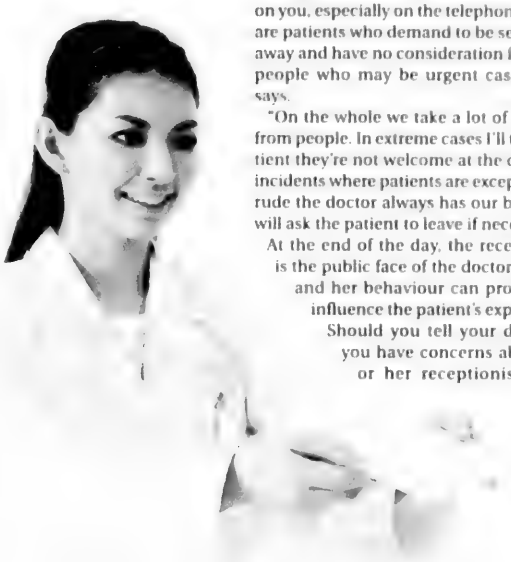
The Medical Receptionist: Make sure she's on your side

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN



She's the person who stands between you and the doctor you need to see: the physician's receptionist or personal assistant. Her job is thankless and prestige-free.

The doctor gets all the credit for whatever happens inside the closed door of the consulting room. The receptionist presides over the waiting room, juggling the doctor's overwhelming caseload, managing difficult patients and setting up tests and referrals. She is lucky if she gets a smile, let alone a word of thanks.

More likely, she'll get complaints about the wait time or angry words about mistakes in scheduling.

Many of us consider receptionists mere paper-pushers, but the truth is they are in command when it comes to seeing a doctor. The control they wield is absolute, and delays at their discretion can be excruciating. It pays to have them on your side.

Lisa Hallgren is the medical receptionist at a Richmond, B.C. walk-in clinic, and says her biggest gripe is the disrespect she receives from some patients.

"People will take their frustrations out on you, especially on the telephone. There are patients who demand to be seen right away and have no consideration for other people who may be urgent cases," she says.

"On the whole we take a lot of attitude from people. In extreme cases I'll tell a patient they're not welcome at the clinic. In incidents where patients are exceptionally rude the doctor always has our back and will ask the patient to leave if necessary."

At the end of the day, the receptionist is the public face of the doctor's office, and her behaviour can profoundly influence the patient's experience. Should you tell your doctor if you have concerns about his or her receptionist? Definitely, says Dr. Stanley Hurwitz, a Richmond, B.C. family physician. "If there is a significant issue in the front room and I don't know about it, I can't do anything about it," he says. "Sure, I'm going to be protective of my staff. But I expect my staff to be courteous with my patients and vice-versa."

How not to annoy the receptionist:

"How much longer?" Don't persistently question the receptionist on the estimated waiting time until you will be seen.

"I'm a friend (colleague) of the doctor's. Can you get me in today?" Never take advantage of a personal or professional relationship with a doctor to try and get an appointment sooner than would otherwise be available.

"The doctor has to cancel." Don't be upset. Understand that medical or family emergencies are inevitable and often they incur delays and rescheduling of appointments.

"I don't have an appointment, but..." Don't arrive unannounced – unless, of course, the situation is an emergency.

"I'm calling for my test results." Don't keep phoning for results that can't be delivered over the phone. ■

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Strategies to improve kids nutrition

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When mealtimes are more about tantrums, screaming and bribery than healthy eating, a mother may feel at the end of her tether.

Aviva Allen, a children's nutritionist, spoke to some 40 mothers last fall as part of a parenting speaker series at Adath Israel Congregation.

Inspired by her two young boys and their adventures in food, Allen understands the challenges faced by parents, and she specializes in helping them with their nutritional needs. Prenatal nutrition, the introduction of solid foods, dealing with picky eaters, food sensitivities, digestive issues, healthy weight, and all areas of nutrition relating to kids and families are dealt with by Allen through her nutritional counselling practice located in mid-town Toronto.

After obtaining certification from the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition, Allen went on to graduate from the Natural Gourmet Institute for Health and Culinary Arts in New York City, a health supportive chef training program with an emphasis on cooking with whole, unprocessed foods. Additionally, she has received specialty pediatric training in the SOS Approach to Feeding for children who are picky and/or resistant eaters.

Allen conveyed to the group of mothers proven strategies to help children and their families embrace better eating habits.

"Picky eating is something that many children will go through. The key is knowing when there is a problem, when it is appropriate to take action, and how."

She offered the following tips:

• Eat with your kids: "Have at least one meal a day together, as each meal is a learning opportunity, an opportunity for the child to learn from your skills. Kids are learning what and how you are eating. If you want your kids to eat vegetables you also need to be eating vegetables. Eating on the go, grazing, eating in the car or standing up, skipping meals – these are learned behaviours. You have to watch what you are doing," she said.

Aviva Allen with sons Solomon and Lev

• You want to make certain your child's meals are not too close together but also not too far apart:

"Offer four to five opportunities to eat throughout the day, including meals and snacks. Snacks don't have to be snacking foods. They can be small meals. Leave two to three hours between meals and snacks. If they are too close together, they can cause issues because the child is not hungry enough to eat."

• Don't force food: "For example, a parent or grandparent chasing the child around the room with a spoon. Pressure can be seen in different forms."

Allen said that if they are eating in a family setting, there will be less pressure on the child.

"And don't be a short-order cook. Focus on serving one common meal but make some variation on it" she said.

Some parents will offer bribery in terms of sweets and desserts, but that does not send the right message.

"If it is a non-food reward, it can be effective for some children. My children might pick a sleepover at their grandparents or a trip to the science centre. This is all about encouraging them to try new foods," said Allen.

Children will not starve themselves, true or false? "Most healthy children will not starve themselves. However, there is a small percentage of the pediatric population – maybe three to five per cent – that actually would starve themselves. There may be some sensory issues involved.

• Have fun with your food: "Kids love to play with their food and I encourage them to do this. It is a way for them to explore and learn, and helps them to become more comfortable with new foods before putting them into their mouths."

Many parents try sneaking vegetables into foods. "Parents who do this feel better. They feel they are doing their job, and getting nutrients into their child. Nevertheless, you still need to teach children those skills, teach them to actually enjoy eating whole fruits and vegetables," said Allen.

"I think your goal as a parent is to try and teach your child healthy eating habits that will last him until adulthood. It is not just about how much he is eating at this particular meal, or this week, or this month – it's about building healthy eating habits, and that will take time." ■

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Four Elms top choice for seniors

Four Elms Retirement Residence, which opened four years ago in Thornhill, offers care for both independent seniors and those who require assistance.

"People come in and they can be completely independent and as they continue to age and their needs change, they don't have to move out," says Reesa Soto, Four Elms marketing manager. "We can provide assisted-living services within the building and in the privacy within their own suite."

Four Elms may also be a top choice for seniors who have cognitive impairments. The residence has an entire floor devoted to people with memory issues. The floor is secure, so residents can walk around and feel comfortable.

"The people there are really receiving excellent care," Soto says.

Those with Alzheimer's disease and dementia cannot exit the floors on their own for safety reasons, but family and friends are always welcome to visit and escort them off the floor. Staff also take residents off the floor at least once a day, for all big events and to enjoy the weather.

"It's kind of like a home within a home. It has its own activity room, dining room, lounge, nurses station, yet the feeling is not that of an institutional environment," Soto says. "It's comfortable and it's warm."

The floor also offers the innovative Brain Gym program, exclusive to Four Elms, which focuses on the plasticity of the brain with the aim to slow down or reduce neuro-degenerative diseases.

Residents of all floors receive amenities which include three meals a day, health monitoring, a wireless emergency pendant with built-in GPS, weekly housekeeping, and laundry of linens and towels. Those in assisted living may also get their personal laundry done and assistance with bathing, dressing and administration of medications.

The residence is predominately Jewish, so there is a pre-Shabbat service every Friday afternoon and a rabbi comes in to lead a service. The menu always has a fish alternative or the option to order a la carte. They also accommodate dietary restrictions.

"We are very big on our food and making our residents happy. They have a huge input in everything that goes on here," Soto says. "We take the information they give us and we use it to better ourselves."

Residents are unlikely to be bored with the programs that go on seven days a week. Four Elms has a full-time activity manager who schedules daily exercise classes, lectures, live entertainment and outings.

"We keep the residents stimulated and engaged all the time. There is always something to do here," Soto says. "A lot of the residents say this is a cruise ship that doesn't float."

Soto says children of residents have noticed a huge change in their parents once they've moved into Four Elms. Whereas before they may have felt lonely in their house, they are now interacting with their peers all day long, and it's enhancing their lifestyle.

"It opens a new chapter in their life. Now they have a new purpose to get up and go down and interact, and suddenly their children see them happier and like a different person," Soto says. "They flourish." ■

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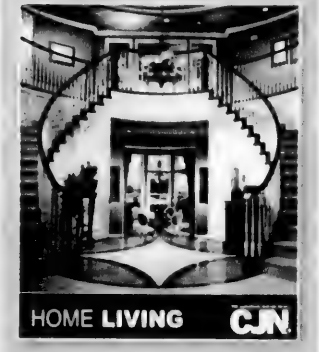
Inside

Orthodox Judaism grapples with LGBTQ inclusion

Canadian rabbis highlight a growing sensitivity to the issue amid public discussions south of the border.

PAGE 12



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Is there a future for intermarried rabbis?

The leaders of Canada's three Reconstructionist synagogues consider whether their denomination should ordain clergy married to non-Jews. **PAGE 8, 24-25**

Learning to love her Jewish mom

Filmmaker Gayle Kirschenbaum on how she came to understand her mother's pain. **PAGE 40**

In praise of Israeli high-tech

'Startup Nation' is open for business. **Plus,** a $1.6M donation supports new research. **PAGE 28**

Jewish Music Week honours two greats

Moishe Oysher blended jazz and Judaism. **PAGE 34**

Recalling Milton Barnes. **PAGE 35**

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A lunar Bible, and *Al Jazeera* accused of anti-Semitism

One small step for... Torah?

A French-Israeli entrepreneur wants to send a Torah to the moon. Haim Aouizerate has launched a campaign to raise $6 million (US) and celebrate the Bible's "innumerable contributions to morality, justice, education, culture, arts and sciences" and "refocus society on the core values it contains." For $18 each, you can buy letters in the scroll, which will be launched in a protective capsule on one of the winner's of the Google Lunar XPRIZE, which challenged 18 teams to land an unmanned rocket on the moon by the end of 2016. The for-profit venture promises to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to Jewish non-profits worldwide.

Fired employee sues news channel

A fired *Al Jazeera America* employee is suing the news channel alleging a hostile work environment that included "discriminatory, anti-Semitic and anti-American remarks."

Hilary Swank will play Deborah Lipstadt.

In a lawsuit filed April 28, Matthew Luke said he was fired in February, 10 days after complaining about his supervisor, Osman Mahmud. Luke was *Al Jazeera America*'s head of media and archive management starting in May 2013, before the channel's formal launch. He's seeking $15 million (US) in damages. The suit accuses Mahmud of making anti-Semitic remarks such as "whoever supports Israel should die a fiery death in hell." It also says he replaced female employees with men and filled jobs with men of Middle Eastern descent. *Al Jazeera* wouldn't comment on the lawsuit.

Movie to depict Lipstadt-Irving battle

Oscar-winning actress Hilary Swank will star as historian Deborah Lipstadt in a film adaptation of her book on her legal battle with a Holocaust denier. The movie will be a courtroom drama based on 2005's *History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier*. Tom Wilkinson, a two-time Oscar nominee, will play David Irving, a British revisionist historian who sued Lipstadt for libel after she called him a Holocaust denier in her 1993 book *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth & Memory*. She won the case in 2000. British playwright David Hare adapted the book for the film. ■

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Quotable

Synagogues are going to need an endowment that generates 20 per cent of their operational income or they're not going to be sustainable

— Rabbi Steven Wernick, CEO of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. See p. 46.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Columnist Mark Mietkiewicz looks at *Yiddishe mamas* in Jewish & Digital.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Diaspora connections

The debate between Rabbi Daniel Korobkin and Rabbi Lisa Grushcow over Diaspora criticism of Israel ("Diaspora disconnect?" April 23) is really a debate between those who want to help Israel and those who don't seem to mind if they cause it some harm.

Is there any other diaspora community that persistently organizes campaigns outside its homeland against its policies? Do Canadian expats living in the United States organize groups like J Street to expose the shameful living conditions on native reserves here? Have French expats formed a "Rue F" to protest French "apartheid" in the Muslim *banlieues* of Paris?

There is no shortage of non-Jewish critics of Israel in Europe and North America. What Israel needs from the Diaspora is vocal support to counter demonization. It is curious that Israel's Diaspora critics place so little trust in Israel's democratic institutions. Like Canada, the country has internal safeguards against human rights abuses. With Israel's liberal Supreme Court, Basic Law and strong human rights lobby, why do so many Diaspora Jews think the country needs external scrutineers?

Marjorie Gann
Toronto

Diaspora connections II

For many years, the issue of whether Jewish leaders are contributing to increased antipathy towards Israel by publicly discussing its flaws has been a challenge for liberal Jews. ("Diaspora disconnect," April 23.)

But some day, hard as it is to imagine at this time, a future government of Israel of a different bent may make decisions that people on the right will find very hard to swallow. A future Israeli government may decide to dismantle West Bank settlements, for example, to allow a Palestinian state to come into existence. A future government may decide on policies that some will perceive as diluting the Jewish character of Israel in the name of enhancing its democratic character.

When and if these developments occur, then it is the Diaspora leaders who are more conservative who will have to decide whether they should refrain from criticizing Israel so as not to cause disconnect or antipathy in their communities, or whether they need to advocate loudly for the principles they believe in, relying on their community members' ability to understand that one can criticize and love at the same time.

Rabbi Ed Elkin
Toronto

Jews in jail

The article on Jews in jail (April 9) went to great lengths to describe the dedication of the rabbis who spend time, effort and expense to bring Judaism to Jewish prisoners.

Unfortunately, the article did not give any information, save but one murder, about the crimes committed by the prisoners. Neither was there any mention of the victims. May I assume (and hope) that these well-intentioned rabbis spend some of their time visiting and perhaps assisting the victims?

Isaac Sachs
Montreal

Jews in jail II

It was a shock and surprise to see the front page's headline was "Jews in jail" (April 9). It would have been enough to put the story in the index. I see the local newspapers always publish negative stories about Jews and Israel on front pages and good reports elsewhere, if at all.

Some of *The CJN*'s articles are painful to read, but it is important to know what is happening worldwide to our people. It would be pleasant to read something that brings a smile to our lips.

Harriet Morton
Toronto

Eshet Chayil

I am sorry Lauren Kramer has problems with *Eshet Chayil* (April 9). It's written in magnificent poetic biblical Hebrew, and I have never seen an English translation that does it justice. One has to study it closely to reveal its beauty in order to understand it.

To me it is no allegory. In it I see the Jewish women I know: my late mother, my wife, my daughters-in-law and my granddaughters, who are selflessly devoted to family, yet still accomplished in the world.

Joe Greenbaum
Hamilton

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God is waiting for us on the Omer

As we count the days toward our reunion with the Divine on Shavuot, we learn how to receive every moment as a gift and make each one meaningful

RABBI YAEL SPLANSKY
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE, TORONTO

RABBI MARK FISHMAN
CONGREGATION BETH TIKVAH, MONTREAL

Rabbi Fishman: The Omer was a sacrifice once offered in the Temple in Jerusalem on the second day of Pesach. It was a single measure of barley that began a 49-day count leading up to the holiday of Shavuot.

On the 50th day of the Omer, another bread offering was given. This time, it was two loaves of wheat. What began as a coarse sacrifice became 50 days later a more refined gift.

During these days, with no Temple to offer such sacrifices, we now count each day toward day 50 and offer a verbal blessing. What does the Omer count mean to you?

Rabbi Splansky: I couldn't tell the difference between a sheaf of barley and a sheaf of wheat, but sfirat haOmer has become an important part of how I mark Jewish time.

I love that we count up from the sea to Sinai. The message is that Pesach and its newfound freedom is not the pinnacle of our sacred narrative – Sinai is. Our freedom was euphoric, but incomplete until we received the Torah and its promise of meaningful purpose. This gets at the core of Judaism's strivings.

Rabbi Fishman: There is a technical detail of Halachah whereby if a person forgets to count the Omer for an entire day, then they have forfeited the opportunity to say the blessings on the subsequent days of the count.

Seen in a vacuum, this law appears to be nitpicking or just irrelevant minutia. However, understanding that we are building up to a conclusion that celebrates each and every step taken along the way, we realize that Judaism values the journey just as much as the destination.

Rabbi Splansky: Maimonides likens the counting of the Omer to a person who expects his most beloved friend to arrive on a certain day. He counts up the days, and even the hours, until his arrival.

I delight in this metaphor that God is waiting in anticipation for the Jewish People to come for a reunion each year on Shavuot.

Rabbi Fishman: You touch on something very powerful: God waiting for us. This is a theology that is not often spoken about and taught to us as children. As such, when we grow up, there can be a tendency to view God through the narrow vision of our childhood.

We were taught that God is all-knowing, ever-present and all-powerful. While these propositions are philosophical axioms, they miss the drama of who God really is.

God is someone waiting by the phone. God is the lover constantly checking his watch, waiting for the moment when his beloved will return. In some ways God, too, counts each day, waiting for our reunion.

Rabbi Splansky: We count time, not people.

Jewish custom and superstition warn against counting souls. For example, one might not tell you how many grandchildren she has. The minyan may be established by counting: "Not one, not two..." or by reciting a ten-worded verse of prayer, assigning one word per person.

But our days are numbered. We Jews are bound to our sacred calendar. Why the obsession with marking time? As the Psalmist beseeches God: "Teach us to number our days that we may attain a heart of wisdom."

The counting of the Omer is an exercise in awareness: to receive each day as a gift and to be mindful of how to make every day count. As Psalm 90 says: "May the work of our hands endure." ■

How to reach us

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UNDUE INFLUENCE AND THE WILL CHALLENGE

As regular readers of this column undoubtedly know, there is a seminar set for June 2nd, 2015. For the purpose of this column, I want to focus on one aspect of the seminar being organized by B'nai Brith Canada's Estates & Trusts, Lawyers Division that deals with undue influence. Since 2006, B'nai Brith Canada has been providing seminars to lawyers and accountants on issues of interest. In the context of a will challenge, it is very prevalent that one side will allege that undue influence was exerted on the testator in the making of a will which invalidates the testamentary document. In our case scenario, the allegation by the daughter is that her brother unduly influenced their mother to make a will that disinherited the sister. Ordinarily, the sister would have the onus to prove undue influence unless there are suspicious circumstances that reverses the onus. In our case, arguably suspicious circumstance exists because the mother had Alzheimer's at the time that she signed the will, she was illiterate and her lawyer took only 10 minutes to translate and explain a complicated will. It is therefore debatable that the onus has shifted and it is up to the brother to prove that there was no undue influence. In order to highlight these issues and the test to prove undue influence, a portion of the moot court will include an examination of the brother (played by John Clegg of Scotia Private Client Group) by Debra Stephens of Goddard Gamage Stephens. Kimberly Whaley of Whaley Litigation will be cross examining the witness.

Charles Wagner

Deb Stephens

John Clegg

Kim Whaley

The event will take place on June 2nd, 2015 at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue at 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5N 1V8. Registration is at 7:30am and the moot court will begin at 8:00am. The event is open to lawyers and accountants. Those lawyers and/or accountants interested in attending may contact Elyse Gruenspan at B'nai Brith Canada at (416) 633-6224 or email at egruenspan@bnaibrith.ca .

Charles B. Wagner, of Wagner Sidlofsky LLP, is a certified specialist in Estates & Trusts Law. He chairs the Estate and Trusts Group, Lawyers Division of B'nai Brith Canada that created and runs this annual continuing legal education program for professionals dealing with estate and trust issues.

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CJN

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From the Archives | Go Habs Go

JEWISH IMMIGRANT AID SERVICES COLLECTION, CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS CC NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Immigrant Jewish children in Montreal, many of them from North Africa, go on a JIAS outing to see a hockey game in the 1960s.

SeeJN | Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration

More than 600 people, including ministers, MPs, senators, Supreme Court justices, diplomats, government officials, clergy, members of the Jewish community and friends of Israel attended the Israeli Embassy's Independence Day reception at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier hotel in Ottawa on April 29. Pictured from left, are Miriam Barak, Ambassador Rafael Barak and Foreign Minister Rob Nicholson.

From Yoni's Desk

Ethiopian Jews deserve better

As Israel's emergency delegation to Nepal prepared to leave Kathmandu over the weekend, the death toll from a massive earthquake was still mounting. The members of the 260-strong team surely had mixed feelings about going home, having witnessed such devastating human tragedy, but also knowing they had saved lives and represented Israel, and all Jews, with courage and honour.

There are no shortage of stories about the heroic efforts of Israeli medical and rescue personnel deployed in Nepal, and a number of pro-Israel groups have ensured these acts of bravery were well-dispersed, especially on social media. But the truth is Israel's Nepal mission wasn't about chasing good PR. It ran much deeper.

The speed with which Israel offered and deployed assistance and expertise came from a natural impulse to ease the pain of the afflicted. And the extraordinary operation to find Or Asraf, the last remaining Israeli unaccounted for in Nepal, proved just how far Israel will go to retrieve its own, even if the 22-year-old ultimately could not be saved. All told, Israel's mission in Nepal exemplified the Jewish nation's genuine desire to lend a hand when disaster strikes, and propensity to punch above its weight when it comes to helping those who need it, wherever they may be.

And yet, back in Israel those very qualities were being called into question by the country's Ethiopian Jewish community after a video was released apparently showing two Israeli policemen attacking Damas Pakada. Pakada, 21, an Ethiopian immigrant who came to Israel seven years ago and was wearing his Israel Defence Forces uniform at the time of the incident, was pushed from his bicycle and then thrown to the ground. He was handcuffed and arrested for assault, but later released from custody.

The troubling episode echoes another recent incident of alleged police brutality against an Ethiopian Jew. Walla Bayach claims Israeli immigration inspectors restrained him last week, believing the Be'er Sheva resident was an illegal migrant. Police say Bayach assaulted the officers when they inquired about his identity. He says they beat him with a crowbar.

Thousands of Ethiopian Jews have taken to the streets in the wake of these incidents. Some have clashed with police. Their protest reveals the deep anger and frustration that have been brewing in Israel's Ethiopian community for years. More than half of the families in the community, which now numbers 135,000, live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate is higher among Ethiopian Jews than Israel's national average, and they are disproportionately represented in the prison system. Many feel Israel has forgotten them. Others say they have effectively been rendered second-class citizens. Some accuse Israel of racism.

That's a hefty charge, one that Israeli authorities should investigate thoroughly. As the United States revisits the state of its race relations after the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Freddie Gray and Michael Brown, perhaps it's time for Israel to do the same. The very same instinct that compelled Israel to send its largest-ever field hospital to Kathmandu, the very same courage that Or Asraf's army buddies displayed while attempting to locate him in the Himalayas – those honourable qualities must be pursued with vigilance at home, too. ■ — YONI

HISTORY

Jewish education is not just a modern-day concern

Editor's Note: The following is an edited version of an essay that first appeared in the May 1951 edition of the Jewish Standard.

Alexander Brown

A time-honoured tradition is regaining wide and renewed acceptance in contemporary North American Jewish life. It is the belief, long cherished by many generations of our people, that Jewish education, while it is a first obligation on all Jewish parents, is likewise the responsibility of the whole Jewish community. This is clearly evident from the continually increasing extent to which federations and welfare funds in the United States and Canada are supporting the cause of Jewish education.

More Jewish leaders are convinced that the only way to ensure a continued lease on life for the Jewish community is adequate Jewish education. Unless our people are educated to vigorous and intelligent Jewishness, it is extremely doubtful whether even the strong external stimulus provided by the rise of the State of Israel can prevent the stagnation and impoverishment of the Jewish spirit in North America. The alternative to a sound Jewish education seems to be the eventual disintegration and submerging of the Jewish community.

In 1936, welfare funds in the United States and Canada subsidized Jewish education to the extent of $750,000. By 1950, some 60 welfare funds and federations had increased this sum to over $2 million, while an appraisal by experts of the overall income from all sources, set the present annual outlay on Jewish education in the two countries at $25 million.

The close connection between the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Toronto and Jewish education in our community goes back almost to the very inception of the welfare fund. One of the first agencies to come into the welfare fund was the Toronto Hebrew Free School, which in 1938, received a grant of $15,000. In 1939, the Eitz-Chaim Talmud Torah, the Borochov School, the Euclid Ave. Talmud Torah, the J.N.W.A (Arbeiter Verband) schools, and the Workmen's Circle School became affiliated with the welfare fund. That year, the total for Jewish education allocated by the Welfare Fund was $29,041. This sum contrasts with a total of $195,937 assigned by the welfare fund to Jewish education in 1950.

In 1943, the Canadian Jewish Congress joined with the welfare fund in sponsoring a survey of Jewish education in Toronto. This action resulted in 1949 in the formation of the Bureau of Jewish Education under its present director, Dr. Joseph Diamond.

The bureau has direct representation on the welfare fund board, as well as the welfare fund executive committee. Samuel Posluns, president of the bureau, is a member of the budget committee of the welfare fund. The Bureau of Jewish Education serves as the Jewish educational arm of the Jewish community of Toronto and has a great many achievements to its credit.

There has been a noticeable change in the prevailing public opinion on Jewish education. There is greater understanding, where before there was ignorance or indifference. There is more goodwill, where before there was hostility.

The bureau began by setting up a staff council, consisting of all school principals and three representatives from the Teachers' Alliance. The council meets frequently on matters pertaining to school management. One of its first decisions was to adopt a uniform system of school management and administration.

All of the schools affiliated with the bureau enjoy ideological and administrative autonomy. Nonetheless, they have agreed to put into effect uniform records of enrolment, attendance, pupil achievement and financial experience. All schools make periodic reports to the bureau.

> *"Jewish education, while it is a first obligation on all Jewish parents, is likewise the responsibility of the whole Jewish community*

The board of directors consists of representatives of all affiliated schools and representatives elected by the community at large, including four representatives each from the Welfare Fund and the Canadian Jewish Congress. Eight standing committees have been organized to deal with budgets, personnel, youth and adult education, public relations, publications, etc.

The bureau has successfully merged the three existing Yiddish high schools of the Borochov, J.N.W.A. and Workmen's Circle in a single high school (Mittel-Shule).

A comprehensive plan has been worked out for the classification of all teachers in four categories on the basis of academic training, experience and pedagogic attainment.

The bureau has arranged a number of useful lectures and seminars for the Jewish teachers in Toronto, in order to enable them to grow professionally.

Among the services to the community initiated by the bureau is the Youth Institute of Jewish Studies. The institute, especially intended for people of college age, has functioned at Oakwood Collegiate during the past term, and has proved extremely popular. Classes have been offered in Hebrew, Yiddish, Jewish history, current Jewish problems, Jewish personalities, etc. The bureau intends to establish a similar institute of Jewish studies for adults, in co-operation with the University of Toronto.

There is a wide field of activities open to our Central Agency for Jewish Education. These range from co-ordinating the work of the various school-units in the community and bringing them to a higher efficiency, to offering them a great variety of technical as well as financial aid. The bureau will provide greater supervision, curricular guidance and materials, text books, audio-visual aids and specialized services in extra-curricular and inter-school activities.

In line with enlightened thinking on this subject by many lay leaders, nationally and locally, Arthur Gelber, president of the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Toronto, made a forthright statement at his inaugural meeting, in which he declared his intention to do everything in his power to strengthen the position of Jewish education in our community.

It is to be fervently hoped that Toronto Jewry will rally wholeheartedly to Mr. Gelber's call and will, in the current campaign, provide the welfare fund with the means to make possible adequate and generous support for the most vital need of all – that of educating our children, our young people and our adults in a living, intelligent, sustaining Judaism. ■

Alexander Brown (1909-1984) was a leader in the field of Jewish education in Toronto. He held various positions with Toronto's Board of Jewish Education and the Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto, and was actively involved with other Jewish organizations, such as the Canadian Jewish Congress and the United Jewish Welfare Fund.

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ROMSPEN

Is there a future for intermarried rabbis?

Three Canadian Reconstructionist leaders consider whether their denomination should ordain rabbinical students married to non-Jews

RABBI ELIZABETH BOLTON

In 1989, when I began attending the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC), there was no guarantee that I would ever find congregational work or rabbinic employment of any kind in the mainstream Jewish community. Why? Because of the person I loved.

There are many who will argue – correctly – that the analogy between the issue of rabbis partnering with members of other religious backgrounds and the changes that have unfolded in synagogue life regarding sexual orientation and sexual expression among clergy is an imperfect one. Yet a heightened sensitivity around both issues is unfolding amid tremendous changes in the North American Jewish communal landscape.

No one can dispute that we are in the midst of a huge paradigm shift. Many reports – articulate, persuasive, fluent with the research – have crossed our screens and news feeds since that big calendar change 15 years ago. Buzz words – remember continuity? – have come and gone. Yet pervasive hand-wringing persists. Will our people survive? Will we make and bring up enough Jewish babies who will then make and bring up Jewish babies? This, I believe, is at the core of the deep fear that pervades Jewish life in the 21st century.

Contrary to recent headlines, the RRC does not have a "ban" on "interfaith" or intermarried rabbis or rabbinical students. A January 2015 article in the *New Republic* was headed by the puzzling "Is American Judaism Ready for Interfaith Rabbis?" and a recent *JTA* report, titled "Reconstructionists Consider Dropping Ban on Intermarried Rabbis," was widely picked up by the Anglo-Jewish press.

The current policy reads: "The RRC does not ordinarily admit or graduate as a rabbi a student married to, or in a committed relationship with, a non-Jew." While not necessarily relevant to the vast majority of applicants, this sentence has sparked fierce and sometimes painful conversations in the college community. Many lives were adversely affected. The college faculty discerned a need to revisit the policy, did so, and is still in the midst of its discernment, while having passed a preliminary vote in favour of altering the policy. (Those alarmed by the headlines may rest assured that even if the change passes a final vote, no "interfaith rabbis" will be ordained by the RRC.)

> "What is important is that Jewish families and Jewish communities continue to welcome and support Jewish people"

Like all of the decisions Reconstructionist leaders strive to reach, the college employed a values-based decision-making process. I was trained, and indeed was compelled only by this rabbinical training seminary, to bring Judaism's treasure trove of textual wisdom to lived lives of Jewish people while integrating contemporary mores.

Peoples change, and leaders lead. Inclusivity and diversity, newer buzzwords, are not proffered as replacements for standards or boundaries. Rather, what is happening in Jewish homes and hearts reflects the ever-evolving life-scape of our people. Of the dozen or so couples with whom I have met in Ottawa over the past year and a half, one looked like a "traditional" pair – young, endogamous, opposite sex – and in that couple, one partner converted! To them, and to all of my couples, I convey my firm belief that they are the face of the Jewish community, that they are inside not outside needing to be included, not different because their race or ethnicity is marked as non-normative by unspoken assumption – our community, and I celebrate their presence.

Others may address the questions of whether or not rabbis should be held to a different standard; whether inter-partnering is detrimental to the Jewish People, and therefore should de facto be outside the range of permissibility for a rabbi; and whether this will further "mark" our movement as extreme, and hamper the credibility of our rabbis, cantors, congregations or initiatives. My colleague, Rabbi Julie Greenberg, writing about the sacredness of family with a "parenting partner" who was not her spouse, wisely once said: "All partnered people engage in a cross-cultural endeavour."

When we conclude the annual cycle of Torah reading we read this phrase, which is also quoted in the well-known liturgical prayer, *Yigdal*: "*Lo kam bevisrael keMoshe od.*" In Israel, none arose as prophet like Moses. I thought of this phrase when I came across this response in the comment thread to the *New Republic* article: "The reality is that 'intermarriage' is simply an opportunity to expand… to a new person through marriage… Moses married a non-Jew and brought her into the fold."

Rabbi Joy Levitt and Steve M. Cohen put these cards on the table in a perceptive and timely *JTA* article last month: "Jews today are facing an unprecedented opportunity to share our rich tradition with thousands who are searching for meaning and looking to raise healthy and happy children with a deep connection to community." I share their optimism and add my hopefulness for the possibility of welcoming all of my passionate, Jewishly committed, creative colleagues who will graduate from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College of the future. ■

Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton is the first resident rabbi of Or Haneshamah, Ottawa's Reconstructionist Community.

See more on pages 24 and 25

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Why is the Green Line not on our schools' maps?

Mira Sucharov

I always enjoy seeing my kids bring home assignments from Hebrew school, and last week was no exception. On a map of Israel were labelled five major cities whose names the students had to write in Hebrew. I delighted in reminding my son that we have relatives or friends in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa, and near Be'er Sheva. There was only one problem with the map, I noticed. There was no Green Line. So to the untrained eye, it looked like Israel's borders span from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

As I often do when I want to tease out a political conundrum, I took to social media. On my public Facebook page, I offered to donate $36 to charity for the first person who could show me a Green-Line-indicated map of Israel currently being used in any Jewish educational setting.

Laurie MacDonald Brumberg wrote that a Washington, D.C., Jewish day school has a National Geographic map containing the Green Line hanging in the classroom. Karin Klein of Chicago showed me a Green Line map she said was used at a Schechter day school. And from Gabriel T. Erbs I learned that J Street U has launched an initiative to circulate Green Line maps to educational institutions. David A.M. Wilensky, writing recently in JewSchool, reported that Union for Reform Judaism president Rabbi Rick Jacobs has agreed to champion this among URJ camps and Hebrew schools. Gila Miriam Chait added that Yachad, a pro-Israel, pro-peace group in the United Kingdom, is following suit.

We all know that Middle East maps are heavily invested with the symbolism of legitimacy and delegitimation. The Palestinians have long been accused of erasing Israel from their school maps of Palestine. It's ironic that we are doing the same thing we accuse our adversaries of doing.

But some might argue that since the Green Line is an armistice line, not a border, there is no need for Israel to include it. It's true that it is not a border, but neither does Israel's international territory extend eastward from Jerusalem all the way to the Jordan River. The point is, the West Bank is under occupation – whether one sees the occupation as justified or not – and maps should reflect this geopolitical reality.

What might a more politically informed Israel curriculum entail? From my kids, I have heard about the ingenious ways that Israel foiled the Egyptian invasion of 1948, including placing stones in irrigation pipes to create noise simulating artillery. My eight-year old was impressed.

What I remain less certain about is how much complexity about Israel's future our kids' schools are willing to impart. Will kids learn who the "Palestinians" are? I know that I am guilty of frequently muttering to them about "Israel and the Palestinians" without proper context. While narratives of inter-state war can be much simpler to impart, when it comes to the Palestinian civilian aspect of Israel's founding, and the current military occupation over millions of Palestinians, it's difficult to know where to begin.

When we learn about the past, it's equally important to consider the future. In fact, no one knows more about the importance of historical memory in shaping today's collective political outlook than the Jewish community. As Wilensky writes in the context of the maps, "it's unpleasant for many to hear, but the final status of a two-state solution – if such a thing can ever be achieved – is going to rely heavily on the Green Line. Putting visual depictions of *that* reality before the eyes of American Jewry will go a long way toward showing them the somewhat unpleasant truths that will help build a more absolutely pleasant future."

As for the J Street U's map initiative, given that Rabbi Jacobs has pledged to roll them out at Reform schools, I hope he will make our communities in Canada an early stop. ■

Mira Sucharov is associate professor of political science at Carleton University.

A shameful moral silence on Iran

Mordechai Ben-Dat

Some time before the March 31 deadline for a framework agreement between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council and Germany (P5+1) was to expire, Mohammad Reza Naghdi, the head of Iran's religious-based Basij militia of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, declared: *"The destruction of Israel is non-negotiable"* (my emphasis). This defiantly savage proclamation was quickly reported. *The Times of Israel* carried the story on deadline day, March 31.

Once these explicit words of official Iranian policy were uttered, one would have thought that the P5+1 team, and especially the American secretary of state, John Kerry, the team's head negotiator and its main spokesperson, would have demanded an official explanation of the statement from the Iranian chief negotiator, Mohammad Javad Zarif. One would have expected that Kerry would unambiguously condemn the Iranian call for the genocide of the people of Israel as an offence to humanity and conscience. One would have expected that he would denounce the Basij leader's statement as inherently counter to the very negotiations at hand. One would have expected that he would at least have called a timeout from the proceedings – if not an actual halt – in order to demonstrate the team's utter revulsion with Iran's murderous foreign policy objectives.

But there was no such reaction by the secretary of state. Indeed, there was no reaction. Period. Perhaps he shook his head in disapproval, but there is no record even of this. "Just more bluster from the persistent but basically misunderstood Iranians," Kerry may have thought. "Nothing too serious. Anyway, we have heard it before. No sense risking offending Zarif and his boss Ayatollah Khamenei. They might walk away from the negotiations!" Kerry probably said to himself. Or words to that effect.

There is no suggestion, alas, that American conscience was rattled or offended that day by Iran's reaffirmation that it intends to wipe Israel off the map. Even days later there is no evidence that American sensibilities were distressed by the Iranian pronouncement. Kerry has remained silent on the matter. U.S. President Barack Obama said it would be a "misjudgment" to demand of Iran, as the Israeli prime minister suggested, that the Shia Muslim theocracy acknowledge the legitimacy of a sovereign Jewish Israel.

Three days after the Basij commander's statement was reported, acting U.S. State Department spokesperson Marie Harf was asked about it. Specifically, she was asked whether such disturbing Iranian pronouncements should be raised in the negotiations over the nuclear agreement. "No," she replied. "This is an agreement that doesn't deal with any other issues, nor should it."

The American response is shocking, as well as morally pernicious.

The fact that Iran's nuclear aspirations are not tied to its foreign policy objectives is the deep structural flaw in the U.S. administration's approach to its negotiations with Iran. It is simply, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu characterized, "unconscionable."

In an article published in the *Washington Post* last month, Jewish Agency head Natan Sharansky perceptively wrote, the "United States appears to have lost the courage of its convictions. We have yet to see the full consequences of this moral diffidence, but one thing is clear: the loss of America's self-assured global leadership threatens not only the United States and Israel, but also the people of Iran and a growing number of others living under Tehran's increasingly emboldened rule."

In his commentary on Parshat Shmini, Rabbi Marc Angel wrote about human responsibility when confronting evil: "In the face of contemporary evil, silence is morally repugnant. One must scream out, one must protest, one must demand justice. Remaining silent makes one an accomplice. The silent onlooker is a tragic figure who, because of moral weakness, brings suffering upon him/herself and upon others."

The problem with American foreign policy regarding Iran is not only its lack of courage, as Sharansky suggests. To borrow from Rabbi Angel, it is also its shameful moral silence. ■

We need more CEOs like Dan Price

Rabbi Jay Kelman

Barrick Gold Corp. has agreed to revamp its executive compensation after shareholders overwhelmingly rejected a pay package of $12.9 million for chairman John Thornton. Considering that Barrick's share price has declined 75 per cent over the past five years and 20 per cent in the past year since Thornton was appointed, such a reaction is not unreasonable.

I fully appreciate that executives are evaluated by many measures, and it's quite possible a leader whose company is losing money may be doing a great job under the circumstances. Nonetheless, there something is amiss when a company that lost $2.85 billion in the last quarter alone and $2.91 billion in 2014 pays its top executives millions.

To be honest, I find it hard to justify that anyone, no matter how successful, should take home $13 million a year – and I strongly believe in free markets and capitalism. But while it's foreign to many, Judaism stresses the importance of limits, modesty and restraint. It's not just the amount that's excessive – it's the gap between those who occupy corner offices and those who are the nuts and bolts of the organization. Such a salary represents 250 times that of the average worker. A generation ago, the multiple would have been more like 20. This income gap, with greater amounts of income controlled by fewer and fewer people, can be unhealthy for society as a whole. This problem is acute in Israel, which has one of highest rates of income inequality in the western world.

All this makes the actions of Dan Price, CEO of Gravity Payments, even more remarkable. He has introduced a minimum wage of $70,000 for all 120 of his employees. This will mean raises for 70 and the doubling of salaries for 30 "lucky" employees. He based the amount on a study on happiness co-authored by Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman (who taught at Hebrew University for many years) that found emotional well-being rises as salary increases up to, but not beyond, $75,000. "We conclude that high income buys life satisfaction, but not happiness, and that low income is associated both with low life evaluation and low emotional well-being," he wrote.

Perhaps even more astounding, the salary increases were largely paid by Price himself, who took a pay cut from $1-million to – you guessed it - $70,000. As he noted "The market rate for me as a CEO compared to a regular person is ridiculous. It's absurd." It should come as no surprise that his company donates 10 per cent of its profits to charity.

Though many will try to deny it, the "debate" surrounding proper compensation ultimately boils down to whether one sees money as an end in itself or a means to an end. Those in the former camp will seek to maximize their earnings, in ways that are perfectly legal and may even be compelling if one only evaluates the contributions of the person. If one, however, takes a broader view and considers the impact of one's earnings on others, one will be quite content with somewhat less. Try as we may to ignore what we instinctively know and what research shows, beyond the first $75,000 or so, money just can't buy happiness. Our sages expressed this sentiment with their well-known teaching, "Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his lot."

Many Jews pray three times a day for material blessings, which are wonderful. But our emphasis on modesty *ipso facto* means that those who have great material blessings are meant to share them with others. Think of how many people would benefit if a corporate executive took a pay cut from $10 million to $5 million instead of laying off 75 workers.

We need more Dan Prices – if only to offer some counterbalance to what all too often goes on in executive suites, and to share happiness with many. ■

A 'woman of valour' as a eulogy?

Norma Baumel Joseph

Why is it that we frequently hear eulogies honouring Jewish women using the Proverbs poem of *Eshet Chayil, A Woman of Valour*? Is this the only resource we have for praising women?

Recently, in these pages, Lauren Kramer wrote that she is "Happy to skip the *Eshet Chayil*." She explained quite thoroughly why this particular poem seems anachronistic and problematic. Far from feeling praised, she and many women like her find it insulting. I too admit that my family does not sing this song Friday night. I do not aspire to the standard of one who works so hard while her (lazy) husband sits at the city gates receiving praise!

Friends have argued with me, and even offered better translations than the outdated one that Kramer uses. But, as she vigilantly notes, this is not about the ancient meaning or attributions of the text, but rather its current usage.

It is not so much that I find it "simply absurd" as that I believe women do not grasp the meaning of the words and would not normally agree to those standards. In fact, neither do the rabbis. Our rabbinic commentators often attribute great beauty to our female ancestors. Their declaration that our matriarchs like Sarah were beautiful was heartfelt and consistent.

We can understand that their description was not merely a statement of physical beauty, but rather encompassed moral and spiritual beauty. So how can we proudly proclaim, "Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain?" Beauty, both physical and spiritual, is continuously an important factor in our lives. It pertains to our esthetic sense and we experience it as part of the completeness of our lives.

I certainly do not mean to oppose praising of women. Far from that. My complaint focuses on the poem itself not the ritual practice of extoling women. And while I do find some of the phrases inappropriate, I also recognize that many women glory in their roles as mothers, homemakers and businesswomen. So, parts of the tale do appear to fit some

> *Our tradition is rich in potential sources by and about women*

women. Certainly, many women enjoy this serenade. It has even been recited at some wedding ceremonies.

But with a tradition so rich in history and poetry, why is it that this is the only text we can find for our eulogies? In fact, I would say that it is this over-usage that prevents me from enjoying any reciting of that song.

Our tradition is rich in potential sources by and about women. In the biblical corpus itself, there are numerous women heroines, including Ruth whom Boaz calls an *Eshet Chayil*. We also can find the songs by extraordinary women such as Deborah, Hanna and Miriam. So why not pursue these sources?

Furthermore, there are so many Jewish women in history who have paved the way for our people's survival. Should we not recognize them or use their stories to highlight the currently deceased?

I know this will involve more work, but the lives and names of these women are known and easily available. People can look up any name online in the Jewish Women's Encyclopedia. There are memoirs and history books. Recently, I received a list of great females in Israel's current history that has more than 200 names. I myself teach five distinct courses on Jewish women.

When I first started teaching, there were few resources, but now I am overwhelmed with sources. Cheryl Tallen of Toronto produced an annotated bibliography of Jewish women in the medieval period of over 55 pages. That collection alone is a significant indicator of our long history and the role great Jewish women played in creating and preserving that heritage.

At the moment of death, we can look back on one lifetime and recognize its significance in the context of our rich heritage. Especially at that moment, this heritage should not be reduced to one poem. ■

News

Canadian Orthodox rabbis note shift on LGBTQ inclusion

JODIE SHUPAC
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While Canadian modern Orthodox rabbis aren't having the kind of public discussion about including LGBTQ Jews like their counterparts did last month in New York, many say they've been grappling with the issue for years and agree there's been a shift toward greater sensitivity to the issue.

Rabbi Michael Whitman of Adath Israel Poale Zedek Anshei Ozeroff Synagogue in Hampstead, Que., and former president of the Rabbinical Council of Montreal, said that in the past two decades, modern Orthodoxy has moved from the attitude that homosexuality is deviant to "we don't agree with the behaviour, but want to support the difficulties [gay and lesbian] people face."

An April 19 conference at Columbia University, titled "Faith, Desire and Psychotherapy," brought together for the first time modern Orthodox rabbis and mental health professionals to explore best practices for serving LGBTQ Jews in the Orthodox community.

Attended by more than 120 mental health workers, educators, students and rabbis, the event addressed rabbis' struggles to balance sensitivity with the preservation of Jewish law, as well as the Orthodox community's past tendency to pathologize homosexuality and options for training for rabbis, educators and mental health professionals.

Conference speakers included Rabbi Mark Dratch, executive vice-president of the Rabbinic Council of America (RCA); Rabbi Shmuel Goldin, former president of the RCA; Rabbi Shaul Robinson, spiritual leader of Manhattan's Lincoln Square Synagogue (one of the event's co-sponsors); and Rabbi Nathaniel Helfgot, a faculty member at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah and the author of a 2010 declaration calling for acceptance of LGBTQ Jews in the Orthodox community.

Rabbi Helfgot's declaration, signed by 150 modern Orthodox rabbis on both sides of the border, stressed that "conversion therapies," which attempt to make a person heterosexual, and pressuring gay people to marry opposite-sex partners are dangerous from a mental health standpoint.

In 2012, the RCA, to which a number of Canadian rabbis belong, rejected conversion therapy outright.

Formal conversations aside, the question of how to reconcile homosexuality and halachic Judaism has been on the minds of many Canadian modern Orthodox rabbis for years.

"Programs [like the one at Columbia] are behind the curve," Rabbi Whitman said. "While there's no change in halachic standards, there are vast changes in attitudes, sensitivities and ways of dealing with people. The conference reflects these important changes, but... for years I've been speaking publicly and doing private counselling around this issue, recognizing that certain behaviours aren't in accordance with the Torah, but we don't apply a moral judgment."

About a decade ago, Rabbi Whitman said, he spoke about homosexuality at an event at McGill University, and for years he's spoken out against conversion therapy and the damage it does.

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

While he wouldn't officiate at a same-sex wedding, he said, he welcomes gay and lesbian singles and couples as "members and leaders" of his synagogue.

Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, spiritual leader of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto, said the Canadian Orthodox community tends to be more conservative than in places such as New York and California, and while it's apparently not engaged in formal discussion on the topic, "almost any Orthodox rabbi has had to deal with this on some level... If you have a congregant who's gay or one with a child who's gay, it requires you to address it and be as sensitive and compassionate as possible."

Rabbi Korobkin said the local rabbinate seems to have largely steered away from conversion therapy, and while an Orthodox rabbi likely wouldn't tell a gay congregant, "I accept what you do," he would say, "I accept who you are and you're welcome in my home, congregation and community," just as a congregant who doesn't keep kosher or observe Shabbat is welcomed.

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation said Canadian modern Orthodox rabbis face the same challenges as those in New York.

"I think going back a generation, the sensitive approach was 'Let's see if we can counsel a person away from homosexuality,' whereas now, the approach is, 'How do we... accept them into our community, but still champion our tradition on a very important issue?'" he said.

Justine Apple, executive director of Jewish LGBTQ group Kulanu Toronto, said she would love to see Toronto hold a conference like the one at Columbia. "There's definitely space and a need for it here," she said.

She said the Reform and, increasingly, the Conservative movements in Canada have been making headway on LGBTQ inclusion, but "we have a long way to go in the Orthodox community," particularly since Orthodox rabbis here seem to be less progressive than their U.S. counterparts.

"I think a lot of LGBTQ Jews are seen as invisible in the Orthodox community," she said. "I'd like to see Orthodox rabbis practising more inclusive policies at their synagogues."

While she recognized that this could take time, Apple said, "it would be really good to see some change and a bit more openness. We can use the United States as a role model for that." ■

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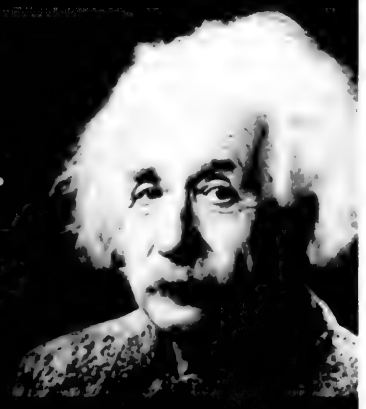

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 7, 2015

Jewish groups raise money for Nepal quake relief

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Although they're half a world away from the crisis, Canadian Jewish organizations are collecting money to help the hundreds of thousands of people suffering in Nepal due to the worst natural disaster the region has seen in 80 years.

Robyn Segall, Ve'ahavta's communications director, said that according to the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), a partner agency that has sent a team to Nepal to co-ordinate relief efforts on the ground, the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that devastated Nepal on April 25 has resulted in a climbing death toll of 5,000 and left more than 20,000 people injured along with more than 1 million homeless or displaced.

In the days following the quake, Canadian Jewish organizations set up relief funds to collect donations for the victims.

Ve'ahavta set up its Nepal Crisis Fund on April 27 and has since collected more than $25,000 as of May 4.

Following a conference call between Ve'ahavta staff and JDC volunteers on the ground in Nepal, Segall told *The CJN* that one of the biggest challenges is getting their hands on the much-needed supplies that are coming in.

"The land is so destroyed that they are having trouble with planes and vehicles getting where they need to go," Segall said.

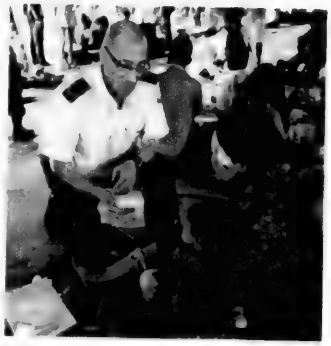
"The priority is to take care of that so supplies can come in. The airport is completely backlogged with supplies, and people on the ground can't actually distribute them to the people that need them, because the roads are in really bad shape."

She said volunteers are currently focusing their efforts on providing medical care and are working with the staff at the Israel Defence Forces field hospital in Kathmandu, the capital.

"People are still being uncovered from the rubble, so it's still a state of emergency," she said.

Jewish Federations of Canada – United Israel Appeal is also collecting donations through its Nepal Relief Fund. Donations can be made through federations in Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, London, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Windsor and Winnipeg.

Dan Horowitz, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's editorial director and senior writer, said Toronto's Nepal fund was set up April 27 and had collected more than $64,000 from some 500 donors as of May 4.



The IDF's field hospital in Kathmandu began operating April 29. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

All of the funds raised by the federations will be allocated to the JDC, which is working to provide humanitarian aid.

"They're still evaluating the needs, but they've already released money for the basic human needs – water, food. Also, sanitation is crucial, because in this situation, diseases occur," Horowitz said.

Sailendra Adhikar, a 27-year-old Kathmandu native who came to Toronto in 2010 and works as a security guard at the Lipa Green Centre, said he's grateful to federation for establishing a relief fund to help the survivors.

"Although I am very fortunate that the members of my family who still live in Nepal were unaffected by this tragedy, I know many others who are not as lucky," he said.

Chabad Lubavitch of Southern Ontario has also set up a Nepal Jewish Relief Fund to assist the Chabad Center in Kathmandu, which has been operating as a refuge for Israeli backpackers and other victims. The Chabad Centre has been providing food and shelter, but their supplies are quickly dwindling.

On April 27, the federal government said it will match donations to Canadian relief funds set up to help the victims in Nepal.

Segall said she would be happy to assist other Jewish groups, such as shuls, that are raising money for the cause.

"We're also happy to work directly with synagogues on the allocation of the funds they collect. Sometimes they don't have the networks to understand how to best use their funds, so we're more than happy to collaborate and help them distribute their funds in the most effective way possible." ■

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Event marks 70th anniversary of the end of WWII

DIANE KOVEN
OTTAWA CORRESPONDENT

The Canadian War Museum was once again the site of the National Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony, this year marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The ceremony, held April 28 and organized by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, was attended by 550 people, including a large contingent from the diplomatic community, as well as local politicians, survivors and members of the public. This year's theme was "70 Years Since the End of the War: The Pain of Liberation and Rebuilding a Life."

Fran Sonshine, national chair of Canadian Society for Yad Vashem and MC for the event, told the audience that she had been born in Cyprus, the child of survivors, and that her husband had been born in Bergen-Belsen.

Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak described the journey of the Jewish People from survival to triumph.

"While the world celebrated the end of the war, the Jewish People mourned their losses," he said. "Armed with nothing but resilience and determination, they rebuilt their lives."

He expressed gratitude to Canada for its strong support for the State of Israel, "the shelter and homeland of the Jewish People."

Defence Minister Jason Kenney, representing the government, announced that "Parliament has designated the month of April as Genocide Remembrance and Commemoration Month" and that "we will soon see the national Holocaust monument rise within sight of this place as a sign for future generations."

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May also shared messages of solidarity, while an emotional Thomas Mulcair, leader of the Official Opposition, told of visiting Dachau with a group of fellow high school students in the 1960s and of a family trip to France last summer with his wife, Catherine Pinhas, who is Jewish, and his mother-in-law.

His mother-in-law had survived the war and was returning for the first time. "I want Catherine's and my own grandchildren to know how real that was," he said.

Groups of survivors, along with politicians and dignitaries, lit candles in memory of those who died in the Holocaust.

Defence Minister Jason Kenney, right, lights the first candle on the Yad Vashem menorah in memory of the six million Jews who died in the Shoah, together with Holocaust survivor Victor David. DAVID AMOILS PHOTOGRAPHY

Dana Bell, a child Holocaust survivor whose family annually sponsors educators from Quebec to go to Yad Vashem, was accompanied by her grandson Richard Pascal as she told her personal story.

"You are looking at a miracle. It is a miracle that I survived," said Bell, who has written a memoir that was among the volumes of Holocaust memoirs published by the Azrieli Foundation that were made available to attendees to take with them.

Prior to the main ceremony, a group of more than 130 high school students from Ontario and Quebec of various faiths and cultures participated in a new program called "Ambassadors of Change," in which they sat with survivors, listened to their stories and engaged in dialogue.

Led by Ottawa teacher Patrick Mascoe, who is dedicated to Holocaust education in the schools, the students then joined the main ceremony, which concluded with them placing yellow flowers near the memorial candles.

Cantor Moshe Kraus, a Holocaust survivor now in his 90s, recited *Kel Malei Rachamim* and led the Jewish audience members in *Kaddish*. The Jewish War Veterans of Canada then marched off the colours. ■

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Arabic paper says killing entrenched in the Jewish faith

PAUL LUNGEN
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They're at it again.

Meshwar, an Arabic-language newspaper headquartered in Mississauga, has drawn the ire of Jewish groups for an article that labels Judaism as a terrorist religion and says killing is ingrained in the Jewish faith.

The article appeared in the newspaper's April edition and is a reprint of an item that appeared previously in *Al Jazeera*. The article was first reported in the Elder of Zion blog and picked up by Honest Reporting Canada.

"This is the same publication that praised the Har Nof synagogue massacre in which four rabbis and a police officer were murdered," said Mike Fegelman, executive-director of Honest Reporting Canada.

"A police complaint has already been filed by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) over that editorial."

"With content like this freely distributed to its claimed 4,000 readers in Ontario, it's no surprise that Toronto Police released findings in March, which noted that Jews are the most targeted group for hate crimes in the city," Fegelman added.

Len Rudner, director of community relations and outreach of CIJA, said the organization has already made four separate complaints to police hate crime authorities in Peel Region over anti-Jewish content in *Meshwar*.

One concerned a cartoon depicting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu drinking the blood of Palestinian children. Another arose from a November 2014 editorial that praised the Har Nof terrorist attack in Israel. Yet another was in response to an August 2014 editorial that denied the Holocaust, he said.

Rudner said CIJA hadn't yet had the most recent item translated, but "if the description that has been provided through Honest Reporting is accurate, we feel there may be grounds to file another complaint with Peel Regional Police."

Jonathan Halevi has been following *Meshwar* and the writings of its editor, Nazih Khatatba, for some time. Halevi, who reads Arabic, said the article builds on traditional Islamic doctrine, which sees Judaism as a corruption of the ancient Islamic faith of the patriarchs.

This article in *Meshwar* upset Jewish groups.

The article refers to the ancient warrior, Joshua, and said the concept of killing others is well entrenched in the Jewish faith. He also compared the ancient Israelites to events in Gaza today, Halevi said.

It condemned Judaism for its treatment of women and said Jews see gentiles as unclean and vile, Halevi said.

"The article takes [biblical] quotes from here and there and compares [them] to Israel today.

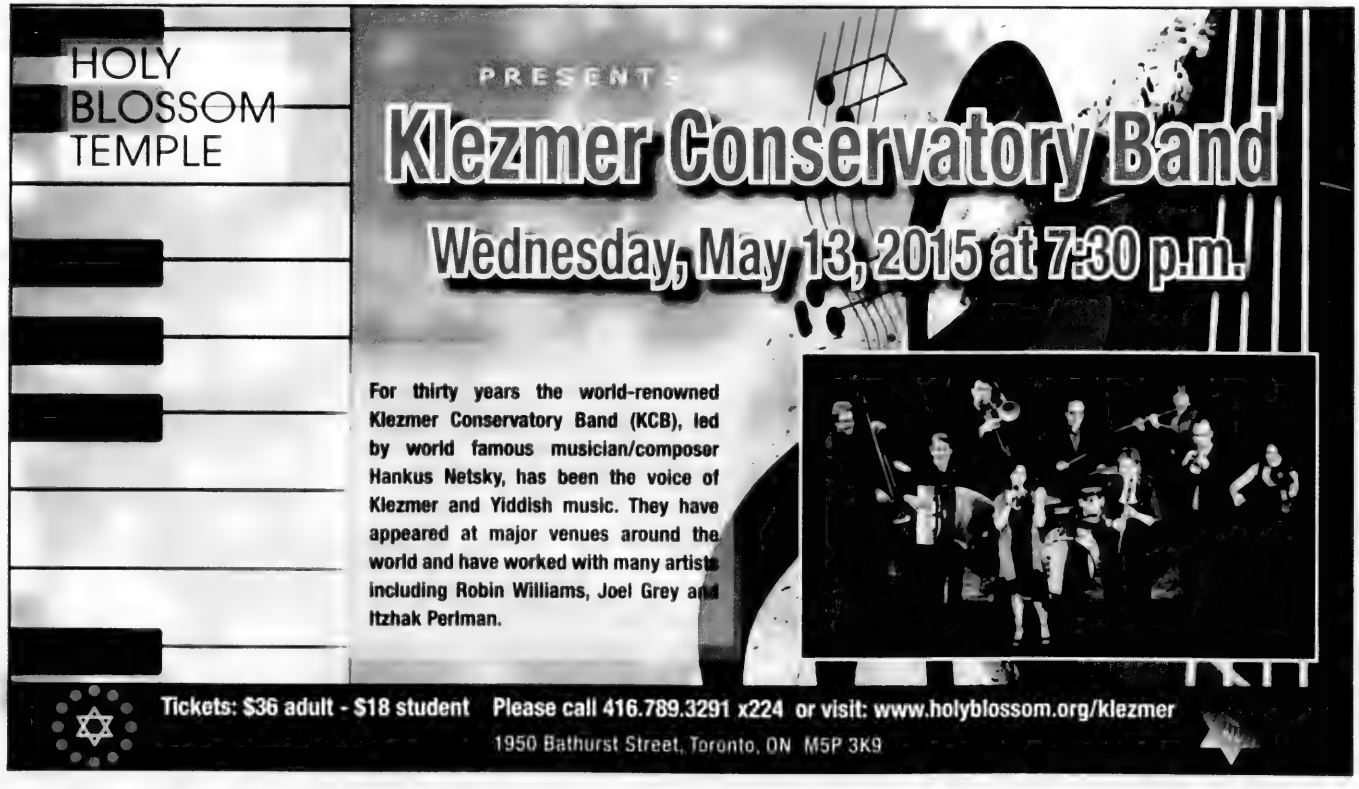
"This is rubbish. [The author] really doesn't understand Judaism. He misquotes what was said and builds a theory around it. It's a very low level of argument. But it's part of the line of the newspaper in demonizing Israel and demonizing Judaism."

Halevi, who served in the Israeli intelligence service, said he had written about *Meshwar* on his blog, *Alternative Angle*, and about Khatatba, who is also a board member of Palestine House.

Halevi noted that Khatatba praised the Har Nof massacre, and called it "an attack with several innovative tactics culminating in the courageous and qualitative al-Quds operation, which was carried out by two Palestinians in a Jewish synagogue."

Khatatba went on to describe the massacre as "self-defence and rescue for the Palestinian people," Halevi noted on his blog.

The CJN contacted Khatatba, but he said he was "too busy" for an interview. ■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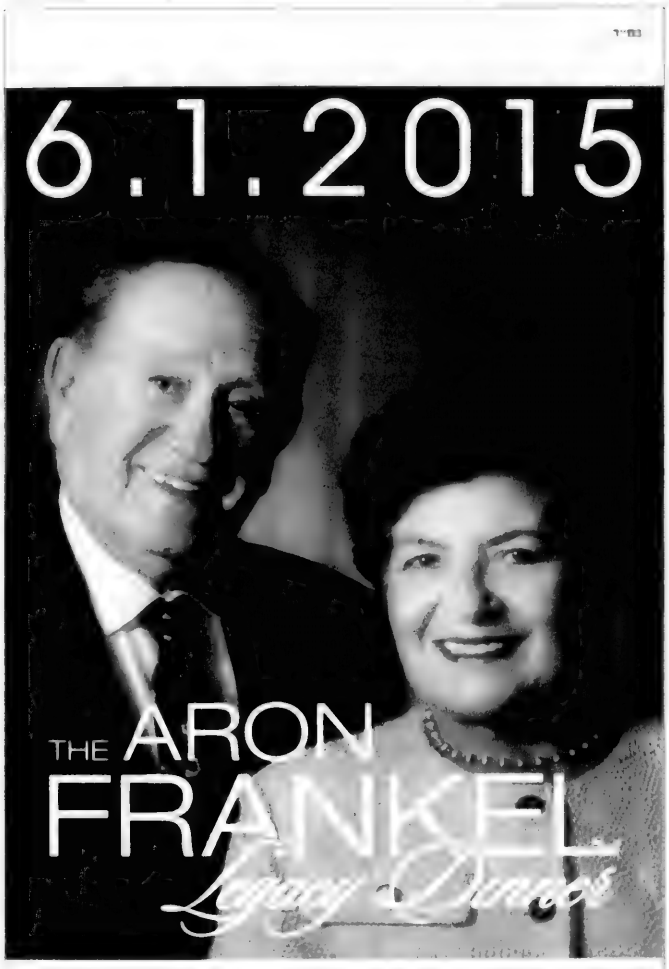

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Pro-peace lawyer says Jerusalem is already divided

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Jerusalem can neither be considered an exclusively Jewish city nor the undivided capital of Israel.

This was the central premise of a talk given April 30 by Daniel Seidemann, an American-Israeli, internationally recognized lawyer, peace advocate and founder and director of Terrestrial Jerusalem, an Israeli NGO that tracks developments in Jerusalem thought to lead to violence, humanitarian crises or political unrest.

As a lawyer, Seidemann has represented both Israeli and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem and has defended people negatively affected by the expansion of Jewish settlements in and around Jerusalem.

"If you come to me and say, 'I don't believe a two-state solution is possible'... Or that we shouldn't cede any territory to them, I'll disagree with you, but feel you could make a compelling piece," Seidemann said.

"But if you tell me we could reach an agreement that includes holding onto Jerusalem and keeping it an Israeli city, despite the large disenfranchised Palestinian population there, I'll quietly take you outside and ask you what you've been smoking," Seidemann told a group of about 40 people who gathered at Holy Blossom Temple to hear him speak about the status and future of Jerusalem.

His talk was presented by Canadian Friends of Peace Now.

A retired reserve major in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and a self-proclaimed "unabashed Zionist," Seidemann argued that while the commitment of so many Israeli and Diaspora Jews to preserve Jerusalem as an undisputed Jewish capital comes from "a noble place," it fails to acknowledge empirical reality: Israel annexed east Jerusalem in 1967 and roughly 38 per cent of Jerusalem's population comprises Palestinians who aren't Israeli citizens and can't vote in national elections.

"In the next 15 or 20 years or so, Jerusalem will have a Palestinian majority," Seidemann said. "Thirty-eight per cent of people in Jerusalem see my [national] independence day as their Nakba... So Jerusalem is not an Israeli city, it's a bi-national city."

He emphasized the city's divided nature, saying that Jews are afraid to go into east Jerusalem, and Palestinians are afraid to enter west Jerusalem.

The latter are scared because Jewish vigilante groups are known to go out "hunting for Palestinians for fun," Seidemann said.

Daniel Seidemann JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

"I say this with pain, but we have an inherently dysfunctional Jerusalem and a city that's detached from reality."

Seidemann clarified that he doesn't believe, as do some left-wing ideologues, that Zionism equates to racism, but he notes that since 1967, Israel has been occupying the West Bank and east Jerusalem, "even though we didn't choose to do so" and is thereby doing itself a great disservice.

"We are confronting an existential challenge of the highest order," he warned. "There's no greater threat to Israel than our sliding into a bi-national state, because this will condemn us to becoming perpetual occupiers... We have no business ruling the Palestinians, and we don't want to be there."

Israel's ongoing policy of settlement expansion is highly self-destructive and will only serve to further isolate the country internationally, Seidemann said.

Having recently met with decision-makers in Washington, Seidemann said U.S. politicians are increasingly at a loss regarding how to help reach a peace deal between the Israelis and Palestinians.

He urged Jews in places such as Canada and the United States to allow for critical conversations on the issue to occur, even if they don't agree with everything being said.

"So much of the conversation in the U.S. and Canada is dominated by people who love Israel so much they want Jerusalem to be an Armageddon playground. It's a strange way of showing love. On the other side, there are the anti-Israel BDS people... Let's bring back the middle ground and leave the crazies and the anti-Semites aside," he said. ■

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UJA's WALK with ISRAEL

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Jewish Heritage Month

This Victoria Day you have a choice: UJA's Run or Walk with Israel

By Daniel Horowitz

It's incredible what can develop from a simple conversation between friends. A couple of years ago, while Sam Mizrahi was co-chairing UJA's Walk with Israel, his friend and self-described "weekend runner" Jordan Korenzvit suggested that if there was a way to run on behalf of Israel, he'd love to lend his legs to that particular cause. The idea, which germinated with an off-the-cuff dialogue between buddies was taken to UJA, who took it to the City of Toronto to work out the logistics, and, after a couple of years to sort things out, UJA's Run with Israel is here.

Taking to the streets of downtown Toronto prior to the start of UJA's Walk with Israel on Monday, May 18, Victoria Day, funds raised for the six kilometre Run, like the Walk, will support UJA Federation's ongoing, transformative projects in Israel that are literally changing people's lives.

Both the Run and Walk will share the same route through the streets of downtown Toronto. Both routes are 6km in length, and will culminate outdoors at Ontario Place for the Renee & Irwin Nadal Festival.

"I have been running a successful community event – the Yorkville Run – and I wanted to combine my knowledge of organizing that run and apply it to fundraising and awareness for Israel," says Korenzvit, Chair of the Run For Israel, along with Mizrahi. "The idea of adding a run is to bring in the demographic that is currently running other runs, for other causes, and give them the option of running for Israel. I am very excited to have the opportunity to run through the Princes' Gate, to the finish line at Ontario Place. I've never done that before and I think it will be a great experience for everyone who does the Run with Israel."

"People who run regularly are passionate about it," says Mizrahi. "By providing these people who share a similar value system with the Run with Israel, it is giving them the opportunity to express and indulge not only their passion for running, but their passion for Israel, and the perfect chance to combine both of those passions to benefit the Jewish State."

"It's very exciting that this year we have two options available for people to show their love for, and support of Israel," says Marcy Abramsky, who is Chairing the Walk for the second straight year. "The bottom line is, whether you walk or run, you will be supporting and strengthening the people of Israel."

Abramsky, who took part in a UJA Federation fact-finding mission to Israel in January, saw firsthand, the projects and the people that funds raised by the Walk and Run will support.

"It was so moving to see the people who our community helps through the Walk, year after year," she says. "It's important to remember that the faces you see on the Walk signs around the city are real people, people who will benefit from the Walk and Run, and each one of those people represent thousands more just like them."

Whether you choose to walk or run, the day promises to be an unforgettable one as participants come together to support Israel while enjoying a day of fresh air and exercise, followed by games, rides, activities, UJA's Shinshinim, and a delicious kosher barbecue sponsored by Sobey's.

UJA's Walk with Israel is sponsored by RioCan and Mizrahi Development. UJA's Run with Israel is sponsored by Yogen Früz.

If you have any questions about this year's Walk with Israel, or the Run, take a look at our FAQ section at walkwithisrael.com, or contact us at info@walkwithisrael.com or call the Walk hotline at: 416-631-5700

Over 16,000 took part in last year's UJA Walk with Israel

When you raise money for UJA's Walk or Run with Israel, you strengthen the people of Israel. People like Adina.

It wasn't easy for Adina to move her family from the relative safety and comfort of Jerusalem to the uncertainty of a life in UJA Federation's partner community of Sderot, which sits less than a mile from Gaza. But it was a conscious decision, one she made 15 years ago with her husband and six daughters. It wasn't long before Sderot was the target of unrelenting mortar and missile attacks from Gaza. Adina and her husband quickly adapted to their new reality, consumed with the whereabouts of their young girls at all times. With only 15 seconds to find shelter before an attack, Adina and her family often found themselves confined to the indoors, rarely venturing outside. While she sits in an outdoor playground at her children's daycare furnished by the generous donations from UJA's Israel Emergency Relief Fund, she is thoughtful about her commitment to living in Sderot. After last summer's Gaza conflict, Adina has been shaken by the constant barrage of indiscriminate rockets but she is adamant that her family's place is in Sderot. She is both comforted and strengthened to know that she is part of the global Jewish family, and that the Jewish community of Toronto, through UJA, support people like her, and are looking out for all the people of Sderot.

Sderot resident Adina (right) with three of her six daughters and Marcy Abramsky, the Chair of UJA's Walk with Israel.

Hillel awards honour chesed and community

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With the theme of this year's Hillel of Greater Toronto's awards night being "chesed and community," it was fitting that the 25 award recipients included both Jewish and non-Jewish students who have devoted themselves to fostering Jewish life on their Toronto university campuses.

The annual awards night, held this year on April 29 at the Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life and attended by about 80 people, honoured student leaders on Toronto campuses that have a Hillel presence, including York University, the University of Toronto, Ryerson University, Glendon College, Seneca College, OCAD University and University of Toronto Mississauga.

"We've started branching out to smaller college campuses where there are Jewish students who would like to start a Jewish presence," said Allysa Moses, Hillel co-ordinator at Ryerson and co-organizer of the awards event, along with Tamara Caplan, director of Hillel at York.

The awards were divided into different categories, and recipients were determined by Hillel members across the city, Moses explained, such as the Passion for Planning Award, given to all students who sat on volunteer-run, Hillel student boards at their various campuses, an Internship Completion Award for each campus's Hillel interns, and the Emerging Communities Engagement Award, which honoured students who have been working to establish Jewish community life on campuses with smaller Jewish populations.

Ryerson student accept the Passion for Planning award. SAM WALMAN PHOTO

In addition, several Community Partnership Awards were given to non-Jewish student leaders who have worked with Hillel.

These included leaders from the Ryerson Hellenic Student Association, which has, Moses said, co-organized events with Hillel and promoted some of Hillel's events and the leader of the Chinese Students & Scholars Association at U of T, which collaborated with Hillel on an exhibit documenting the experience of Jews who fled Nazi-occupied Europe for Shanghai during World War II.

Israel Engagement Internship Awards were given to student interns at Ryerson who participated in a program in which they spoke about Israel with both Jewish and non-Jewish students across academic departments.

"So, an intern studying social work would meet with Jewish and non-Jewish students and tell them about work and innovations that Israel is doing in social work," Moses said.

Two students also received Commitment to Jewish Life Awards for exemplifying outstanding leadership on campus.

Ruchie Shainhouse, who won the Ryerson Commitment to Jewish Life Award, has shown "four years of dedication to Hillel at Ryerson, been on the Hillel board for four years, and went above and beyond to create a strong Jewish community on campus and make sure events are creative, fun and vibrant," Moses said.

For instance, this past year, Shainhouse created the first citywide Hillel semi-formal, held at Ryerson.

The event included speakers such as Marc Newburgh, Hillel's executive director, who spoke about the March of the Living trip that he recently returned from and how he was deeply inspired by the positive attitude exhibited by one of the accompanying Holocaust survivors.

He emphasized the strength of the Jewish people and praised the Hillel student leaders for proudly displaying their passion for being Jewish and for Israel on campuses where many people don't look favourably on Israel.

"It was a really enjoyable evening and the students felt they contributed a lot to Hillel and that they are appreciated and encouraged in their Jewish leadership," Moses said. ■

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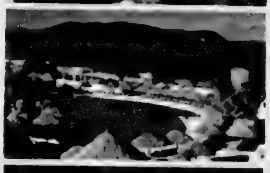

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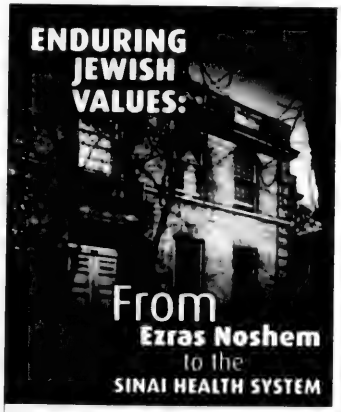

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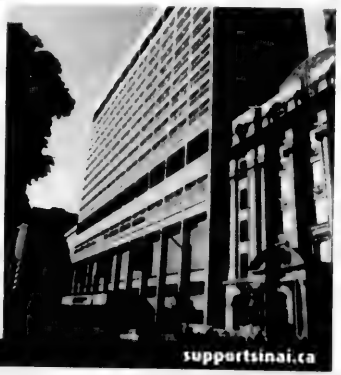

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Give young Jews a reason to love Israel, rabbi urges

PAUL LUNGEN
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Rabbi Donniel Hartman, right, with *CJN* editor Yoni Goldstein RABBI ADAM CUTLER PHOTO

As Rabbi Donniel Hartman reflected on his Zionist youth, he recalled that as a bar mitzvah boy he had "bought" a tree in Israel – or at least, a part of one.

The memory still brought a smile to his face. "What a beautiful idea," he reminisced.

Today, however, it's not enough to plant trees in Israel. "We have to plant ideas," he said.

All Jews have a stake in the future of Israel, not just in the land but in its cultural values and principles, he said. We need to shift away from a longstanding focus on "continuity Zionism," which was concerned with the survival of the Jewish People and the preservation of the State of Israel, and turn to support for "cultural Zionism."

That's an aspirational Zionism that seeks to make Israel not just a state of the Jews, but also a Jewish state, one imbued with Jewish ideals, Jewish principles, Jewish culture and a Jewish way of doing things. It is open, accepting, democratic and tolerant, he said.

Rabbi Hartman, president of the Jerusalem-based Shalom Hartman Institute, addressed the topic, "Talking about Israel, the need for a new conversation."

At a community gathering sponsored by *The CJN* in association with the Shalom Hartman Institute and hosted by Beth Tzedec Congregation on April 27, he encouraged Diaspora Jews to make their voices heard and influence the discussion about the future of Zionism. Doing so is necessary to preserve Zionism's appeal to future generations.

He said continuity Zionism makes no sense to young people in Canada and the United States. Their experience is not of rampant anti-Semitism, but of welcoming societies in which they feel safe, where intermarriage is high in the United States and growing in Canada, where Israel is more powerful than its enemies and where the Holocaust increasingly recedes into history.

An appeal to their Zionist sympathies based on concerns over the safety and security of the Jewish People will fall on deaf ears, Rabbi Hartman argued.

Instead, Jews must focus on a cultural renaissance in which Israel will nurture a democratic, pluralistic, tolerant and expansive version of Judaism, a "Judaism on steroids… the best of what we are."

He said too many policies of the current government are influenced by concerns over security and "continuity Zionism." He criticized the government for failing to welcome 50,000 African refugees, instead referring to them as infiltrators. He said such an attitude ignores Jewish tradition, which taught that all people are created in God's image and that Jews were once strangers in Egypt.

He called on Israel to be "an exemplar of how you treat refugees."

He said a Jewish state is obliged to pursue peace, even if there is no discernible peace partner.

"At least you keep it on the table. That's what a Jewish state is about," he said.

Rabbi Hartman asked an audience of 390 people to consider "how we, the lovers of Israel, create a future for the lovers of Israel." Is the community laying a foundation so that in 20 years, the room in which he spoke will again be filled with lovers of Israel? For that to happen, he suggested, you have to give young people another reason beyond continuity Zionism, to support Israel.

Going back to the 19th century, he made a compelling case for Israel as a state for the Jews – a refuge from anti-Semitism and a place where Jews could live without discrimination.

However, there was an element within Zionism that did not see a state for the Jews as a goal in itself, he continued. "Jews never saw continuity as an end in itself. To be a Jew meant to strive for something."

Cultural Zionism looked at ways Jews could be a holy people, as expressed at the national level. Their goal was to bring Jews together to create a cultural renaissance, a society worthy of the idea of Jews as a holy people, he said.

In their national home, Jews would take what is best from their own tradition, adapt influences from other civilizations, and become players on the international scene, not just spectators. In that way, they would become a light unto the nations, he said.

But in the aftermath of the Holocaust, continuity Zionism naturally took precedence. Over the years, weaknesses in that approach emerged. Palestinians ask why they should pay the price for Auschwitz, Rabbi Hartman said.

And for young Jews, continuity Zionism is "not coherent." The legitimacy of Israel based on the Holocaust does not resonate.

Instead, an aspirational Zionism is the best way to gain support.

The greatness of life is not measured by what you achieve, Rabbi Hartman said, "but by what you yearn for."

Others to address the event included Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, senior rabbi of Beth Tzedec Congregation, *CJN* president Elizabeth Wolfe, and DJ Schneeweiss, Israel's consul general to Toronto and Western Canada. *CJN* editor Yoni Goldstein served as moderator of a question and answer session following Rabbi Hartman's address. ■

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UJA's WALK with ISRAEL

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Jewish Heritage Month

Ordaining intermarried rabbis is not the answer

RABBI TINA GRIMBERG

Can a rabbi intermarry? This is the question. The issue is complicated and rich; it is controversial and divisive. If my email inbox is any indication, the passions run high.

Dating as a rabbinical student or rabbi, especially as a woman, presents enormous challenges. I met my husband in my last year of rabbinical school, so I know this first-hand. Even among liberal Jewish circles, Shabbat observance – both Friday and Saturday – was a hard sell. "So what's your weekend like?" he asked, sitting across the table at a Lower Manhattan Starbucks.

"Friday night I'm on the pulpit for Kabbalat Shabbat services." I responded. "Saturday morning, there's a bar mitzvah, and Sunday morning, there's family programming at the Hebrew School, and maybe a hospital visit thrown in somewhere in between."

Really?" responded this intelligent, Jewishly conscious man. "I have a cottage outside New York. I work hard all week so I can be there by 4 p.m. on Friday. Does that mean you will not be able to join me?"

I stared at my cup of coffee and realized that between my Jewish professional commitment and the social demands of relationships, there lay an ocean.

The Reconstructionist movement is tiny. The congregations within it are also, for the most part, small. Only a handful of synagogues have memberships of more than 500 households. Within the liberal Jewish spectrum, Reconstructionist Judaism is certainly the minority. Take for example, the Reform movement, which has 101 affiliate congregations in New York state alone. The Reconstructionists? One hundred and five across the entire world. The 2014 graduating class of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College was six students.

In other words, the conversation about this is a lot bigger than the issue itself. Why the controversy, then?

Proponents of ordaining intercoupled rabbinical students argue that intermarried rabbis are likely to be more successful in attracting and integrating interfaith couples into the Jewish world. I would like to challenge this idea. I have been working with interfaith couples for the last 20 years, and I can say, both as a rabbi and as a family therapist, that the identity of a rabbi's partner has little to do with his or her ability to engage interfaith families in Jewish life. Working in private practice, as well as in New York at the 92nd Street Y, the JCC, a Reform synagogue in Brooklyn, and in Toronto at my current pulpit at Congregation Darchei Noam, I have noticed over the years that people are searching for a place with no judgment. A place of Jewish meaning where they feel pastorally understood and communally stimulated. They are looking for communities that share their values. And, above all, they are looking for Jewish experiences.

Interfaith families come to Jewish institutions to foster their Jewish identities. They are here to learn; they are here to share life's joyous moments; they are here for support while they grieve. It is the job of the rabbi, and one that I take very seriously, to acknowledge the unique identity of all of the members of the community – whether they come from a Jewish background or not. The rabbi becomes, for his or her congregation, a mentor.

What matters most is the ability to build a bridge. Empathy, understanding, real engagement in people's lives and deep respect for their stories is what fosters integration. What we know is that integration is currently working better than it ever has, as rabbis across the liberal movements, along with their communities, open doors and their embrace to the diversity of Jewish life and experiences.

The skills to work with intermarried couples are expected of pulpit rabbis in congregations across North America. Even Orthodox rabbis come face to face with these issues. How do we know that integration is working? The numbers tell us. We see a growing number of children of intermarriages who identify as Jewish – the Pew Research Center's fantastic 2013 Survey of American Jews tells us that.

The number of Jewish life-cycle events – brit milah or milah l'shem gerut (for conversion) ceremonies, baby namings, b'nei mitzvah – of children of intermarried couples keeps growing. Every year, more people in interfaith relationships come into my office seeking support and counsel in order to enhance and deepen their Jewish life.

In a world of such autonomous choices for liberal Jews who see rabbinic authority on a continuum, when one rabbi disagrees with them, another rabbi who will agree is a Google search away.

The Jewish life of a rabbi has never been meant to be a mirror for his or her community. The rabbi is an example, a model and a guide. To ordain intermarried rabbis just to reflect a growing portion of the Jewish community does not answer or solve the issues at hand. ■

Rabbi Tina Grimberg is the rabbi at Congregation Darchei Noam, the Reconstructionist synagogue of Toronto.

Why I am opposed to lifting the ban on rabbis with non-Jewish partners

RABBI RON AIGEN

One of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan's major contributions to modern Jewish identity was to note that Judaism has always placed the emphasis on belonging over believing. By focusing on peoplehood and the notion of belonging to the Jewish People as the normative criteria for defining oneself as a Jew, the founder of the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism was articulating the way most Jews in the modern period self-identify. But more than that, Rabbi Kaplan also captured the traditional uniqueness of Judaism as being more than a religious faith between the individual and God.

Judaism has always been about the creation of a collective identity, of being part of a family, a tribe or, in Rabbi Kaplan's terms, a civilization, sharing in a culture and way of life. From the very outset Abraham was not an individual seeker of God – he did not go on his spiritual journey alone. He went together with his wife, Sarah, his nephew Lot... "and the persons they acquired in Haran." The rabbis understood this (anachronistically) as referring to the converts they had led to embrace the one true God – Abraham converted the men and Sarah the women.

This midrash tells us two things: first, that Judaism was a family affair. The ideal model was for the whole family to share in and be engaged with the project of creating a Jewish way of life. Secondly, it tells us that this family was, from the very beginning, open to the idea of welcoming outsiders to join in and embrace their shared values and goals. It was never merely ethnic, it was always about creating a shared ethic.

The goals of Judaism were traditionally also focused more on the welfare of the collective than on the individual. Unlike other religious systems that focus on the salvation of the individual, in Judaism the individual traditionally found his or her fulfilment in the collective life of the people. Our messianic hopes were always for the return of the collective People of Israel to our homeland, and for the establishment of world peace and universal justice.

The notion that rabbis could or should offer a model of Jewish life that allows for a radically atomized notion of spirituality, creating within their own family a variety of individual choices that might offer the children a non-Jewish option for their personal fulfilment seems to be a shocking, radical break with the very essence of Judaism.

It indeed seems to be following the trend of our increasingly individualized culture, as described by sociologist Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone: the collapse and revival of American community* and psychologist Sherry Turkel in *Alone Together: why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. Just when Judaism needs most to exercise its traditional role as being counter-cultural, it would be a tragic mistake for a rabbinical school to follow the drift of the wider secular society in which we find ourselves.

While it is true that many Jewish families are making this choice, and we make every effort to reach out to them, welcome them and help them to promote Jewish families when that is their aim, it is quite another thing to claim this is the ideal model. The statistics over the past decades have proven otherwise.

While it is possible to have some success in having committed Jewish children emerge from interfaith families, the success rate is not high. It is far from the majority of children raised in interfaith families who go on to build strong, committed Jewish families of their own.

Once rabbis are seen as positive models for creating interfaith families, there is no longer any argument to be made for in-marriage, or for encouraging conversion for the sake of promoting a stronger, shared Jewish identity in the family.

We need rabbis to be models for creating a commitment to building a Jewish way of life that promotes the communitarian ethos of Jewish Peoplehood. We need this not just because it's in our own tribal interests to do so. We need this as a model for creating a better world for all human beings. ■

Rabbi Ron Aigen is spiritual leader of Congregation Dorshei Emet, Montreal's Reconstructionist synagogue.

> "We need rabbis to be models for creating a commitment to building a Jewish way of life that promotes the communitarian ethos of Jewish Peoplehood."

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 7, 2015

Rotstein was educator, economic nationalist, family man

PAUL LUNGEN
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To the Canadian public, Abraham "Abe" Rotstein was a prominent economic nationalist, an educator and a public intellectual who called for greater Canadian control over resources and the economy.

But he was also remembered as a devoted father, grandfather, and brother, someone who enjoyed music and travel, was a sharp dresser who was known affectionately as "Count Rotstein," and was not a particularly good driver.

Rotstein, professor emeritus of economics at the University of Toronto, died last week at age 86.

At his April 30 funeral at Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel, his son, Daniel, brother Morris and longtime friend Mel Watkins eulogized him as a beloved educator who possessed a sharp mind and a gentle touch.

Daniel recalled his father as a lover of the written word, who read and collected daily newspapers, international magazines and several publications from the Jewish press. "Rarely was any of these thrown out." Instead his father collected stacks of yellowing and dusty articles for future reference.

His father "liked to look good" and was known for his ties, cravats and cigarette holder. He "loved being Jewish" and ensured his children received a Jewish education, Daniel said.

His father grew up in Depression-era Montreal at a time when universities enforced a quota to limit the number of Jewish students. That pushed him to excel in all he pursued and to expect top marks from his own children, Daniel said.

Music was important to his father. The house was filled with classical, jazz and Jewish music, and later world music. The family would play together in the Rotstein Family Band, with Abe on violin, Daniel said.

Morris recalled his brother as part of a generation who grew up in hard times but succeeded in their various walks of life.

Abe was an outstanding student who excelled in both English and Hebrew schools. He was a leader in the local Zionist Habonim Dror youth movement and "he inspired and educated a wide range of young people in the Zionist idea," Morris said.

Abe studied economics at the University of Chicago and Columbia University before earning a doctorate from the University of Toronto. After some time in the private sector, he moved to academia. He edited *Canadian Forum* magazine, an important and thought-provoking publication at the time, and helped found the Committee for an Independent Canada in co-operation with former finance minister Walter Gordon. Rotstein published *The Precarious Homestead*, his most famous book, in 1973.

> *He was an active, interested and committed Canadian. He was also a committed son of the Jewish People.*

His brother was concerned foreign corporations would buy up Canadian resources and corporations and that Canada would lose control over its own economic fate, Morris said.

"He was an active, interested and committed Canadian. He was also a committed son of the Jewish People," Morris said.

Political economist Mel Watkins recalled a close friendship with Rotstein that spanned 55 years. Rotstein kept teaching long after his colleagues stopped doing so, he said.

In the 1960s, there was "a surge of pent up Canadian nationalism" and Rotstein was one of that movement's "leading theorists and most prominent and innovative practitioners," he said.

A public intellectual, he served as co-chair of the Canadian Institute for Economic Policy. Rotstein was a dissenter from mainstream politics and often found himself on the losing side of political debates, but he never lost his good cheer, Watkins said. He "was respected by his students as a gentleman, and as a gentle and patient person."

Watkins recalled Rotstein as a great friend who "was always there for you. He was a good and wise person."

Funeral services were officiated by Rabbi Miriam Margles, who noted Rotstein's "fierce intellect" and his non-judgmental interactions with others.

"He walked through life as an educator" and delivered his last lecture – to his grandson Lev's Grade 3 class, on the fur trade – only a few weeks ago.

"The world has lost a great teacher," Rabbi Margles said.

Rotstein is survived by son Daniel and his wife Azeema, and daughter Eve Rotstein and Theo Wibisono, as well as three grandchildren, his brother Morris and Joan Charlap. ■

ITANU *Toronto is an initiative of UJA Federation that works to ensure that the Jewish community of Toronto is an inclusive one where people with special needs are able to fully participate in educational, spiritual, communal, social and recreational programs and activities.*

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60 Years of Tradition - Building for the Future

Ex-Habs chief 'bullish' on Israeli economy

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca, MONTREAL

"I can't guarantee the Canadiens will win the Stanley Cup, but I can guarantee you will do well investing in Israel."

Those confident words were from Pierre Boivin, former president and CEO of the Montreal hockey team, and now president and CEO of Claridge Inc., the private investment firm headed by Stephen Bronfman.

Boivin was speaking at a day-long conference April 29 called "Israel's High-Tech Miracle and Canada: Innovation for Humanity," sponsored by Montreal's Canadian Institute for Jewish Research.

That belief in the profitability of Israel's technology sector has led Claridge to return to Israel for the first time in a decade. And the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, which manages $225 billion in pension funds, is an equal partner.

They have just opened Claridge CDPQ Israel in Tel Aviv, a new firm looking for promising civil technology and innovation ventures, particularly in early-stage companies.

"To say we are bullish is an understatement," said Boivin.

Claridge, established in 1987 by Stephen's father, Charles Bronfman, has not invested in Israel since a major holding, the conglomerate Koor Industries Ltd., was sold in 2006, he said. Claridge previously had large stakes in Teva pharmaceuticals and Osem, the food company.

Montreal entrepreneur Matthew Price Gallagher, left, and consultant Dan Vilenski.
JANICE ARNOLD PHOTO

Doing business in Israel means learning one must penetrate a "rough exterior to find the sweetness inside," Boivin said.

Claridge is impressed that Israel's economy is projected to grow by 4.2 per cent annually until 2019, Boivin said. It also takes into account that over 650 firms, 75 per cent of them foreign, have invested over $2.3 billion (US) in the last two years alone in Israel.

As an example of Israeli high-tech ingenuity, Boivin pointed to Mobileye, a collision-avoidance app, whose shares are now worth 60 per cent more than those of Bombardier, only five years after the company went public.

Prudent fiscal policy, a sound banking system, a resilient economy, and a government that actively promotes innovation and entrepreneurship are all factors feeding that bullishness, he said, and, of course, the discovery of natural gas in Israel.

The "ecosystem" that exists among government, the military, industry and academia has made Israel "the global capital of innovation," according to Boivin.

Israel invests 4.4 per cent of its GDP in research and development annually, the highest rate in the world, which goes a long way to explain the country's 4,000 startups.

"This is a complicated and aggressive region where the 'fight or flight' response is often tested," he said, but that fosters an entrepreneurial and competitive spirit.

As white-hot as the "startup nation" is, Boivin advised growth-equity investors to be patient and not sell too early, as some have in the past.

Patience is something Montreal-based entrepreneur Matthew Price Gallagher, president and CEO of Water Cluster Scientific (WCS), learned. It took him 18 months to negotiate a partnership with Yissum, Hebrew University's technology transfer company, on strategy and ultimately revenue sharing. But he has no regrets five years later.

On the contrary, Gallagher believes Israel, a world leader in nanotechnology, is the best place to develop WCS. Besides, Canadian universities are too "bureaucratic" to enter into such a partnership, he said.

Recently, WCS made a scientific breakthrough in artificial photosynthesis, which has potential applications for solar energy. Gallagher said WCS's experience shows Israel-Canada partnerships are "truly a 1+1=3 proposition."

He's thankful another conference speaker, Dan Vilenski, a member of the Israel National Nanotechnology Initiative, helped him make contacts in Israel.

Canada can learn from Israel in motivating Canadians to be more entrepreneurial, starting in high school, Gallagher thinks.

Our government needs to follow Israel's example in providing "leadership, funding and infrastructure" to encourage innovation. This country has outstanding research and development (R&D) institutions but they lack funding, he said.

"It is embarrassing to me as a Canadian that Canada ranks 19th in terms of overall expenditure on R&D as a percentage of GDP [1.9 per cent], while Israel ranks first." ■

Donation supports Waterloo-Technion research projects

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

A $1.6-million donation by the Gerald Schwartz & Heather Reisman Foundation in support of an academic partnership between the University of Waterloo and Technion-Israel Institute of Technology will support a number of ground-breaking research projects in the areas of quantum information science, water, and nanotechnology.

"The donation is in support of our various collaborative research initiatives we have. It will mean a lot more than just providing financial support. It is a huge endorsement to this fantastic collaboration between two world-class universities," said Feridun Hamdullahpur, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Waterloo.

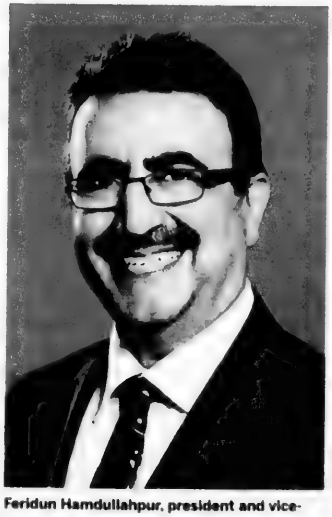
"We have some similar understandings, similar goals and similar objectives as to what we could collectively do to really make a big difference in the discoveries of new knowledge in these areas and to get support from private citizens like Gerald Schwartz and Heather Reisman means a lot, because they do believe in the nature of a partnership."

One of the projects to come out of the Waterloo-Technion Research Co-operation Program – which was established in 2014 and began with a joint conference in Israel – focuses on the use of nanotechnology to treat lung diseases by carrying medicine directly to the source of the problem. This increases the drugs' effectiveness and minimizes harmful side effects.

The research is a joint project between Waterloo's Prof. Frank Gu of the Waterloo Institute for Nanotechnology and Prof. Josué Sznitman, of Technion's faculty of biomedical engineering and the Russell Berrie Nanotechnology Institute.

Another project, in the field of quantum computing, aims to build a scalable, universal quantum computer, which will be capable of things a regular computer can't do in the areas of database search, machine learning, drug design, information security and more.

Hamdullahpur said that when he discussed with Technion president Peretz Lavie which projects would be best for the two institutions to collaborate on, they agreed that they didn't want to waste a lot of time talking about the partnership.



Feridun Hamdullahpur, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Waterloo.

"We said let's get to it and do the thing that is the absolute right thing to do – put our researchers together – and that's what we did. Within that short year, we ended up with a lot of excellent initiatives, some of which are already producing results right now," Hamdullahpur said.

"The collaboration between the University of Waterloo and the Technion focuses on joint research between Israeli and Canadian scientists in areas crucial to making our world a better place," Lavie said.

"I cannot think of a better partner for such projects than the University of Waterloo, and it is the vision and generosity of Gerald Schwartz and Heather Reisman that are making this promising partnership a reality."

Hamdullahpur said that while Waterloo has agreements with other Israeli institutions, the partnership with Technion is unique.

"There are some other wonderful institutions in Israel, and hopefully we will be establishing more relationships with them, but right now, focus is very important to us and we have put this collaboration onto a solid platform and we really want to focus there and hopefully we will expand this into other partnerships as we go along." ■

INTERNATIONAL

Tel Aviv protest against racism descends into chaos

JUDAH ARI GROSS
TEL AVIV

What began as a peaceful protest turned into bedlam in the heart of Tel Aviv May 3, as demonstrators gathered to protest police brutality and alleged institutional racism against Israel's Ethiopian population.

A video released last week showed a policeman and a police volunteer assaulting an Ethiopian-Israeli soldier in Holon. That footage sparked a demonstration in Jerusalem on April 30, and one in Tel Aviv Sunday, May 3.

At Sunday's demonstration, protesters threw rocks and glass bottles at police, who responded with stun grenades and fired water cannons at protesters.

As of midnight Sunday, almost 50 people had been injured. According to Israel Police spokesperson Micky Rosenfeld, 23 of them were police officers.

By the end of the night, 26 protesters had been arrested, he said.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Public Security Minister Yitzhak Aharonovitch during the tempestuous protest, and afterward called for order.

"There's room for the clarification of all claims, but there's no room for violence and breaking the law," Netanyahu said. He was to meet leaders of the Ethiopian community May 4, including the soldier who was beaten by police last week.

Sunday's protest began mildly. A few dozen Ethiopian-Israelis and sympathizers gathered at the intersection of Menachem Begin and Eliezer Kaplan streets. The group blocked traffic on Tel Aviv's Ayalon Highway and other roadways, but the protest was non-violent.

Tenat, a nurse at Petach Tikva's Schneider Children's Hospital, sat down in the middle of the intersection. She had just worked a double shift at the hospital and was tired, but felt it was important to come to the demonstration. So she did what she could: she blocked the intersection.

"This is my country, too," she said. "Tomorrow it could be my brothers or my cousins [who are subject to police brutality]."

But as more people arrived at the normally busy intersection, the intensity grew. Police formed a human chain, locking arms to prevent protesters from crossing Menachem Begin eastward to Givat Hatachmoshet Street. Restless demonstrators took that as a challenge.

A protest by thousands of Ethiopian-Israelis and sympathizers against police harassment and brutality turned by nightfall into a chaotic and unusually violent confrontation with the police in the centre of Tel Aviv. RONI SCHUTZER/ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

The two sides pushed up against each other for dominance. Protesters shouted at Israel Police, and then at the Border Police officers who arrived as reinforcements. A female protester broke the tension at 5:45 p.m. when she grabbed a policewoman's hair and pulled. She was swarmed by other officers, handcuffed and escorted away.

After more aimless struggling with police on Givat Hatachmoshet, the protesters eventually made their way west down Kaplan toward Rabin Square, where plans were made for the rally to continue.

With no leadership or organizing committee, the protest lacked focus as the demonstrators arrived at the square in central Tel Aviv.

People chanted in Hebrew, "Violent police officers should be locked up!" and "For blacks and for whites, racism is the devil."

Sometimes it was simpler. "Police state" and "No to racism!" some shouted.

An Ethiopian man in his mid-20s, who identified only as V., stood in the crowd draped in the flag of the Golani Brigade's 13th Battallion. He was a veteran of the 2008's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza.

"We say no to racism," he said. "We say no to violence. We've had it up to here.

"I almost lost my life for the country, and this is how they treat me?"

But while many protesters came with good intentions, there were no speeches planned, no fixed goal. And so, with nothing to do, protesters pushed their way onto the platform overlooking the square. Police quickly and forcefully pushed them back.

In response, protesters threw plastic water bottles at them. Eventually that unrest yielded small scuffles in the parking lot beneath the platform. The mounted police unit arrived on the scene shortly after 8 p.m., causing a stir among the demonstrators.

Police regrouped on the platform above the square, forming another human chain of officers in full riot gear. Protesters pushed and shoved, someone brought a hose from a nearby building and sprayed the police.

At a little after 9 p.m., the first stun grenades were thrown by police. That set off the first of many rounds of escalation, followed by full-blown conflict.

Over and over, police and protesters clashed on the east side of Rabin Square. The two sides would push and shove until someone – from either side – would push too hard. Police would respond by throwing stun grenades. Protesters would respond by throwing bottles and rocks.

Rosenfeld said, "Police did not use force until… protesters threw stones at officers and there was no option but to make arrests."

At 10:55 p.m., police brought water cannon trucks into the square, dousing protesters with a sudsy blue spray. Several protesters were knocked down by the water cannon. Medics from Magen David Adom, who treated demonstrators and police alike, had to brave the water cannons themselves to get to and treat injured protesters.

But there were glimmers of hope in the chaos. A middle-aged Ethiopian man, Gidon, gathered a group of younger people around him. "Violence," he told the group, "we've gotten it. The hardest hits, we've experienced them." That's why he told the surrounding protesters not to pick up a rock, now. "Say no to that violence."

Black and white Israelis struck up dialogue on the outskirts of the square. The Ethiopians tried to explain what they've been through, the white Israelis asked if this violence was really the best way to solve the problem.

There were also low points. A volunteer medic – not a member of Magen David Adom – was helping a wounded protester, whose head and arm were bleeding. As the medic and others gathered to clean the man's wounds and apply bandages, a stun grenade landed in the middle of the group. The volunteer medic fell to the ground.

Two stretchers had to be brought to take away both men.

A protester later shouted at police: "You see that? That's your brother you're doing that to. That's your brother you're putting in jail."

The police were given orders not to respond. "Is it difficult?" an officer asked. "Sure it's difficult. Any more than that I can't say."

Standing over a puddle of blood and broken glass on Malchei Yisrael Street, an Ethiopian man said to the surrounding protesters with a wry laugh, "See, our blood is just like yours."

Yitzhak, a religious Ethiopian man with side-curls and a large white yarmulke, commented, "I feel like we're strangers, like we're not Jews.

"We fight all these wars," he said, "but this is the real war."

While Yitzhak believed that he, as a father, had to come to the demonstration for the sake of his children, he was unconvinced that there would be any discernible effect.

"This protest – there will be more and more of it," said Yitzhak, who like the rest of the protesters refused to provide his last name for fear of legal consequences.

"But in a few days, it will blow over. Then where will we be?" he asked.

The protest began to wind down by midnight, leaving Rabin Square – named for the assassinated prime minister and symbolizing, perhaps, deep schisms in Israeli society – full of broken glass, shards of stun grenades, rocks and burned garbage. ■

Times of Israel
timesofisrael.com

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 7, 2015

How Jewish aid is reaching Nepal

The IDF field hospital in Nepal IDF SPOKESPERSON PHOTO

URIEL HELMAN
JTA NEW YORK

Almost as soon as news of Nepal's devastating earthquake reached the wider world, Jewish aid groups began mobilizing humanitarian efforts to help the victims.

In Israel, that meant dispatching first responders to Nepal. In North America, it mostly meant raising and allocating money.

How is the Jewish aid being deployed in Nepal?

Israel:
The biggest Jewish on-the-ground response has come from Israel, which currently has more than 260 Israeli soldiers, doctors and rescue experts working in the disaster zone — the largest of all the international aid teams on the ground, according to the Israeli Consulate in New York. The 170-person Israeli Defense Forces delegation has been helping with search and-rescue operations and setting up field hospitals consisting of two operating rooms, four intensive-care rooms, 80 beds and neonatal care.

Magen David Adom, Israel's version of the Red Cross, also sent a group of doctors, paramedics and medical supplies to the country, and rescue and recovery workers from ZAKA and United Hatzalah are in Nepal. The Israeli non-profit Tevel b'Tzedek, which has had a presence in Nepal for eight years, is helping to provide emergency shelter relief and meet other urgent needs.

IsraAid, a 14-year-old Israeli non-profit that focuses on disaster relief work, made headlines on April 30 when its workers helped lead an international aid effort to rescue a woman in her 20s who had been buried in debris since the earthquake hit five days earlier.

Some of the Israeli groups receive American Jewish support – IsraAid, for example, is funded by a few North American Jewish federations, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith International – but most of the American Jewish money dedicated to Nepal is not going through Israeli groups.

Jewish Federations of North America:
The federation umbrella organization, based in New York, is the central address for the fundraising efforts of individual Jewish federations around North America (donors also can give to the umbrella group directly). Since the Nepal quake, non-federation Jewish institutions such as the Orthodox Union also have appealed to constituents to make Nepal relief donations through the Jewish Federations.

Most of the money raised for humanitarian aid goes to the Jewish Federations' overseas partner organization, the JDC. Totals raised from federations for other recent major disasters overseas included $1 million (all figures US) after the Philippines was struck by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, $1 million after the 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami, $5 million after the 2010 Haiti earthquake and $10 million for the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC):
The JDC collects money for special disaster relief appeals from North American federations and individual donors and foundations, and spends it on a variety of needs ranging from the immediate to the long term.

After the Nepal earthquake hit, JDC, which did not have a presence in the country, sent some medical equipment to the IDF field hospital that departed for Nepal last week, including two neonatal incubators. The JDC also sent funds to Magen David Adom to assist the Nepalese Red Cross, to UNICEF to provide emergency supplies for children including water and sanitary materials, and to Tevel B'tzedek to assist with providing shelter.

Meanwhile, the JDC dispatched several staffers to Nepal, including a disaster relief expert who is also a field medic, JDC's India country director and others with experience in disaster relief and work in the developing world.

Typically, JDC disaster relief efforts last for years. For example, of the $2.7 million JDC raised for Philippines relief, as of last September, $1.5 million of it had been allocated along the following lines: 34 per cent on emergency response and relief, 25 per cent on restoring jobs and livelihoods, 15 per cent on disaster risk reduction programs, 14 per cent on rebuilding schools, 11 per cent on psychosocial support and post-trauma care and 1 per cent on public health initiatives.

JDC's disaster relief efforts included $2.8 million after the Japanese earthquake, $8.8 million after the Haiti earthquake and $19.6 million after the Indian Ocean tsunami.

The JDC also co-ordinates the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief, a collection of 49 Jewish agencies that have raised funds for various disasters and in some cases have implemented their own disaster relief programs.

American Jewish World Service (AJWS):
AJWS works in six countries in Asia, but not Nepal. Following this week's earthquake, however, the organization sprung into action, raising $800,000 for Nepal disaster relief in just five days and beginning to distribute the funds to local recipient organizations. AJWS's focus is on rural communities, minorities, women and gays.

To that end, the first round of AJWS grants to Nepal are going to a group providing medical support and earthquake relief to HIV-positive LGBTQ people; an organization that provides free and low-cost medical care to Nepal's most destitute; a group that focuses on health care, education and employment for poor communities in remote mountain villages; and a women's rights organization providing pregnant mothers with shelter and other basic necessities. AJWS is also supporting International Medical Corps' work providing earthquake survivors with first aid and psychosocial support.

AJWS became a major Jewish aid organization after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, for which it collected nearly $11 million. It also collected $6.6 million after the Haiti earthquake, $1 million after the Philippines typhoon and over $1 million for Ebola relief. Some of AJWS's money has come from Jewish federations.

Chabad
With outposts around the world, Chabad emissaries often are the first Jews to respond in person to disasters in far-flung places. After the earthquake struck Nepal, Rabbi Chezky Lifshitz of Chabad of Nepal began bringing hygiene supplies, hot meals, fresh water and fruit to Nepalese citizens whose homes had turned to rubble, distributing some 2,000 meals per day, according to Chabad.

The rabbi also borrowed a helicopter to hitch a ride to the mountainous region of Dhunche last week, where some 25 Israeli hikers were stranded and later airlifted out.

The hikers will be sheltered in the Chabad house, which has turned into a crisis hub according to Chabad. The movement is also collecting funds for Nepal earthquake relief. ■

A baby born at the field hospital IDF SPOKESPERSON PHOTO

OPINION

Celebrate Lag b'Omer in Israel – but watch the fire!

Yair Lootsteen

It's Lag b'Omer here in Israel, and I'm reminded of the words of Shai Agnon, Israel's first Nobel Prize laureate, who wrote in the 1950s that "one who has not seen the festivities of Lag b'Omer on the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in Meron, has never seen true joy."

Lag b'Omer was the last holiday added to the Jewish religious calendar – only in the 12th century. It marks the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer, the period between Passover and Shavuot. Supposedly, on that day millennia ago, a deadly plague that had killed 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva's students finally came to an end.

The holiday is very much an Israeli phenomenon. Growing up in Toronto, I remember learning about it, but I can't recall celebrating or commemorating Lag b'Omer, although I understand that nowadays it's celebrated within Orthodox circles in the Diaspora.

It's a different story here in Israel. Another of those endless dichotomies within Israel society.

To start with – the hiloula, a festive annual celebration at Meron, near Safed in the Galilee. Hundreds of thousands of ultra-Orthodox men and women from all over the country come to commemorate the second-century death of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, one of Rabbi Akiva's disciples, the most noteworthy of the five survivors of the aforementioned plague.

A headache of the first order for police, medical and public transportation services, as well as for other local authorities, the number of visitors grows from year to year. From afar, the hiloula is a huge, raucous *balagan*. Organized chaos. A celebration of prayer, of dance and of other customs associated only with Lag b'Omer, most notably the traditional *halake*, when three-year-old boys have their hair cut for the very first time.

It's a different Lag b'Omer for the rest of us. Our Lag b'Omer was crafted by ideologues before Israel's establishment in 1948 and commemorates the Bar Kochba revolt of the Jews against the mighty Romans in second-century Palestine. During Israel's nascent days, that narrative better fit the need for heroic symbols of heightened Zionist awareness. A similar ethos arose around Chanukah and Masada.

Young secular and modern Orthodox Israelis grow up enjoying Lag b'Omer *kumzitzes* – nightlong bonfires, potatoes and onions thrown in to be discovered and eaten charcoaled late in the night; old-time songs and competitions with "neighbours" for wood and who can keep their fire going and fatigue away, at least until dawn.

In the weeks before Lag b'Omer, kids – my 15-year-old son and his friends have been at it the last couple of weeks – are everywhere collecting wood of all sorts, using supermarket carts and other means and methods to haul their quarry to secret hiding places, awaiting the eve of the holiday.

And every year, thousands of weddings are celebrated on this day, ending 32 days of halachic nuptials prohibitions.

Sounds lovely, wholesome, romantic.

But Lag b'Omer is actually many people's least favourite night of the year.

With literally hundreds of thousands of bonfires alight around the country, the Environment Protection Ministry warns us of "significant increase[s] in particulate matter in the air, which can affect the respiratory system" and of dangers to wildlife and pets, not to mention to humans, on this night. It's definitely firefighters' busiest night of the year.

And don't forget to close every opening of your house and remove all laundry from the lines unless you relish the pervasively smoky scents that will linger everywhere for days. You might as well have been at a bonfire and at least enjoyed the atmosphere.

Whether you're ultra-Orthodox, traditional or plain secular, the way we celebrate or try escaping from Lag b'Omer is just another manifestation of the special, Jewish place Israel is.

Maybe next year, I'll venture to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's grave in Meron. ■

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Jewish Life

Film documents Arab/Jewish teens at Ontario camp

BY BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Imagine sharing a room with people from a cultural group that you've grown up mistrusting – and even hating. This kind of living arrangement could naturally generate fear and apprehension.

And it did last summer, when a group of 20 Israeli teenagers – 10 Palestinian Israelis and 10 Jewish Israelis – spent two weeks together at Camp Shomria in Perth, Ont.

They were participants in Heart to Heart, a program founded in 2011 through a partnership between Shomria /Hashomer Hazair Canada and the Givat Haviva Education Institute in Israel. Givat Haviva runs educational programs that promote co-operation and understanding between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis.

The experience of the fourth group of Jewish and Arab teens to go to Shomria was filmed last summer in *Heart to Heart*, a documentary film, directed and produced by Karen Robbins and edited by Karen Shopsowitz. The film debuted in April at a Heart to Heart fundraiser held at Lula Lounge in Toronto.

The film, focuses on four of the teenagers, a pair of males and females from both the Arab and Jewish groups. In the video, all of them expressed their apprehension at the outset.

"I was really nervous about being in a cabin with Jewish and Arab girls," recalled Sana Zahalka, one of the Palestinian Israeli girls. Towards the end of the film, she said, "At first I wanted it to end quickly. Now I don't want it to end."

Majd Massarwi, one of two Palestinian Israeli males, was worried he might not have anyone to talk to. "I discovered that they [the Israelis] have a lot in common with me," he said.

These sentiments were echoed by the Jewish participants, Nir Sela and Raz Swid. They also conveyed their empathy for the Palestinian political situation. "Everybody says [tells] the history differently," said Sela. "And we need to learn from it …"

Usnat Atamna, a Palestinian Israeli who was one of the chaperones from Givat Haviva, said the camp experience enabled the youths to transcend ethnic barriers "They saw the others as people."

This mutual understanding is the explicit goal of *Heart to Heart*, according to its executive director, Dalia Krusner. She was interviewed extensively in the film. "To see the transformation these 15-year-olds go through in just over three weeks is just incredible."

Robbins, the director of the documentary, heard about Heart to Heart in 2012 when she was on a trip to Israel.

When she was approached about doing an educational video for Heart to Heart, Robbins agreed to take on the project. It was her first major independent undertaking. "I was doing it as a volunteer. I knew it would just be me, so I was going to have to hone my camera skills."

Much of the film captures the time she spent following the Israeli teens at Shomria. Robbins arrived there after the group's second week, and by then the teens had congealed as a group.

In fact, the connections between them were strong enough to withstand the emotional challenges brought on by the war in Gaza last summer, Robbins recounted. "They actually all cried with each other when they heard the news."

And the group was praised for maintaining this cohesion in a scene filmed at a community party in Toronto. "In the midst of really horrific violence, the 20 of you have managed to come together … Frankly, that's remarkable," Janice Stein told the teens. Stein, founding director of the Monk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, was the featured speaker that evening.

After Robbins reviewed her footage, she asked the award-winning documentary filmmaker, Karen Shopsowitz, to help her edit *Heart to Heart*.

"I was sold on the project right away," Shopsowitz said at the launch. "Karen's footage was great … It was very important for the kids to tell the story.

"I was so impressed with Heart to Heart … What I like about this program is that they don't shy away from the tough questions." ■

Roei Hasnes, left, a Jewish Israeli, and Yanal Igbarya, a Palestinian Israeli , became very close friends last summer when they participated in the Heart to Heart program at Camp Shomria. KAREN ROBBINS PHOTO

Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

Laura Adler's Last Love Affair screens at Bloor Hot Docs Cinema.

ISRAELI FILM EXPLORES WORLD OF YIDDISH THEATRE TROUPE

Friends of Yiddish and the Toronto Jewish Film Festival present *Laura Adler's Last Love Affair*, a 1990 Israeli film in Hebrew and Yiddish (with English subtitles) about the beautiful middle-aged star of an obscure Yiddish theatre troupe in Israel, sustained by her loyal but aging audience.

Directed by **Avraham Heffner** and starring **Rita Zohar**, the film is "a cinematic gem that truly deserves to be rediscovered." Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, Sunday May 10, 12 p.m. Tickets via www.tjff.com or 416-324-9121.

• • •

Koffler Imports Drag Show: The Koffler Centre of the Arts presents *Ballad of the Burning Star* by London-based Theatre Ad Infinitum. Imported from the U.K., this provocative drag cabaret show explores the psychological impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict. $20, $35, $50. Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. W. May 19 to 24. Free pre-show chats 45 minutes before curtain time. kofflerarts.org, 416-538-0988.

New in Print

Toronto author **Renate Krakauer's** new book *Only by Blood* is a novel about the search for roots, mother-daughter love, and family reconciliation. Two Polish families survive World War II and then suffer the unforeseen consequences of their survival. Set in the broader context of the fraught relationship of Poles and Jews during and after the war, *Only By Blood* depicts the circumstances that made some people behave heroically while others betrayed their friends and neighbours. Published by Inanna Publications, www.inanna.ca

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Music & Dance

• MNjcc Music Ensembles Recital features the **MNjcc Daytime Choir, Open Choir** and **Klezmer Ensemble;** choir conductor is **Gillian Steyck**, klezmer conductor is **Eric Stein**, with accompanist **Asher Farber.** $10. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Tuesday May 12, 8 p.m.

• **Klezmer Conservatory Band**, led by **Hankus Netsky**, performs at Holy Blossom Temple. $36, students $18. Wednesday May 13, 7:30 p.m. 416-789-3291, ext. 224; www.holyblossom.org/klezmer

• Presented by Reasond'etre Dance Productions, *How Far Can You Go?* is a dance performance and film screening with Israeli dancer **Sharon Fridman** as part of the 2015 Contact Dance International Film Festival. $16, $20. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Thursday May 14, 8 p.m. www.reasondetre.com

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Arts in Brief

• Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation and Toronto Jewish Film Festival present *Raise The Roof*, a documentary about the reconstruction of a lost wooden synagogue in Poland. With filmmakers **Cary** and **Yari Wolinsky**, and professors **Rick** and **Laura Brown** in attendance. Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W. at Bathurst. Thursday May 7, 6 p.m. Tickets via tjff.com

• Actor-playwright **Julie Tepperman** leads *Playwriting for Beginners*, a six-part workshop in writing, imagining, improvising, character development and ways to generate material. Cost $150; pre-registration required. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursdays, May 7 to June 11, 7 to 9 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Film critic **Adam Nayman** continues his series of talks with film clips on "The Coen Brothers in Nayman's Terms." The topic on May 11 is "*Miller's Crossing / The Man Who Wasn't There.*" Mondays, ongoing to July 6, 7 to 9 p.m. Drop-in $12, students $6.

• Canadian Sherlockians **Clifford Goldfarb** and **Hartley Nathan** present "Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle & the Jewish Connection." $4. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday May 21, 1:30 to 3 p.m.

• Writer-editor **Nora Gold** recently released the 15th issue of *Jewishfiction.net*, the online ezine dedicated to Jewish fiction. The issue features pieces by **Isaac Babel, Thane Rosenbaum, Boris Sandler, Maria Bloshteyn** and others. jewishfiction.net

• The Toronto Jewish Film Festival continues through May 10. For the schedule, please visit tjff.com ■

Legendary singer blended jazz with cantorial career

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jewish Music Week is saluting Moishe Oysher, the cantor who brought jazz to Jewish liturgical music. Also a popular entertainer, Oysher starred in Yiddish movies and Yiddish theatre, performed on Yiddish radio, sang in concert halls and recorded several successful albums.

The Wonderful World of Moishe Oysher is a multi-media show that features Cantor Simon Spiro singing newly arranged selections from Oysher's movies, concert appearances and cantorial and secular albums. Two singers will perform Oysher's well-known nonsense song *Haleiva*, which he recorded with the Barry Sisters, as part of a tribute to them.

This Jewish Music Week show also includes rare footage, stories about Oysher's life and the 22-piece Moishe Oysher Big Band. Born in Moldova in 1907, Oysher, who was descended from six generations of cantors, had a Canadian connection. In 1921, he was on his way to Winnipeg to join his father when his voice broke. "As a child he was a wonderful boy soprano. His voice came back as a baritone," Spiro said.

Oysher joined a Yiddish theatre company in Winnipeg when his voice came back, then he performed in Montreal's Yiddish theatre. In the late 1920s, he was on Yiddish radio in Philadelphia and eventually he started his own theatre company. Back from a South American tour in the mid-1930s, he had trouble finding work in New York's Yiddish theatre and was offered the position of cantor at the First American-Rumanian Synagogue in the Lower East Side.

"Being a cantor came very late in his career," Spiro said. Oysher was a sensation at the synagogue, which became known as "the cantor's Carnegie Hall." But some members of the congregation balked at the idea of a vaudevillian leading them in prayer and some even revoked their memberships.

To silence the outcry, Oysher made an agreement with the board of rabbis: he would stay off the stage, but he would act in movies and would continue singing on Yiddish radio.

Spiro was 12 when he discovered Oysher on record, on three cantorial albums. Up until then, Spiro, an Elvis fan to this day, "had an aversion to listening to cantors," he said. He added that listening to Oysher, the liturgy "just came alive. On record, his *Dayenu* blew my head apart on what could be done."

Moishe Oysher

Oysher liked the jazz style of singing and so he brought it to the cantorial liturgy, using similar rhythmic melodies in his prayers. "He was a scatter, the first Jewish scatter," Spiro said. In his day, Oysher was compared to Louis Prima, who was known for his scat singing, but only Oysher "can sing the way he did," Spiro said. "He was able to do these fluid scales because he was brought up in Romania and heard it from the Gypsies."

Oysher, who died in 1958, was one of the first singers to step from the stage to the pulpit. Spiro, Beth Tzedec Congregation's senior cantor, has also balanced dual careers in both cantorial and popular music.

"I led a double life, which Moishe Oysher did," Spiro said. While Spiro performed as one of the regular BBC singers on national weekly radio in his native England, he was also a cantor at the St. John's Wood Synagogue in London, then the seat of the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire.

"We had to keep it quiet for the more stuffy members of the synagogue," Spiro said. Known as the "British Jazz Singer," Spiro worked with Elton John, Faith Hill, Sheena Easton, Johnny Mathis, Kenny Rogers, Cliff Richard and Shania Twain, and he has had hit singles on Israeli and British pop charts. Twice he represented England in the Eurovision finals.

On the cantorial side, Spiro's solo album, *Traditional Cantorial and Concert Favorites*, is one of the top-selling CDs in the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music catalogue. ■

The Wonderful World of Moishe Oysher will be presented at 7:30 p.m. on May 12 at the St. Lawrence Centre, Jane Mallett Theatre. For more information, visit www.jewishmusicweek.com.

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Sons pay tribute to the music of Milton Barnes

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Jewish Music Week opens this year with a tribute to the music of Milton Barnes, including a performance of *Harbord Street*, a composition that was named for a street in a downtown Toronto neighbourhood that was the heart of the Jewish community until the mid-1950s.

Harpist Erica Goodman, flutist Suzanne Shulman, violist Ivan Ivanovich and accordionist Joseph Macerollo perform at this Mother's Day concert on May 10. The composer's sons, Daniel and Micah, will be on hand to share memories of their father.

Barnes' compositions were inspired by romantic classical music, jazz, popular music and traditional hebraic music. Although those influences can be heard in his works, he viewed himself as continuing the mainstream of classical composition.

He once said that all great composers have drawn their inspiration from the cultural cross-currents of their own time and place.

"Dad was known as a maverick and bohemian," Micah said, because he wasn't musically far out. As a composer, Barnes chose his own path rather than following the lead of the avant-garde composers of the 1950s, who based their music on rhythm, texture and tone colour, instead of the traditional aspects of melody and harmony.

"He consciously stayed away from the avant-garde," Daniel said.

Barnes studied at the Orchestra and Opera Conducting School of the Vienna Academy in 1961, where "they encouraged old-style romantic classicism," Micah said. He added that his father was a renegade who "made music that is vital."

Born in 1931, Barnes began his career as a jazz drummer and guitarist in the 1950s and used the money he earned from playing in dance bands to study composition at the Royal Conservatory of Music. "It wasn't an easy choice for him to become a musician," Daniel said, because his family hoped that he would join the family business.

"His dad ran a successful building company," Daniel added. "After making that choice, he had a need to do something more substantial other than gig around in dance bands."

From 1964 to 1973, Barnes conducted the Toronto Repertory Orchestra, which he founded, and he was music director of the Niagara Symphony and the Niagara Falls Philharmonic. In 1973, he decided to become a composer full time.

Milton Barnes

Barnes was a prolific composer, leaving behind 140 scores, for orchestras, films and television when he died in 2001. "We're cataloguing them for the Canadian Music Centre," Daniel said.

Released in 2001 on the album of the same name, *Harbord Street*, originally commissioned by Harbord Bakery, evokes memories of downtown Toronto where Barnes grew up.

"Milton really tried to capture what it was like growing up in Toronto as a Jewish kid," Micah said. The era was notable for its anti-Semitism and it was a time when gangs of Jewish and Italian youths roamed the streets. "He had to learn to fight. He had to fight his way to school," Micah said. He added that his dad was always drawn to hebraic themes and "went into his blood for Jewish cultural inspiration" as a composer.

Growing up with a father who Micah said "always had music in his mind and heart," both sons pursued musical careers. Micah, a Juno-nominated singer and songwriter, is a vocal coach who has worked with cast members of the Mirvish production of *The Sound Of Music*. Daniel, a bandleader, composer and drummer who can be heard backing other musicians on some 40 CDs, has released two CDs of his own and has another one on the way. He plays drums on Micah's latest CD, *New York Stories*.

Their mother, Lilly Barnes, a poet, novelist and arts journalist, was a scriptwriter for the CBC children's television show, *Mr Dressup*, for 30 years. Daniel and Micah have another brother, Ariel, who is a cellist with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. ■

The Barnes salute takes place at 7:30 p.m on May 10 at the Glenn Gould Studio. For more information about Jewish Music Week, visit www.jewishmusicweek.com.

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Photo exhibit centres on the notion of memory

AMY GRIEF
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Alan Resnick never considered his late father an artist despite the fact that he was always snapping pictures. Now, Morris Resnick's photographs are featured in *Erratics*, an exhibition running until June 14 at Toronto's Koffler Gallery.

For *Erratics*, curator and gallery director Mona Filip brings together two projects centred on the notion of memory: one is by novelist Martha Baillie and the other is a joint effort by artist Malka Greene and Resnick, who's a Gemini award-winning television writer. "I thought it was an interesting parallel to explore with the two projects how much memory and reality inspire fiction and how much fiction and imagination alter memory, or construct memory," says Filip.

Resnick's photographs impressed Filip. "He captured moments and expressions and people with a real photographer's eye," she says. "And it's really wonderful to be able to share these images."

Alan Resnick stumbled upon the cache of photos while rummaging through his parents' condominium locker. He found material from the 1940s and from World War II – his father was a reconnaissance photographer and family lore puts him with "the planes." Resnick knew his dad was the head of the photography club at Hart House while in medical school. At the time, he even won an award, presented to him by the renowned Yousuf Karsh.

Yet, the photos from the locker revealed a whole new side of Resnick, one his son hadn't been privy to before. "When you see your parents in a certain light and now you're kind of being manoeuvred into seeing them in another way, it can be jarring," he says.

He showed the photos to Greene, who eventually compiled 350 of them in an online archive. Since Alan Resnick didn't know what was happening in most of them, Greene filled in the blanks to provide each one with a description. However, this wasn't a random task. Rather, it involved research to ensure historical accuracy. "I'm making it up based on something that to me feels like a truth," she says of the process. "It's not just like oh, that guy is standing on a rock."

Morris Resnick took this in World War II

While wandering through the gallery, it's easy to take the photos and their descriptions at face value. Though, Greene divulges that most of the information is made up. For her, the exhibition explores our relationship to our memories; how they're dually comprised of both fact and fiction.

Meanwhile, Baillie's multimedia project stems from her latest novel *The Search For Heinrich Schlögel*, about an archivist searching for Heinrich, a young German man who went missing in the Canadian wilderness. It includes a collection of postcards from when Baillie wrote down her manuscript and mailed fragments of it out. The exhibition also includes an audio component and original music by the late composer Nic Gotham.

Filip sees a similar thread between the two parts of *Erratics*. "One dealt with a real archive that a real person had amassed through his life," she says. "And then the other one, the fictional piece that's based on Martha Baillie's book, dealt with a fictional archivist that is trying to piece together the life and what happened to a fictional character."

While Greene archived the photographs, Alan Resnick wrote textual pieces that appear on the gallery walls. In one, he reflects on his father's role as a reconnaissance photographer. Resnick never thought his dad was in danger during the war; the photographs told a different story. "I grew up believing my Dad was a stay-on-the-base man," writes Resnick. "But when I think about how he lived his life, he was a more fly-in-the-air man."■

Erratics runs until June 14 at the Koffler Gallery, 180 Shaw Street, Toronto.

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Theatre trouple tackles *Simpsons* in post-apocalpytic play

MICHAEL FRAIMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Big Picture Cinema is in terrible shape. The interior of the east-end Toronto theatre is purplish-blue and plastered with gaudy golden frames. The seating is upholstered with dirty turquoise ribbed velvet, and the ceiling paint is peeled off in chunks, revealing off-beige patches.

In short, it looks post-apocalyptic – which is perfect for Mitchell Cushman and Simon Bloom.

"Some spaces have just a ton of potential," says Bloom, who, along with Cushman, is a co-artistic director of the much-acclaimed Outside the March theatre company.

"If you were house hunting, you'd say, 'Oh, that house has a lot of character.' We look for spaces that have a kind of character, that's going to respond to the work that we're doing."

This month, that work is *Mr. Burns, a Post-Electric Play*.

Mr. Burns debuted in 2012 in Washington, D.C., and tells the story of a dystopian theatre troupe that recreates *Simpsons* episodes after a global catastrophe. The plays transforms *The Simpsons* ever deeper from pop culture into genuine mythology by its third act, which takes place decades after the first.

"Whether you've seen each and every episode or have never seen an episode, I think that ultimately there are things that the show riffs on that have much more to do with the energies of our contemporary society."

The play's major conceit is that there is no electricity used at all – everything is gas-lit or battery-powered, all sound effects made in-house.

This is the second play that Cushman and Bloom have co-directed, and the company's eighth since its inception in 2009. Almost all their shows have been site-specific – they can't be picked up and transplanted onto any other stage – and have taken audiences to a kindergarten classroom, a public park, a United church and an actor's mother's house.

"When we were thinking about what space a post-apocalyptic *Simpsons* play would do well in, we sort of felt this place was kind of perfect," Bloom says.

They use the space well. Actors move fluidly throughout the theatre, down the aisles and up the scaffolding erected onstage. It's easy to bend the script this way, the directors say, because of how ambiguous and challenging the script is.

One such challenge: the musical numbers. At one point, the actors create a car commercial with only their bodies and voices – their arms as windshield wipers, their voices an a cappella soundtrack.

Later, they run through a kinetic series of pop-hit mashups of the last few decades. After rehearsing one that includes a few lines from Gloria Gaynor's *I Will Survive*, Cushman interjected: "As you keep exploring this, any time you mention survival, treat it like a national anthem. Make it something really patriotic, really unironic."

All this may sound silly, but Cushman and Bloom are aiming for something deeper. On the advice of the playwright, Anne Washburn, they are avoiding easy laughs and keeping the actors serious, even mournful – something they both feel connects them to their Jewish heritage.

"In some ways, this is actually a very Jewish play," Bloom says. "There's a lot of honouring people through memory, and also the development of ritual through the act of remembering that reminds me a lot of the *Kaddish*."

"It reminds me of being in Yad Vashem and thinking of the way in which the Holocaust is memorialized," Cushman adds. "It's about people who recover from trauma. So in that sense it's universally applicable, but also everyone will see this story through their own lens."

As for non-electrical lighting, the directors will stop short of bringing menorahs into the mix. But Bloom seemed struck with the thought when it came up in conversation. "I wouldn't say there's no menorahs," he said, inviting the idea. "There might be menorahs."

Play runs at Toronto's Historic Aztec Theatre through May. www.outsidethemarch.ca ■

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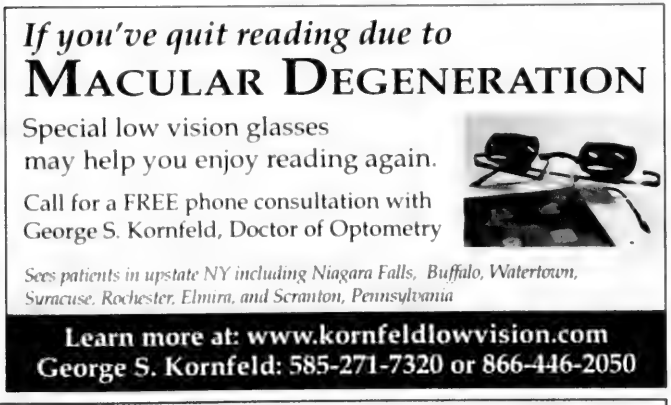
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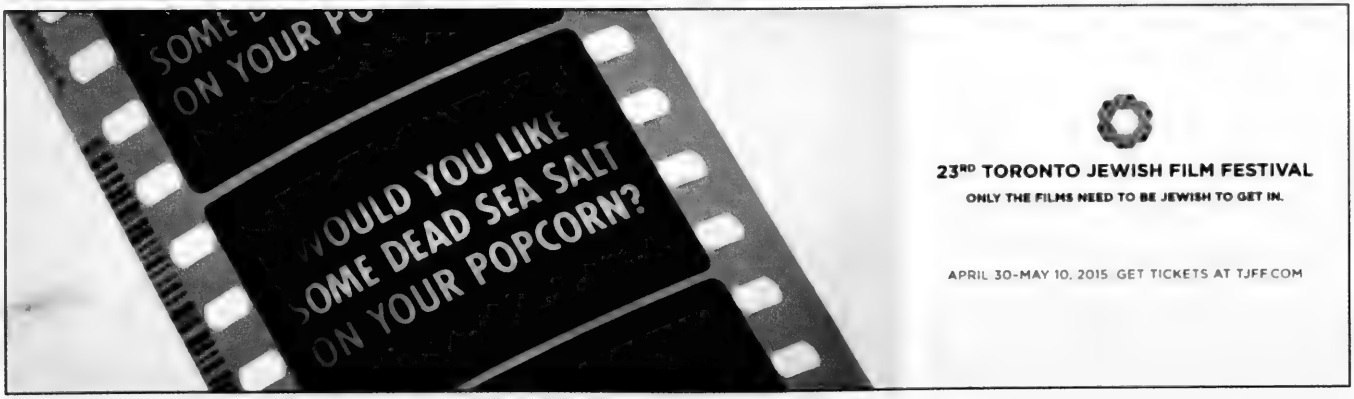
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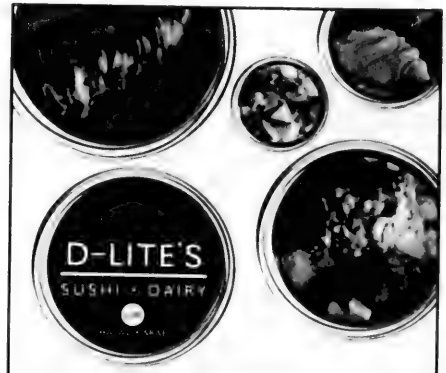

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The sweetness of precarious happiness

MORDECHAI BEN-DAT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

There is an achingly poignant, telling moment in *Shocking Paris*, when Gerda Michaelis Groth – a young refugee who had sought sanctuary in France from Germany's ruling Nazis – recalls the anxious, tense days prior to the outbreak of World War II.

She and the tempestuous, moody painter Chaim Soutine were in love, living in the idyllic, sylvan splendour far south of Paris near Civry-sur-Surein. Gerda was attempting to restore Soutine to full health from severely debilitating stomach ulcers. Through the powerfully recuperative combination of her tender ministrations, fresh country air and the uncluttered, quiet, calm nature of their lives in the green and gold countryside, Soutine started to heal.

"Soutine and I lived from day to day, enjoying the hours that flowed, the pleasure of being together, *the sweetness of precarious happiness*. [My emphasis] We had willingly abolished our past, and we closed our eyes on the future."

In this one precious nugget of paradox – the sweetness of precarious happiness – Gerda conveys the compressed truth of Stanley Meisler's book.

Meisler has written an instructive, thoughtful book about the group of mostly Jewish immigrant artists who moved to Paris in the early decades of the last century. They and their collective works became known as the School of Paris despite the fact, as Meisler writes, "they were not a school or a movement in the usual sense. They did not try to produce a certain kind of art. Nor can an art historian discern one characteristic or another that defined them. They were simply a phenomenon of history."

It is, of course, this tumultuous and ultimately murderous period of history that lends the touching effect to the phrase: "the sweetness of precarious happiness."

The artists who comprised the School of Paris wildly succeeded in the personal development of their own art and in the advancement of modern painting. But France was not very gracious in accepting them – this dynamic, high-energy group of foreign-born painters. Indeed, it is the reaction of the Parisians to the immigrant artists' success that provides the title to Meisler's book. "The foreign-born immigrant painters in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s made an impact on the history of art before most Parisians realized they were there. When Parisians did realize it, they were *shocked* that so much of their cherished world of painting was now in the hands of immigrants."

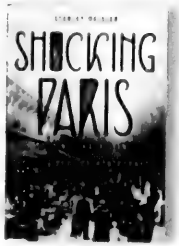
Meisler observes, "the Jewish character of the school of Paris provoked the most puzzlement and comment and rancor in the city." Thus, when the Nazis conquered France in 1940, many of those same Parisians who had expressed resentment over the presence of the foreign-born artists, joined in the sordid effort of ridding the country of these unwelcome immigrants, the mostly Yiddish-speaking, Jewish painters of the School of Paris.

Thus, despite the happiness engendered by their success as artists, they all stood on the edge of a very precarious precipice.

Meisler examines Paris during the period of the first four decades of the 20th century in great detail. This examination takes place on three distinct levels. On the first level, Meisler researches a handful of artists who typified for him the School of Paris: Chaim Soutine, Amedeo Modigliani and Marc Chagall. Meisler reserves the largest treatment for Soutine, because, as we find out in the book's introduction, Soutine was distant family to the author and the magnet that attracted Meisler to writing the story in the first place.

The second level of analysis is a wide-ranging, seminar-like discourse on the School of Paris itself. Some art historians count as many as 77 painters among the group. Meisler focuses primarily, as mentioned, on Soutine, Modigliani and Chagall but also frequently refers to Jules Pascin (Pincas), Moise Kisling, Ossip Zadkine, Jacques Lipchitz, Michel Kikoine, Chana Orloff , Emmanuel Mané-Katz and Pinchus Krémegne. The book is rich in edifying detail about these artists and their exceptionally evocative art.

The third and most compelling level of Meisler's exploration is the constant motif of the artists' outsider status. It courses through the work and culminates in the sorrowful depiction of the fevered efforts by the painters to escape the genocidal grasp of the Nazis and their Vichy accomplices and of the remarkable courage of a few caring others who helped bring about the rescue of some of the artists.



Shocking Paris: Soutine, Chagall and the Outsiders of Montparnasse
Stanley Meisler
(Palgrave MacMillan 2015)

Shocking Paris is an excellent work. It is far more than a literary presentation of the "turmoil, exuberance and pulsating power" of Soutine's paintings, or of the "universal nobility" of Modigliani's subjects or the "deep colours and surreal dreaminess" of Chagall's paintings. At its core, it is a tightly told tale of the flowering of immigrant and especially Jewish immigrant spirit, energy, drive, single-mindedness of purpose and brazen creative power despite an environment that was often hostile and ultimately toxic.

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For additional insight into the turbulent Paris of the first half of the 20th century, I recommend *Léon Blum, Prime Minister, Socialist, Zionist* by Pierre Birnbaum, professor emeritus at the Sorbonne (Yale University Press, 2015).

Fastidiously researched – each page densely loaded with information and anecdotes that are supported by some 40 pages of footnotes – Birnbaum mines the rich veins of myriad archival documents to paint a richly detailed portrait of the remarkable man who stood his principled, moral ground against horrific personal vilification, waves of thuggish political violence, grotesque anti-Jewish hatred, Vichy betrayal and Nazi brutality.

Blum, the improbable prime minister of France in 1936, was the strong-willed and resolute socialist leader of a left-wing coalition of disparate parties. He was a lightning rod for the reactionary forces that would soon transmogrify into the monstrous supporters of Hitlerian fascists and Pétainist collaborators.

Birnbaum paints his portrait of Léon Blum with specifically Jewish brush stokes, time and again highlighting how Blum's Jewish identity was central to all aspects of the man's personality, politics and private and public loyalties. ■

Film fest to end on a delightful note

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

After 11 days of programming, the Toronto Jewish Film Festival will end on a high note, with several films destined to make audiences smile and laugh.

The Go-Go Boys and *Look at Us Now, Mother!* are two hilarious documentaries focusing on fraught family relationships. Meanwhile, *Mr. Kaplan*, an award-winning comedy from Uruguay, will serve as a delightful dessert when it closes the festival on May 10 at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema.

Film aficionados should not miss *The Go-Go Boys: The Inside Story of Cannon Films*. The doc tells the story of two cousins, Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus. Golan and Globus were popular Israeli filmmakers who found international success after they moved to Los Angeles in the early 1980s.

Their American studio, Cannon Films, mainly produced films considered to be a schlocky alternative to more reputable mainstream titles. Critics hated them, but audiences in the mood for thrills and vulgarity could not resist the Cannon output.

Filled with sex and violence, these movies were cheap to make yet made a killing at the box office. Some of their biggest hits include *Breakin'* and *Bloodsport*, as well as numerous titles with Chuck Norris and Charles Bronson.

Despite the company's fate, watching Globus and Golan recount their biggest successes is a delight. The best part of the doc is at the end, when the cousins sit in a darkened movie house, watching and reacting to their biggest Israeli and American hits.

They earned the nickname "The Go-Go Boys" for the speed they could get a film from the script stage to the big screen. Filled with candid interviews with the titular cousins, the doc about them is suitably fast-paced. It is also a frequently funny flashback to an era of Hollywood rarely seen on the screen.

The Go-Go Boys screens at Empress Walk on May 6 and the ROM Theatre on May 9. (Two of the producers' biggest lewd hits, *Lemon Popsicle* and *The Last American Virgin*, also play at the festival.)

Meanwhile, screening on May 8 (at the ROM Theatre) and, more appropriately, on Mother's Day at Empress Walk, is *Look at Us Now, Mother!* In the film, director Gayle Kirschenbaum explores her difficult relationship with her mother, Mildred. It's a poignant and hilarious doc that should resonate with Jewish mothers and daughters.

Kirschenbaum always found her mom to be mean and highly critical. Mildred, meanwhile, cannot understand why her daughter won't get a nose job or find a husband.

Look at Us Now, Mother! is a therapeutic film of sorts, exploring the misery behind the women's resentment of each other. Kirschenbaum shares painful journal entries from her youth when her mother humiliated her. Mildred also opens up about her difficult childhood and her sadness after her husband of more than 50 years dies.

The dysfunction could have been too much to bear; however, the director finds the right mix between rudeness and tenderness. Mildred has no filter, but although she says some incendiary things that should get big laughs, she has a lot of good things to say about her director daughter.

Although the film loses a bit of focus when it sprawls to examine other family members, anyone watching the doc should be able to relate to some of the stories of family struggle. *Look at Us Now, Mother!* is a deft blend of sharp comedy and observational drama.

Both the director and her mother will be at the screenings, as well, which should make for a spirited post-film discussion.

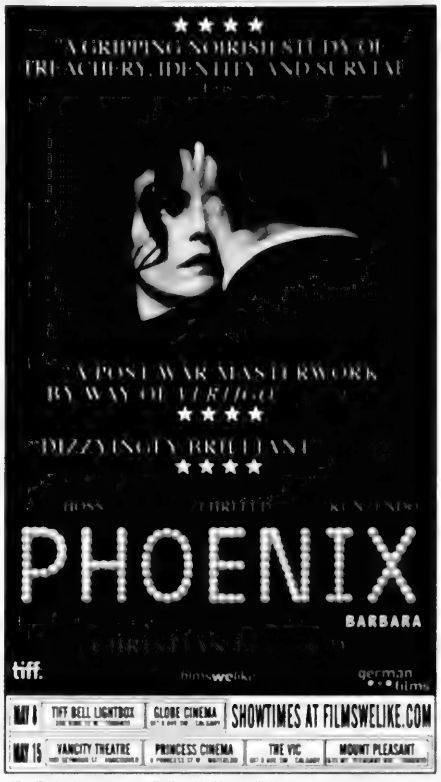
Finally, closing night pick *Mr. Kaplan* – Uruguay's submission for the foreign language film Oscar – should send audiences home happy. Filled with comic energy due to its sly parodies of spy flicks, it tells the story of Jacob Kaplan (Héctor Noguera), a Jewish man struggling to cope with old age.

When Kaplan hears about a Nazi hiding in South America, he makes it his personal mission to find the war criminal and bring him to Israel to be tried in court. To help him with this task is Wilson Contreras (Néstor Guzzini), Kaplan's bumbling driver who used to be a police officer.

The two men make for an inspired comic pairing and the film often moves in unpredictable directions as Kaplan comes ever closer to capturing the shifty Julius Reich. Writer/director Álvaro Brechner has a knack for creating memorable comedy set-pieces, including a suspenseful scene on a diving board (as Kaplan cannot swim) and a dizzying dream sequence.

It doesn't boast a lot of slapstick, but there are some cheeky sight gags and deadpan reaction shots, as well as much witty banter between Noguera and Guzzini. Gorgeously lensed and terrifically acted, *Mr. Kaplan* is a wonderful film about second chances. ■

Above, Gayle Kirschenbaum, right, with her mother. At right, Albaro Brechner's *Mr. Kaplan* closes the festival.



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GUEST VOICE

Look at us now

Gayle Kirschenbaum

I was convinced I was adopted. I couldn't understand why my two older brothers were being treated so differently from me.

Once I realized I was not adopted, I had to figure out what was going on. I knew that I didn't do anything wrong – I was just born a female to a mother expecting a boy. But for mom, there was never anything right about me – my nose was too big, my hair too curly, my body too fat (even though I was quite thin). Humiliation was her specialty.

I tried to hide in my room and escape into my diaries, where I wrote and drew. Even those were found and read by mom. I lived filled in fear, never knowing what might trigger mom's rage toward me.

I went to university – 320 kilometres away – so I no longer had to live in what felt like enemy territory. My friends became my family, and all the things I had been criticized for, I was now complimented on.

My confidence started building, and soon I found my path in life. However, I still struggled with my relationship with my mother. I knew, for my own mental and physical health, I needed to find a way to forgive her. I knew I had to render her abuse powerless over me, but I was still seething with anger and resentment. All I wanted to do was get away, nurse my wounds and wallow in being a victim.

I started searching for answers, delving into mom's past to find out what happened to her as a child. Mom's response was always, "I don't know. I don't remember." I kept digging.

I also agreed to visit a plastic surgeon, as long as she let me bring a film crew. I ended up making a funny short film, *My Nose*, about my mother's relentless campaign to get me to "bob my schnoz." I was overwhelmed by the reaction to this little film, and I started hearing other people's stories. I knew I was not alone.

I was on a mission to heal my relationship with mom and record the journey for personal purposes. Mom agreed. As I started to understand her better and we grew closer, I knew I was tapped to make an in-depth film about the (hopeful) transformation of my relationship with her from loathing to love. I had no idea how hard it would be to make.

> *I was on a mission to heal my relationship with mom and record the journey.*

With the help of professional therapists, mom began to open up, and I researched what she did not remember, finding answers through archival records and newly discovered family members. As family secrets were uncovered, mom revealed a childhood filled with tragedy and struggle – attempted suicides, financial hardships and untimely deaths.

Armed with this knowledge, I was able to change how I looked at her. I stopped expecting her to love and adore me, and starting looking at her as a wounded child.

Today we are extremely close. Since dad died, we have become each other's preferred travel companions. I feel lucky to have gotten to this place in my relationship with her and can treasure and enjoy our remaining time together. Judaism teaches us that every descent is for the sake of an ascent. If it weren't for my difficult childhood, I would not have had the opportunity to grow. I am forever grateful for the obstacles I have faced; they provided me with a chance to learn. The greatest lesson I have learned is the ability to forgive, which is the biggest gift you can give to yourself. ■

Gayle Kirschenbaum's film Look at Us Now, Mother! *screens May 8 at the Royal Ontario Museum and May 10 at the Cineplex Cinemas Empress Walk 6 as part of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.*

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ASK ELLA

Testing friendships

Ella Burakowski
ella@thecjn.ca

Dear Ella,

My close friend Cindy has no sense when it comes to money. Cindy is the type of gal who has to have everything – the latest trendy outfit, pair of shoes, car. She has her nails done every week and is forever going to her masseuse. The problem is that Cindy has no money! She lives off some money her parents left her, but that will soon be gone. She has no savings, no RRSPs, no real estate. Her car is leased, her condo is rented and her credit cards are maxed out.

She has come to me for a loan from time to time, and I have always managed to weasel out of giving it to her. I feel like I'm standing by and watching my friend self-destruct. At this rate she is going to end up homeless. How do I get through to her?

Lousy Money Manager

Dear Lousy Money Manager

Cindy may be spending to fill a void. This excessive spending behaviour is no different than any other addiction. It is labelled compulsive buying disorder, or oniomania.

If you are prepared to get involved, you must call her out on what you see and not let her make excuses for her actions. Are you prepared to take her by the hand and lead her through the steps she will have to go through?

Like any other addiction, Cindy has to admit she is in trouble. This will be the hardest part of the entire journey. Let her know what you have noticed and try to scare her into reality. Be honest and tell her why you will not lend her money. If she is willing to disclose her financial situation, you can show her on paper how she is setting herself up for a disaster.

If you can get through this first step, you can move on to a more positive solution. Help Cindy come up with a budget. Write down every expense she has and every bit of money she has to work with. See if she is willing to be accountable for her spending. If all else fails, CAMH has programs for this type of addiction. It may be a good place to get ideas on how to help Cindy.

Don't be surprised if Cindy is not willing to listen just yet, but feel good knowing that at least you've planted the seed of concern in her mind. Let her know you will be there, when she comes to terms with the fact that she needs help.

Dear Ella,

I'm part of a close circle of friends. Janice, one of my dearest friends, broke up with Josh more than a year ago, but they remained close, and he has become an important member of this circle.

A couple of months ago, Josh's mom passed away. Since then, Josh and I have become closer. I lost my mother last year, and this common grief has bonded the two of us. It is obvious that Josh and I are headed into a relationship that will extend the boundaries of "just friends." I have no idea how Janice is going to feel about this, and I love her dearly and do not want to hurt her. I also do not want to give up on what Josh and I have developed. I'm stuck and scared. Help!

Testing Loyalty

Dear Testing Loyalty

Dating your friend's ex falls in the category of the "dating grey zone," and there are no easy answers. This situation is a little different, because Josh and Janice were mature enough to put their breakup behind them and continue on with their friendship. Often a relationship will end badly, and hard feelings and anger are left behind.

Don't let Janice discover this through the grapevine. You must be upfront with both Janice and Josh. Be honest with Janice. Explain how innocently your bond developed. Hopefully enough time has passed that Janice will be onside, but you have to prepare yourself for the chance that she will not approve. In that case, you will have some hard decisions ahead of you. Even if Janice gives you her blessing, the dynamic of your relationship could change.

Often, the best relationships are created when the two people involved start out as friends first. Friendship is about honesty, loyalty, support and respect. Your circle of friends has already tested some difficult situations and has come out on top. ■

Ella's advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.

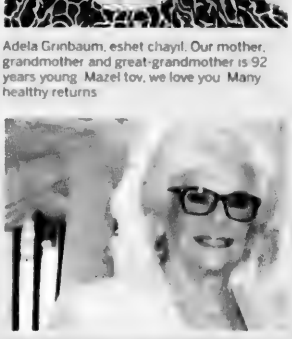
Family Moments

Adela Grinbaum, eshet chayil. Our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother is 92 years young. Mazel tov, we love you. Many healthy returns.

Barb & Jeremy Levy announce the arrival of Gaby Elisha. Ecstatic grandparents are Cathy & Stewart Indig, Luise & Murray Levy and great-grandmother Rose Indig.

Happy birthday to our beautiful, smart and loveable seven-year-old, Hannah Simcha Stroh! We love you so much, mommy, daddy and Mikey.

Mazel tov Ilana Chernack upon receiving a master's degree in educational psychology from McGill and the Judy Fish Award in inclusive education. Love, your family.



Wishing Estelle Caplan a special 80th birthday. Neil & Rena, Debbie & Fred, Heidi & Earle, Josh & Michelle, Pamela, Jeremy, Bryan, Gillian, Geordan, Jamie, Brittney.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

What's New

MAY 7 - MAY 14

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, May 7

YIDDISH VINKL
Ralph Wintrob discusses the works of Lord Byron and his influence on Hebrew and Yiddish writers, noon, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20, includes lunch. RSVP: yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

HAGGAI AND THE SECOND TEMPLE
Rabbi Wayne Allen discusses "Haggai: the unknown hero of the Second Temple," tonight and May 14, 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

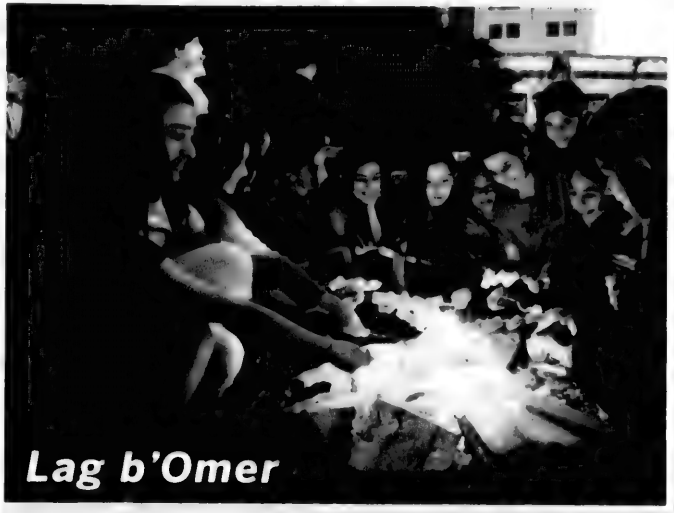
DAVID ANISMAN DINNER
Beth Emeth Synagogue holds a dinner and draw in honour of **David Anisman's** 100th birthday, 6:30 p.m. For tickets, 416-633-3838

SPEED DATING
Canadian Hadassah-B'yachad chapter holds a speed dating evening for women aged 26-35; 36-45 and men 26-37; 38-49, Honest Lawyer, 115 York Blvd., Richmond Hill, 7:15 p.m. $59.99. For tickets, go to www.chw.ca/toronto/events-and-fundraisers or email byachad@hotmail.com.

LAG B'OMER
Jewish Russian Community Centre holds a Lag b'Omer family celebration with music, bonfire and a barbecue, Earl Bales Park, 6 p.m.

GHETTO BROTHER
Graphic novelist **Julian Voloj** discusses *Ghetto Brother: warrior to peacemaking.* Learn about the Crypto-Jewish roots of **Benjy Melendez** whose gang, the Ghetto Brothers, was a key player in the emergence of hip-hop. Sponsored by Congregation Darchei Noam, Miles Nadal JCC, Bechol Lashon, 7:30 p.m., Daniels Spectrum, 585 Dundas St. E. Free.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of May 21 is May 11. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**



Lag b'Omer is celebrated this week in Toronto's Earl Bales Park with bonfires, barbecues and music. FILE PHOTO

Sunday, May 10

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
Shoresh is offering intensive training in Jewish environmental education, ideal for camp staff and teachers. May 10-12. Email risa@shoresh.ca or call 416-805-8382.

THE NEW KLEZMORIM
Film screening and Q and A with director **David Kaufman,** 7:30 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam. Free.

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH OR TEA
Enjoy a Mother's Day brunch, 10:30 a.m. or high tea, 3 p.m. with DANI, $20/$25 per person. Reserve at info@dani-toronto.com or 905-889-3264, ext. 231.

KITTY WINTROB'S STORY
Kitty Wintrob discusses being a child evacuee in 1939 England, 7:30 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Free.

LAURA ADLER'S LAST LOVE AFFAIR
Film screening, noon at Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W. Sponsored by Friends of Yiddish Toronto and Toronto Jewish Film Festival. For tickets, www.tjff.com or 416-324-9121.

Monday, May 11

BETHLEHEM
Beth Tzedec book and film club watches the movie and discusses it.10:30 a.m., $20.

A TASTE OF SUMMER
Cookbook author **Bonnie Stern** presents "A taste of summer," 7 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue. $30/$35.

SHAVUOT ARTS & TEXT WORKSHOP
Rabbi Miriam Margles leads a workshop on writing poetry for Shavuot, 7 p.m., Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth. RSVP info@djctoronto.com.

HEBREW & YIDDISH ARE ALIVE
Katherine Barber discusses "Hebrew and Yiddish are alive and well and living in English," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. $12.

Tuesday, May 12

GREED IN AMERICA
Heather Kassel discusses "Greed in America," as seen in the movies *Blue Jasmine, American Hustle, Wolf of Wall Street,* 8 p.m. Adath Israel Synagogue. Movies are not shown on review night. $10/$15.

For more information, call **Beverley**, 416-493-3626.

LUNCH & LEARN
Naomi Parness discusses "Growing up as a granddaughter of Holocaust survivors," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15 p.m. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

TORAH THROUGH FEMALE EYES
Loretta Tanenbaum teaches "Torah through female eyes," 10-11:15 a.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. Today, "The hand that rocks the cradle."

ISRAEL STAMP CLUB
Ed Kroft discusses "Postal rates, postmarks and stamps of 3 governments during 1948," 7 p.m., Antibes Community Centre, 140 Antibes Dr. 416-226-2050.

Wednesday, May 13

BIBLICAL DAY TRIPS
Hana Werner discusses "Destined from birth: Samson and his escapades," Beth Tzedec Congregation. Dessert at 1:30 p.m., lecture at 2 p.m. $10. RSVP 416-781-3511.

KLEZMER CONSERVATORY BAND
Klezmer Conservatory Band with **Hankus Netsky** performs klezmer and Yiddish songs, 7:30 p.m., Holy Blossom Temple, $36/$18. For tickets, 416-789-3291, ext. 224 or www.holyblossom.org.

CONTRACTS WITH GOD
Rabbi Ben Hecht discusses "Kabbalat HaTorah: contract negotiations with God," 7 p.m., B'nai Torah Congregation

Thursday, May 14

HUMANISTIC JUDAISM
Oraynu Congregation holds a session on "Introduction to Humanistic Judaism," 7:30 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC.

Coming Events

JERUSALEM DAY
Celebrate Jerusalem Day with a carnival 11 a.m.-3 p.m., May 17, York Hill District Park, Thornhill. Sponsored by B'nai Brith Canada.

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YOM YERUSHALAYIM CONCERT
Joshua Nelson, the King of Kosher Gospel, performs at Beth David Synagogue, May 17, 8 p.m. $50/$100 For tickets, 416-635-5500, ext. 0

PEACE OF MIND GALA
Peace of Mind, a program developed by the Israel Centre for the Treatment of Psycho-Trauma, holds a gala June 2 at The Warehouse. $118. For tickets, email pomcanada.com/tickets

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS
Registration is required for all programs Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted

› Widows/Widowers over 65
A 6-session group for men and women over 65 who have recently lost a partner or spouse. Starts May 6, 1-2:30 p.m
› One family, two homes: a 6-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Starts May 6, 6:30-8 p.m
› Life skills for today's woman: a 6-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives, starts May 6, 7 p.m. at Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St., or May 7, 1 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.
› The challenge of anger for women: a 6-session group for women to learn to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Starts May 7, 7:30 p.m
› Living with teens: a 6-session group for parents of teens. Topics include setting limits, letting go, realistic expectations and the pressures of drugs, alcohol and dating. Starts May 7, 7:30-9 p.m.
› Adult children losing a parent: a 6-session group for adult children who have recently lost a parent. Starts May 12, 7:30-9 p.m
› Mind, body connection for women: an 8-session group for women to learn meditation and mindfulness. Starts May 14, 1-2:30 p.m.
› High conflict divorce: a workshop for parents to develop strategies to deal with a high conflict situation. Not for individuals in an abusive situation. May 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
› Effective Parenting: a 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-10. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m.
› Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: a 4-session group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m.

For Seniors

› **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 526
› **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Social games club, May 21, 11 a.m. Free but RSVP one week in advance, 416-924-6211, ext. 155. Stay for a lecture on "Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and the Jewish Connection," 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155
› **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Casino Woodbine, May 13. Barber/hairdresser, May 14. High tea with big band music, May 27. Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; Balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m
› **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. May 12, **Rabbi Yossi Sapirman** discusses "Shavuot, Torah and the environment," 10 a.m.; May 14, **Mariah Griffin-Angus** discusses "Chemical detectives," 1:30 p.m.; Mondays, current events with **Harvey Skolnick**, 10 a.m
› **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes
Call 416-635-2860

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.
› Exercise classes, free to seniors and can be done seated in a chair. Contact cathy@prossermanjcc.com.
› **Kitty Wintrob** discusses her memoir *I'm Not Going Back*, May 7, 7 p.m.
› The JCCs go to Stratford to see *Diary of Anne Frank*, May 20. June 25, JCCs go to see *Sweet Charity* at the Shaw Festival.
› **Bill Gladstone** presents "Basics of Jewish Genealogy," May 14, 21, 7 p.m.
› **Osnat Lippa** presents "Pioneering women artists of the modern era," June 9, 16, 1 p.m.
› Casual Yiddish conversation, Mondays, 1:30-3 p.m.
› **Jordan Klapman** discusses "Hollywood's Oscar-winning Jewish songs," June 4, 11, at 1 p.m.
› Beginner bridge starts June 29, 10 a.m.
› Osteofit – safe exercises for those with osteoporosis, starts May 6, 11 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org
› Playwriting for beginners with **Julie Tepperman,** May 7-June 11, 7 p.m. Must pre-register , ext. 0.
› *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, presented by the Alexander Showcase Theatre, continues to May 10, Al Green Theatre. For tickets, www.alexandershowcasetheatre.com
› **Adam Nayman** looks at the films of Joel and Ethan Coen, Mondays ongoing until July 6, 7 p.m. May 11: *Miller's Crossing, The Man Who Wasn't There*
› Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, May 10, June 7, 1 p.m. Ext. 521 Inclusive ballroom and Latin dance workshop, May 10, June 7, 2:15 p.m
› MNJCC music ensembles recital May 12, 8 p.m. Featuring the daytime choir, open choir and klezmer ensemble. $10 Ext. 0
› How Far Can you Go? Dance performance and film screening with Israeli dance artist **Sharon Fridman,** May 14, 8 p.m., Al Green Theatre. Tickets $16/$20, www.reasondetre.com
› Volunteers wanted for the downtown Tikkun Leil Shavuot, May 23. Volunteer orientation session May 14. Call ext. 250
› KatKa Team: A program for children in grades 2-6, co-sponsored by Camp Gesher, Habonim Dror, May 17, 1 p.m Free. Email: Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com.
› Student art for Jewish Music Week is on display at the gallery until May 18
› Downtown Tikkun Leil Shavuot, May 23. Family dinner, 5:30 p.m.; Kids and teen programs 8 p.m.-11:45 p.m.; Main event 8:30 p.m.-6 a.m.
› **Katherine Barber** discusses "Jewish contributions to the world of ballet," June 1, 8, 15, 1:30 p.m
› Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147
› Register for Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singers edition, seeking male voices, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17-21. Ext. 250
› Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025
› The JCCs go to the Shaw Festival to see *Sweet Charity*, June 25
› **Suzanne Metz** offers a "Non-traditional life drawing workshop," July 14-16.
› Bridge, Level 2, runs June 23-Aug. 11, 7-9 p.m.
› **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental mix media," May 20-June 10, 7 p.m.
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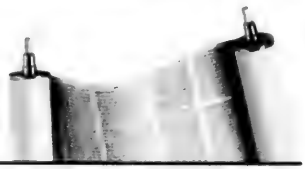
Parshah

Emor | Leviticus 21:1 - 24:23



Rabbi Ilan Acoca recalls Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai on the occasion of his Yom Hiloula
Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl explores the ritual and tradition of counting the Omer
Rabbi Catharine Clark says we must never forget our obligation to care for the poor

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

The weekly parshah starts with God commanding Moses: "Say to the kohanim and tell them" (Leviticus, 21:1)

Rashi points out that God used the terms "say" and "tell," thus commanding Moses to transmit the message to the adult kohanim, who in turn were supposed to transmit it to the younger kohanim.

The idea of passing the message on is one of the most important teachings of Judaism. Without it, Judaism would cease to exist.

One classic example is the *Shema* paragraph, where it says "You should teach them to your children." (Deuteronomy, 6:7).

This week, we are celebrating Lag b'Omer, the Hiloula of the anniversary of the death of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Rashbi), who, according to many opinions, is the author of the Zohar.

Why would we celebrate the anniversary of his death?

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai referred to this day as Yom Simchato ("the day of his happiness") and a spiritual wedding because the Rashbi knew that after his death, he would be under the marriage canopy with God and Am Yisrael would embrace the teachings of the Zohar so dearly as if they were married to it.

And it all started with the Rashbi transmitting the teachings of the Zohar to his disciples, eventually leading to the printing of the Zohar in 1558.

The Rashbi was the first tzaddik whose Yom Hiloula was celebrated.

In the Sephardi tradition, a Yom Hiloula is commemorated specifically with joy and festive celebration. According to Kabbalah, on the yahrtzeit of a tzaddik, all the spiritual redemption of his life shines into this world, contributing to the messianic redemption and bringing spiritual blessing to all who are connected to him.

May the merit of the Rashbi and the teachings he transmitted shine upon us, and may we able to transmit the message to the next generation. Amen! ■

Rabbi Ilan Acoca is rabbi at Congregation Beth Hamidrash in Vancouver.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

The Torah reading, Emor, includes in it the commandment of Omer: "You shall bring a sheaf [*omer*] of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Eternal for your acceptance." The Torah also mandates that "you shall count for yourselves from the morrow after the Shabbat from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven complete Sabbaths, until, on day 50, the Festival of Shavuot is marked."

This count, from the day after the day of rest of Passover, begins a seven-week period that serves as an agricultural bridge from the barley harvest of early spring to the wheat ("first fruit") harvest celebrated in early summer, at Shavuot.

There was an ancient debate about this counting and about the sacred calendar. According to the Book of Jubilees, the Omer count began on Sunday, following the Shabbat day of rest, as part of a 364-day solar year. Because 364 is divisible by seven, each of the festivals would occur on fixed days of the week. This tradition was also associated with the Baitusim (Essenes?), a group mentioned in the Talmud and the Qumran community.

In contrast, the rabbinic tradition (also preserved in the Greek translation of the Bible) maintained that the calendar followed the lunar cycle in a complex interplay with the solar year and that the counting began on the second day of Passover, which follows the festival rest day. By counting from the second day of Passover, the 49-day period directly links Passover and the Exodus to the date of the giving of the Torah, a day mentioned in the Torah and eventually associated with Shavuot.

Not only do traditional Jews verbally articulate (*emor*) a ritual counting count each night of the sheaf-omer period, the sheaf-waving (*omer*) comes to be linked to a belief in an oral tradition (*emor*) about the revelation of Torah on Shavuot. ■

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl is senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto.

Rabbi Catharine Clark

Parshat Emor reviews the Jewish calendar, telling us which holidays to celebrate when and with which customs. The passage hits all the highlights of the Jewish year, including Shabbat, Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot, in this order.

One odd detail of the text is the insertion of agricultural instructions between Shavuot and Rosh Hashanah. We are warned against reaping all the way to the edges of our fields and against gathering the gleanings of our harvests. Rather, we should leave this produce for the poor and the stranger.

The commentators rightly wonder why our obligations to the poor are recited in the midst of instructions about the holidays. Rashi writes that the Torah's ordering of the text teaches us how commendable it is to leave food for the poor. According to him, for one who fulfils the commandment to leave the corners and gleanings of the field, it is as if he had built the Temple and brought his offerings there to be sacrificed. Supplying food for the poor is the same as making pilgrimage, a powerful mitzvah.

Nehama Leibowitz suggests an alternative explanation. Citing earlier commentaries from the Bechor Shor and Ibn Ezra, she observes that Passover and Shavuot coincide with the harvest season. The rules benefiting the poor are recited here to counteract the natural human tendency to forget the needs of others as we enjoy our bounty.

I propose one more explanation. We look forward to each holiday and celebrate it with joy. We put so much thought into planning for the holidays, considering guest lists and menus well in advance. So too we should approach our obligations to care for the poor. Parshat Emor teaches us to give with joy and to plan our budgets so that they include ample donations made wisely. ■

Rabbi Catharine Clark is spiritual leader of Congregation Or Shalom in London, Ontario.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 7, 2015

Rabbi Steven Wernick: Shuls need to provide meaning

LILA SARICK

Rabbi Steven Wernick, CEO of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), was in Toronto last month as part of a cross-country tour visiting Canadian synagogues. He sat down to discuss the challenges facing the movement and its future.

What do you hear from Canadian congregations?

It's concern about the future and what are the things we should be focusing on. There's a clear understanding of many of the challenges that we face in terms of literacy, living in an open society, assimilation, intermarriage and so forth. There's an understanding that the business model of synagogues has radically changed.

What do you mean the business model has changed?

A membership model is based on a transactional relationship and it's based on certain assumptions of affiliation that can no longer be made. Synagogues used to have a monopoly on education. If you wanted Jewish learning, you had to be part of a synagogue. They no longer have that monopoly. People go to Wikipedia. Synagogues used to have a monopoly on life-cycle events. They no longer have a monopoly. You can get a life-cycle event done practically anywhere.

So the fundamental purpose of sacred community has to be re-imagined for the needs of individuals today. We need to focus more on Torah as wisdom for leading a meaningful life, as the primary reason why we cluster in communities, because that Torah is most powerfully felt in relation to other beings that share a commitment to each other, to God, Torah, and to Israel, the Jewish People and the Land of Israel.

Rather than asking "How can I get more members in," I think the core question synagogues have to ask is "How can I get more meaning out?"

The change today is if you only worry about membership, you're not going to get the money or the members. You have to worry about meaning and about how you can understand people's self-interest, their values, their stories, and organize around what those interests are through a Jewish lens. If you do that, then you build a financial model around it, which is the reverse of what tends to happen today.

Rabbi Steven Wernick

In Toronto, a number of shuls have left the USCJ. What is the argument for them to rejoin the movement?

United Synagogue has really heard, understood and internalized the need for change and has successfully transformed itself into a new organization. If you want to have a seat at the table that shapes the [ideological] centre and the future of the centre, United Synagogue is the platform that makes that table possible.

The synagogue has been the most successful institution for the mass transmittal of Jewish identity for the last 2,000 years. There's nothing on the horizon that looks like it's going to take its place.

United Synagogue creates the platform for congregations that share a worldview can come together to discuss, share, and co-create the future. If you look at the work United Synagogue does, by virtue of the fact it's the largest constituent body for Conservative Judaism in the world, our engagement with Ottawa, our engagement with Washington, our engagement with Jerusalem, we're invited to participate in those conversations because we're viewed as representing that body. So if you want to have influence, you need to be at the table.

Looking at challenges facing synagogues, how can they change?

Those synagogues that are understanding the status quo is not sustainable are making changes. What does it really mean to be relational? Obviously you do programs, but what are the values that underpin the programs you create? What does success look like?

If you value Torah learning as a transformative experience, then are you asking people what are their concerns in the world and the way in which they can be transformed. Same thing about prayer.

It's not that there are any easy fixes for this, and it's not like there's a program bank like we used to have.

What does success look like?

It looks like having a deep understanding of who are the people in your community. Many synagogues will do the ceremonial pre-Rosh Hashanah phone call, where the board will call shul members, and everybody's excited that no one's asking for money, they're just saying "Good yontif."

If we were to really become a relational synagogue, the questions are different. You want to know what gets people up in the morning and keeps them up at night. Then you create activities in response to what people are thinking about. It has staffing implications – not only how much staff do you have, but what are the jobs of the staff?

That's not to say casino nights or social programs are unimportant. But it is to say that the job of the leadership is not to micro-manage that type of activity. The job of the leadership is to say if we care about Torah and tfillah, if we care about Israel, what are the ways that we leverage our resources to accomplish that?

Synagogues are going to need an endowment that generates 20 per cent of their operational income or they're not going to be sustainable. And they're going to need to create that within the next 15 years.

Why is this so crucial for synagogues?

We have a heavy investment in real estate that's becoming more and more expensive to maintain. Fixed costs like staffing and electricity are going up and the amount of money a Jewish family is able and prepared to spend annually has just about topped out. There's not much higher you can go in terms of what you charge for dues, so you have to build the endowment. Plus, we know the assumptions for millennials to join are different than the assumptions of baby boomers and current retirees.

How will the Conservative movement look in 10 to 15 years?

There's going to continue to be some more contraction, but I think the engagement and commitment levels are going to go up.

I hope synagogues will come to understand that the conversation with millennials, Jewish adults in their 20s and 30s, is not how can we engage you but can we help you engage us? That engagement might not happen in the synagogue. It might have to be something the synagogues supports in urban areas where Jewish adults in their 20s and 30s live.

My vision would be that we actually align what we profess with what we do, that we're more concerned about Judaism as a means for refining the human condition than we are about boundaries, that we don't measure success by how many observances a person has but how a person uses observance to improve the human condition. And that our synagogues understand that success can't be just looking internally and asking "How do I drive members to my shul?" but "How do I drive my shul to making meaning within the lives of my members and the community in which we live?" That would be really exciting. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
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'Holy War': The Montreal rabbis' walkout of 1935

Backstory

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In the 1920s, Montreal Jews established the Vaad Ha'ir (VH) to exercise control over kashrut and subsidize Jewish educational institutions. Montreal's Orthodox rabbinate simultaneously organized as the Vaad Harabbonim (VR). VR enabled a number of immigrant Orthodox rabbis to earn a relatively decent living supervising kashrut.

By 1935, however, the Depression was taking its toll. The previous December, VH reported a deficit of $10,000. This resulted in pressure to economize by either cutting rabbis' salaries or the subsidies VH was paying to educational institutions whose teachers had not been paid in months. VH proposed a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in rabbinical salaries in January, 1935.

In February, all but one of the VR rabbis staged a walkout. VH tried to continue without them, claiming that it still controlled kashrut even though only one of the eight original VR rabbis was still on the job. The seven strikers – including VR's chair and vice-chair Rabbi Hirsch Cohen and Rabbi Yudel Rosenberg – continued to regard themselves as the legitimate VR and warned that in VH slaughterhouses errors in kashrut were now very likely.

The press, using standard labour terminology, spoke of the rabbis having "downed their tools." VH charged the rabbis with walking out for no reason and with no warning. Rabbi Cohen argued that the rabbis had walked out because VH was concerned only with issues of kashrut and not with other communal issues.

Not so, retorted the VH. They had argued for years that it wanted its rabbis to fulfill functions other than kashrut, including visiting hospitals and schools, and that it was the rabbis who had balked at the extra work. VH charged that the rabbis had walked out because VH continued to support the schools at the expense of their salaries. In response, Rabbi Cohen cited Shakespeare: "the devil can quote scripture." He pleaded for a non-partisan committee to hear the rabbis' complaints.

In March the dispute ratcheted up a notch. VH publicly claimed to employ 11 slaughterers, 10 supervisors and to be supervising 67 butcher shops. More significantly, it claimed that its rabbis constituted the only legitimate VR. In response, the dissident rabbis formed a new Va'ad Hakashrut (VK).

At this point one of the major fault lines in the rabbinical walkout became publicly visible. At its inception, VH had been purposefully constituted so as to be inclusive of the "radical" non-Orthodox Jewish community and to undertake to support both the religiously-oriented education of the Talmud Torah and the "radical" Folks and Peretz Shules. The fact that Rabbi Cohen wished to give VK's support only to the Talmud Torah indicates that he wanted no part in this inclusive coalition. Rabbi Cohen and his colleagues likely saw in this crisis an opportunity to create a strictly Orthodox VK. The rabbinical strike had now become a "holy war."

By April, both sides were looking for a way out of the impasse. VH could not indefinitely dispense with the services of the most important Orthodox rabbis of the city. The strikers, for their part, failed to get a recognized communal leader to head a VK that worked specifically for their religious interests and that doomed their effort to failure.

A break in the conflict came about a month later, when Rabbi Rosenberg and two colleagues asked to be reinstated in VH and were accepted back. Rabbi Rosenberg called for the remaining dissidents to return as well, stating that no one profited from this communal division except Satan.

Through the summer of 1935, the newly reconstituted VR functioned with five members, while four rabbis remained for the moment on the outside. But on Oct. 17, the leading holdout, Rabbi Hirsch Cohen, once again publicly took his place as chair of VR. By the annual meeting of the VH in December 1935, affairs had returned to a semblance of "normalcy".

The Montreal rabbinical walkout of February to October 1935 highlighted the changing role of the Orthodox rabbinate. It also exposed tensions within the community between Orthodox and "radical" Jews that would ultimately result in the evolution of VH into a decidedly Orthodox institution with hardly a memory of its initial inclusive mandate. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Granovski, Tatiana	Feb. 24, 2015	Private
Blyudoy, Yenta	Feb. 24, 2015	Private
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Kagan, Oleg	Feb. 25, 2015	15 North Park Rd
Schwartz, Berel	Feb. 26, 2015	1 Northwestern Ave
Banner, Jack	Feb. 26, 2015	10 Trench Ave
Borenstein, Anne	Feb. 26, 2015	103 Acton Ave
Tesler, Ida	Feb. 26, 2015	243 Betty Anne Dr
Mendel, Jack	Feb. 26, 2015	206 Midland Ave
Tsyrulnik, Raya	Feb. 26, 2015	Private
Polevoy, Peysya	Feb. 27, 2015	Private
Barr, Naomi Hinda	Feb. 28, 2015	170 Red Maple Rd
Basch, Elaine	Mar 1, 2015	130 Neptune Dr
Malkovski, Eduard	Mar 1, 2015	905 Spring Gate Blvd
Pavlichenko, Ita	Mar 2, 2015	Private
Furman, Zelman	Mar 2, 2015	6250 Bathurst St
Price, Ruth	Mar 2, 2015	3000 Bathurst st
Najman, Bernard	Mar 4, 2015	43 Greenbush Cres
Kammer, Thomas	Mar 5, 2015	58 Stave Cres
Chesler, Brian	Mar 6, 2015	117 Bellagio Cres
Goldberg, Bunya	Mar 6, 2015	601 Clark Ave W
Madorsky, Ruth	Mar 7, 2015	4300 Bathurst St
Smulewicz, Joseph	Mar 7, 2015	7440 Bathurst St
Goldgrub, Israel	Mar 7, 2015	88 Promenade Circle
Schlifer, Anne	Mar 9, 2015	Private
York, Melanie Nadine	Mar 9, 2015	479 Rushton Rd
Werb, Chaim	Mar 10, 2015	150 Neptune Dr
Leshinski, Sarah	Mar 10, 2015	Private
Abramson, Evelyn Miriam	Mar 10, 2015	2 Covington Rd
Katsnelson, Mark	Mar 11, 2015	Private
Rubenstein, Nancy	Mar 12, 2015	750 York Mills Rd
Billyack, Joseph	Mar 13, 2015	500 Duplex Ave
Scher, Barbara	Mar 13, 2015	7420 Bathurst St
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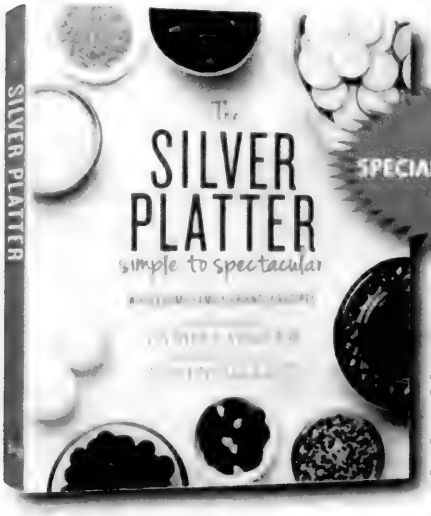

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- Many recipes are naturally gluten-free or offer a gluten-free option
- Nutritional information included for every recipe

Daniella Silver, an exciting new personality in the world of Jewish cooking, combines an amazing sense of style and presentation with an understanding of what makes food wholesome and nutritious — and of what families want to eat. In The Silver Platter she brings us more than 160 recipes that allow us to explore new dishes, tastes, and presentations, all while keeping our families happy with great-tasting and wholesome food

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Daniella has an extraordinary sense of colour and presentation, while Norene possesses a wealth of understanding and knowledge of kosher cooking techniques. Bring them together, and it's like having two gourmet chefs with you in your kitchen!

Every recipe includes easily-accessible ingredients, clear instructions, a gorgeous photograph, "Norene's Notes" with tips and techniques, as well as full nutritional information for every dish listed in an appendix. More than 80 recipes are gluten-free, perfect for Passover and for those on gluten-free diets

The Silver Platter features recipes for every occasion, from quick weeknight suppers to holiday celebrations. From the bold, unusual appetizers to the delectable desserts, and everything in-between, here are foods that are healthy to eat, spectacular to serve — and surprisingly easy to prepare. So... get cooking!

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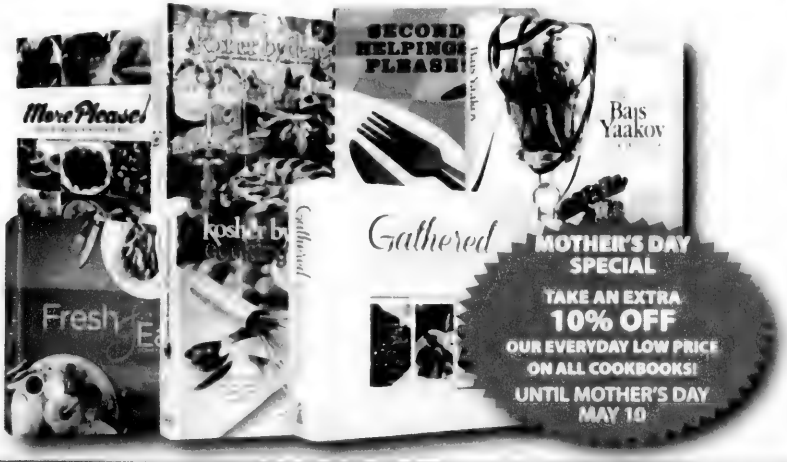

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...of Things Past – consignment at its best

...Of Things Past, an elegant consignment showroom, showcasing pre-owned luxury home furnishings and accessories, was founded on a passion for design and an appreciation of elegance, beauty and fine craftsmanship. Since 1996 ...of Things Past has been selling and consigning the best home furnishings and decor from the finest private residences in the GTA. With their accent on design, materials, finish and craftsmanship, it was with no surprise that in 2012 ...of Things Past opened a boutique shop in Rosedale, one of Toronto's premier neighbourhoods.

Together, ...of Things Past Bridgeland, a 22,000 sq. ft. showroom, and ...of Things Past Rosedale, their boutique shop, have the largest and most diverse selection of upscale home furnishings, rugs, lighting, art and accessories in Canada. Savvy and sophisticated shoppers find designer brands and unique pieces from contemporary to traditional, modern to antique. One can find timeless pieces with enduring style by renowned designers such as Barbara Barry, Ralph Lauren, Baker and Christopher Guy.

...of Things Past is now positioned to service a new emerging market and is taking in a broader range of quality consignment. On May 7, ...OTP Living, ...of Things Past's newest 10,000 sq. ft. showroom, located by the Castlefield Design District, will open its doors to a market that does not want to sacrifice personal style for price. ...OTP Living will showcase a variety of exciting home furnishings that accentuate your individual taste. ...OTP Living provides a perfect mix of designer and less expensive name brands, which have been carefully chosen with the uncompromising standards that ...of Things Past is well known for.

At ...OTP Living, with its unlimited style for the limited budget, discover a better ecofriendly way to design and furnish your home with one-of-a-kind unique pieces. ...OTP Living gives you the opportunity to purchase quality furnishings that create style and warmth while still expressing your own individual design. The selection is eclectically edited and from around the world.

...OTP Living is your destination for design, value and quality furnishings.

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...OTP Living is providing an incentive for consignors to donate their proceeds of the sale of their merchandise. ...OTP Living will give an additional 10 per cent of the proceeds to Habitat for Humanity on behalf of the consignor.

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...otp living

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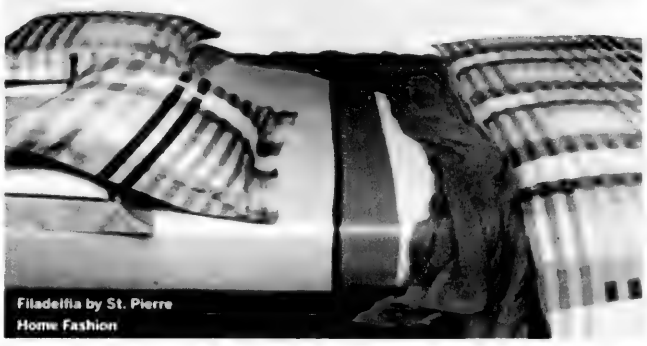
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Get away to your own garden

A shady space in your yard, especially one that provides an escape from late afternoon sun, can be the perfect cooling and calming getaway spot. Combining shade-loving perennials and annuals in a subtly contrasting mix of shape, texture and colour assures beauty and restfulness in this peaceful retreat.

"Take a look at the PC hosta called Cool as a Cucumber for example," says Peter Cantley, gardening expert for President's Choice brand. "This plant features long, tapered leaves with bright green margins and white centres. The name itself invokes calm, cool feelings – and this hosta is ideal for areas with minimal sun exposure."

Keep the final height and width of your chosen plants in mind when placing them in the garden. Taller plants should be placed near the back of border gardens or at the center of island-style gardens. Make sure to arrange your selections in clusters of three to five plants of each variety for the most eye-appealing end result.

The size of your garden area and the individual space requirements of each type of plant you choose will determine how many plants are needed. Check individual plant tags for the correct spacing and the size of maturity to help you decide.

> *Pair the soothing sounds of a fountain with a hammock*

To really accentuate the calming atmosphere, think about adding a small water feature. Pair the soothing sounds of a fountain with a hammock plus your favourite book and your shaded area will be a perfect little summer oasis. ■

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How smart are the new Smart Home gadgets?

A thermostat that programs itself based on your schedule. A light bulb that transitions from hard to soft light depending on the time of day…A smoke alarm that texts you when there's a problem. Smart Home gadgets are on the rise, and there are plenty to choose from this year. The folks at Home Guru Inc. demystify some of the new technology and help us figure out how to get the best smart home for the best value.

The sum is greater than its parts

Tempting as it is to grab these products when we see them, we should be wary of trying to piece together makeshift systems from individual products at big box stores. When you try to do home automation yourself, you're missing out on the magic of what home automation can be. Going the piecemeal route to your smart home is the biggest mistake many buyers make. Often, they end up with a system that is not cohesive, which can cost more in the long run trying to make it right.

Saving money with home automation

Save money by using a professional to program and install a system that is customized to your needs. You'll get the benefits of the best energy savings for your lighting, heating and cooling systems and you'll have problem-free installation and usability.

The pros know which products work best for a retrofit versus a new home. They know which components will last longest with fewer repairs and more room for upgrades, and they can program everything to be accessible from your mobile device or computer, instead of having a different remote for each component.

A cohesive lighting, heating and cooling system will reduce energy bills by self-adjusting when nobody is home, and you can use Shabbat packages for worry-free Shabbats with no planning, or forgetting, or having the worry of kitchen fires from appliances left on. Use your smartphone to turn up your heat and water heater when you're on your way home from vacation. Schedule your air conditioner by your work hours or set your door locks to turn on lights, music or fireplace when you arrive home.

Security, control, and peace of mind

Our biggest investment is our home. Using the right technology, we now have the ability to protect and manage that investment in a way we never could before. A smart home can help keep homes, pets and loved ones safe in the event of a fire, flood or break-in.

Imagine being able to remotely check on your home while you're away, and setting your furnace to shut down air circulation if a fire starts. This will prevent it from spreading while you and the authorities are notified. Your outside lights will flash to allow emergency crews to find your house quickly and alert neighbours to the problem.

You can set your main water valve to shut off as soon as a flood is detected to prevent excessive damage, or make it look like you're home with a program that changes up your lighting patterns, and opens and closes your blinds while you're away.

A smarter home today means money saved and a mind at ease, and with exciting new technology being introduced for 2015, the possibilities are truly endless. ■

Home Guru Inc., Toronto's home automation experts for over 25 years. For more information, visit www.asktheguru.ca

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How to revitalize your home with high-impact results

Spring is the time of year when we breathe a collective sigh of relief that winter has finally released its icy grip. That is, until we realize it's time to tackle a full season (or two) of collective grime. While some of us might consider crocuses and red-bellied robins to be a sure sign of spring, unofficially, it can just as well be heralded in by the run on cleaning supplies and the steady hum of a vacuum cleaner.

So, when everything in a home looks like it's ready for a refresh, where does one start? If you want to make the greatest dent, tackle these high-impact areas first:

Dusting

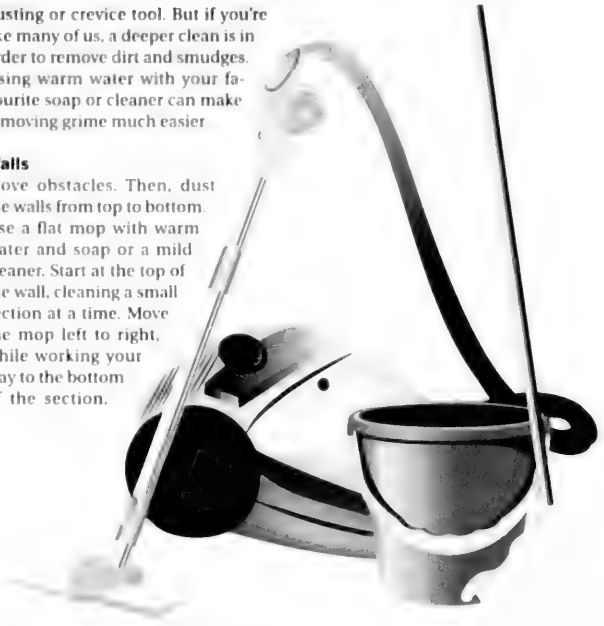
Dust settles everywhere, and cleaning every surface and object can get really tedious. So why not save some time and energy? Your secret weapon – your vacuum and its trusty soft dusting tool – will help you to tackle just about any surface and get the job done in half the time.

Baseboards and door frames

If you've been pretty good about upkeep, your baseboards and door frames may just need a quick swipe with your vacuum's dusting or crevice tool. But if you're like many of us, a deeper clean is in order to remove dirt and smudges. Using warm water with your favourite soap or cleaner can make removing grime much easier.

Walls

Move obstacles. Then, dust the walls from top to bottom. Use a flat mop with warm water and soap or a mild cleaner. Start at the top of the wall, cleaning a small section at a time. Move the mop left to right, while working your way to the bottom of the section.



Dry the wall with a clean towel. Repeat, completing one section at a time, until you reach the end of the wall.

Carpet/hardwood floors

Winter is hard on flooring, but so is the spring melt. Even with the greatest care, somehow the outdoors has made its way indoors. A deep clean is the simplest way to revitalize tired flooring. Experts like Hoover suggest using a vacuum that can get the job done effortlessly. At the top of the list this year is the Hoover Air Cordless. It offers constant, powerful suction with the ability to tackle multiple surfaces. This expert also recommends making multiple passes for the most effective clean. Washing floors thoroughly and regularly with a multi-surface deep cleaner will extend the life of your floors and help your home shine. In fact, you can simplify the job with a versatile unit like the Hoover Max Extract, which can wash hard and soft floors, as well as upholstery.

Now with the big stuff out of the way, you can focus on the little things – like a mani-pedi to reward all that hard work. ■

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Modern stained glass windows at AM Studio Toronto

From the heart of the Galilee in Israel to the heart of the design and décor district in Toronto, AM Studio, acclaimed stained glass artists, bring a wealth of talent and experience to any project they tackle.

The team of glass artists are from the well-known Israeli art glass studio, Andreas Meyer, in Nahariya. Since 1967, they have crafted stained glass windows and other glass objects in Israel and all over the world.

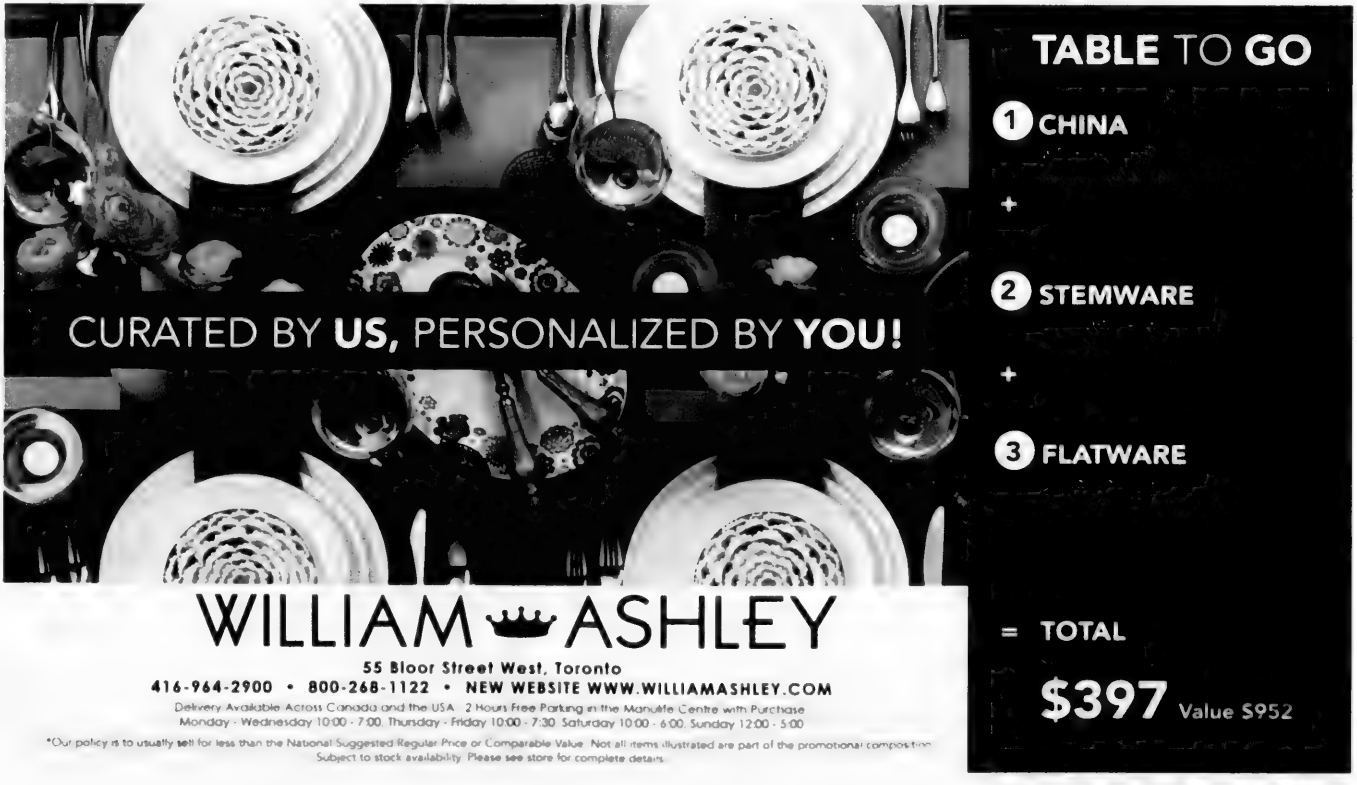
Giora Meyer, a co-founder of AM Studios, managed the Andreas Meyer glass studio for over 20 years. Upon moving to Canada, Giora saw an opportunity to introduce many of the same artisan and unique glass technologies to the North American market.

In 2007, together with Orly Meyer, he opened AM Studio in Toronto. As a team, they look to serve the trade and public with their first custom lighting showroom and glass studio.

They have carried commissioned work around the world, using a variety of creative techniques and designs including stained glass and contemporary fused stained glass. Their projects in Canada include Shomrai Shabbos Chevrah Mishnayos Congregation, Adath Israel Congregation, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, Beth Jacob Hamilton and other commercial and residential projects.

In addition to stained glass work, AM Studio has expanded to custom lighting and has been showcasing their fused glass light fixtures to the local and international market in Toronto. ■

We invite you to visit our showroom to see more of our creations on site at 1270 Castlefield Avenue, in Toronto, or call 416-783-4100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Quick tips for home rejuvenation

Preparing your home for summer involves just as much planning and organization as switching your wardrobe before the warmer months arrive. Don't let yourself get overwhelmed because you've waited too long to begin, no matter whether it's finding a swimsuit or buying an air conditioner.

Here's a helpful guideline:

Bring the air conditioner out of storage or uncover your outside unit and hose down the coils. Wash the filters – blocked air filters create a drag on an air conditioner's ability to push and pull air through air registers. After washing, turn it on. If it doesn't work at every temperature and fan range possible, call a professional to see if it can be fixed. If you must replace it, act soon while the selection is greatest. Before inviting a handyman to install your unit, clear areas around it so that it has strong air flow, and, if there's space, consider planting a tree outside the window to provide shade, another aid in running air conditioners efficiently.

Carefully inspect all lamps and appliances you plan on using throughout the season – refrigerator, washer and dryer, dishwasher, blender, coffee and ice cream makers – for functionality, cleanliness and faulty wiring.

Clean the windows' interiors and exteriors. At the same time, look for cracks or damage to windows and weather-stripping, which might need a boost or total redo. Take down the storm windows if you have them, and replace them with screens – checking for tears and washing them first.

When it comes to the window dressings, consider shades that help reduce energy loss through the windows so your air conditioner won't have to work so hard.

Have your own pool? Bring in a professional to inspect it thoroughly, including both the visible, like cracks and stains, and more mechanical aspects, such as pump and filter, chlorine content, diving boards and safety rails, and make any necessary repairs. The same goes for hot tubs, barbecues and lounge furniture – maybe a good cleaning or new cushions are in order.

If it works with the design, remove rugs and show off shiny hardwoods, which not only keep the room cooler, but are easier to keep clean. Bring out your entertaining supplies – table and bed linens, beach towels and toys, hammock and picnic basket. Make sure no moths have done their damage or mold has grown over the winter, that there is enough of everything, and that all are in top-notch condition. Prepare the fireplace for cool evenings and stockpile logs. Shore up a supply of energy-efficient light bulbs as well as candles, which will come in handy for dinner parties and electrical outages, a hazard of summer storms.

Anything can happen anytime, anywhere, so keep contact information for qualified service professionals in your area handy. It's always good to have phone numbers for a plumber, an electrician, heating and air conditioning services, and a general handyman.

With these tips, a great summer is just around the corner. ■

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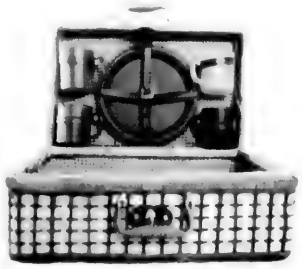
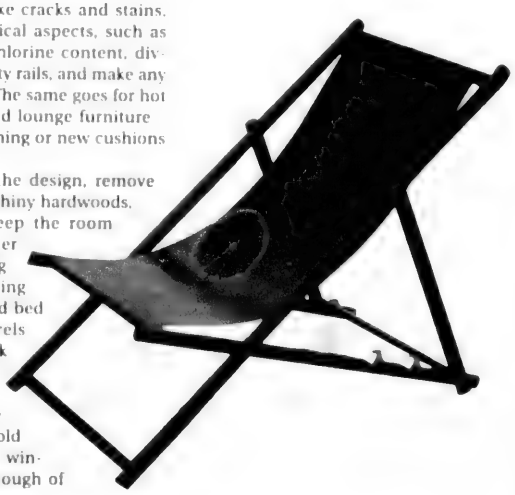
> *Consider shades that help reduce energy loss through the windows.*





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Add trendy updates to your outdoor space

If you would like to put some new life into your patio this year and are curious about the latest outdoor living trends, take a look at a few tips from Cindy Jardim, a home furnishings expert at Lowe's Canada. She is at the forefront of what's hot in décor and design.

"When it comes to your outdoor spaces, décor should be an extension of your indoor design sensibilities," explains Jardim. "The same principles that apply inside like spacing, scale and accessorizing should be used to enhance an outdoor space."

Here are her top three outdoor living principles for 2015.

Conversation sets: Homeowners are moving away from traditional dining sets and choosing furniture that encourages people to kick-back and linger. Need space to eat? Group together multiple coffee tables with your conversation set to create a relaxing and casual environment.

Innovative outdoor cooking: Escape your kitchen and enjoy the outdoors. Outdoor kitchens are big this year. And no, we're not just talking about burgers on the barbecue – from pizza to rib roast you can buy accessories to cook literally anything outside these days.

Backyard smokers are gaining momentum in Canada and barbecue options go way beyond just gas, charcoal, and electric. Choose the grill size that best suits your lifestyle. For example, those who like to entertain might opt for a party-sized unit and empty nesters or singles living in the city, might choose a smaller-sized electric grill. There's something for everyone.

Small space décor: Just because you have a small outdoor space, like a condo balcony, doesn't mean you can't enjoy it. Take back your space with privacy screens and use space-saving, double-duty furniture to maximize square footage. Outdoor flooring can also go a long way to elevate your space, making a concrete balcony more welcoming and comfortable.

Bonus tip: Are you tired of spending your precious summer weekends and evenings mowing the lawn or setting up sprinklers? Consider laying artificial grass. With a product called SYNLawn, you'll use up to 70 per cent less water and it looks great. ■

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Home décor enthusiast heeds Mother Nature's recipe

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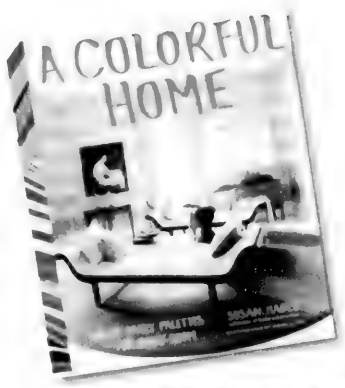

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAINCOAST BOOKS (CANADA)

American author/textile designer Susan Hable, co founder of Hable Construction, is a colour expert affiliated with the Color Association of the United States. Hence, when this design guru relocated from New York City to Athens, Ga., she assumed decorating her new home would be a snap.

However, Hable was overwhelmed by the creative challenge until taking a tip from Mother Nature. While exploring her new neighbourhood, the astute artist suddenly realized nature had paved the way.

She observed multi-hued blooms, feathers, flowers and foliage, and marvelled at the effect of natural light on the colourful landscape. Buoyed with enthusiasm, Hable applied nature's ready-made palette to create colourful settings in furnishing her home. She also did her homework by visiting other homes and public buildings, and she culled mementos from personal travels.

Moreover, she decided to share her experiences with readers in a 208-page hardcover book. Distributed by Raincoast Books in Canada, *A Colorful Home* includes lively palettes for every room. Rinne Allen's magnificent photographs accompany Hable's enlightening text. Throughout the book, pictorials depict each phase of the decorating project. Hable's commentary and pictures begin with abstract items, such as swatches of fabric, and progress to photographs and text describing the finished product.

Colour prevails in daily life and Hable sheds light on how a pebble, a shred of bark, a decayed leaf or irregular crystals of salt can contribute to the colour scheme. Gray neutrals lay the groundwork for serene space to harbour weary travellers. Therefore, one room is dedicated to out-of-town guests. Hable drew inspiration from rocks she had collected at the beach. Upon examination, she noted variances in texture and colour tone.

Practising what she preaches, Hable finds a way to make use of cherished items in each room, whether it is a wall hanging, a vase or sea shells. Colour preferences vary, but sometimes a hue that never appealed to the eye turns out to be a hit. Her husband wasn't a big fan of green until she highlighted it in furnishing his den. Now, he's delighted with the green accents in his "lair".

While soft colours and cozy items grace some rooms, others are bursting with bold colours and whimsical designs. Her candy-striped bathtub exemplifies the latter. Hable's colour palette and furnishings reflect the respective accommodations. Colour schemes set the mood, whether it's a child's cheery room or a formal living room.

Her rose room settings are bound to wow even the most blasé individual. Here, her colour sense and designer acumen come into play. A case in point is Hable's pink patterned wallpaper, which serves as an elegant backdrop for a parlour furnished with a plush rose rug and a gracious seating arrangement.

Hable provides a colour glossary referring to the colour wheel, shade, tint, tone, saturation, primary, secondary and tertiary hues. She defines complementary, analogous and monochromatic colour schemes. Each term has a different connotation, therefore, this section is instructive.

Hable's appreciation for nature is impressive. Moreover, readers may be inspired to display an objet d'art or souvenir instead of hiding it away. ■

SPONSORED CONTENT

Renting for independent seniors at Two Neptune

You don't have to buy it to get it anymore.

Two Neptune, a condominium for independent and active seniors aged 65 and over, has begun to offer a new option, along with their life leases.

For the first time, people can rent a suite at the Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community at Two Neptune Drive as opposed to having to purchase a life lease.

"There's a new opportunity in the market place and there's certainly demand from our aging adult population to be in a senior-friendly environment in a rental capacity as opposed to a purchasing capacity," said Laurie Banks, marketing and sales specialist for Two Neptune.

The building, which is half a block north of Baycrest Health Sciences' large healthcare campus, opened 15 years ago as a life-lease condominium for adults 65 and older.

Now, Two Neptune (which is owned and operated by Baycrest, but is not a care facility) is offering rental suites for the first time. Utilities are included in the monthly rent, except for electricity.

"In terms of rentals, we have one-bedroom and two-bedroom suites available that will include the storage locker and the use of building amenities and services," said Banks, who noted all rental units for new residents will be renovated and upgraded. There are many attractive features at Two Neptune for older adults: a 24-hour concierge, secured underground parking, easily accessible common areas, a social hall, and private dining room with a kosher kitchen for larger gatherings.

There is a new fitness facility on site providing classes for all levels of mobility. The classes are delivered by certified and trained fitness instructors from Baycrest's popular Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Community Centre. In addition, Two Neptune has a library with complimentary computer access for residents.

With housing prices skyrocketing in Toronto, the renting option has become very appealing for seniors who wish to downsize their home, free up the equity from a sale, and simply pay a monthly rent. The driveway clearing in winter, grass cutting in summer and other landscape and maintenance chores are taken care of.

For seniors who can't afford to purchase a life lease condominium but desire to live in this type of setting, they'll now have the option to rent at Two Neptune.

"From a population perspective, not everyone will have the funds to purchase a life-lease unit," Banks said. "The banks don't offer mortgages on a life lease, so people either need the full amount or a private broker.

"Renting is a simpler alternative and you still get to enjoy the full suite of programs and activities on site. The building fronts Bathurst Street, just south of the 401, which is perfect for seniors who want close access to the shops, cafes, synagogues, and programs at Baycrest. That's the real advantage of this location."

Older adults do not necessarily want to purchase another home at this stage of life, and rental units are in high demand. "We wanted Two Neptune to be flexible and responsive to what the market is demanding," said Banks.

"For independent seniors desiring to live in a senior-friendly environment, Two Neptune has neighbours that will be of a similar mind and, ideally, interests. Our location allows for those who are shomer Shabbat to be able to walk to local synagogues."

Two Neptune is home to a very active residents' council. Its dedicated members ensure all residents have a say in how the building is managed and the type of recreational and social programming provided on site.

"When we first moved in, our concierge Danny said, 'Welcome to the family' and he was right," said Morris Adams, current president of the residents' council. "Two Neptune is a caring community filled with programs and activities for independent seniors." ■

For information on renting one-bedroom or two-bedroom units at Two Neptune, or to arrange a tour of the model suite, visit www.twoneptune.ca , or contact Laurie Banks directly at 647-788-4887, laurie@twoneptune.ca

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Love thy home: Renovations

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When I was growing up people seldom renovated their homes. They accepted the good with the bad when they purchased, and barring a flood or fire, unpacked into their houses, arranged the furniture and kept things the same for the next 20 to 30 years.

Times have changed, and today home renovations are an oft-chosen pastime, a passion borne of reality shows, glossy magazines and the skills of interior decorators. Together they've shown North America the promise and potential behind that faded carpet, mouldy grouting, ugly light fixture and ill-chosen shade of white on the walls. They've taught us the only thing between a homeowner and a gorgeous home is money and imagination. But mostly money, since creativity, if you don't have it, can be easily purchased from someone who does.

The most frequent rooms to be made over are the kitchen and bathrooms, those sanctuaries of comfort where we sate our appetites for food and hygiene. The average cost of a kitchen reno is $14,800 according to Homeadvisor.com, with most homeowners spending between $13,000 and $17,000. Bathroom renos average at $8,000 but can dip as low as $4,750 and soar up to $22,000 depending on the extent, complexity and sophistication of the re-do.

Though it may be tempting to choose a contractor on price, the Canadian Home Builders' Association warns that this is a perilous choice. "Consider the implications of choosing on price alone," it cautions in its Golden Rules of Renovating.

"Does the renovator understand what's involved in your project and have the necessary experience? Will the renovator offer a warranty on the work? Will the renovator still be in business if you need to call back?"

These are good questions and if the answers are uncertain you'll want to ask yourself if the risk outweighs the benefits. Either way, once you've given a contractor permission to move forward, expect to take an active role in the project. You'll be the primary communicator, the one showing the most flexibility and understanding as schedules delay your renovation. And you'll be the individual finding quick solutions when things don't go as planned, as inevitably happens.

It's crucial to be realistic about time frames, for example. We all want our renovation done as fast as possible, with little interruption to our daily lives. Usually, that's simply not feasible. When your contractor tells you a time frame of 'weeks,' mentally substitute the word 'months' to best prepare yourself for the actual duration of the project. "Unexpected delays" are de rigueur in the construction industry and to expect otherwise is naïve. You'd also be wise to anticipate costs amounting to well beyond your budget as substitutions are required, pipes break or the toilet you chose doesn't fit where it was supposed to.

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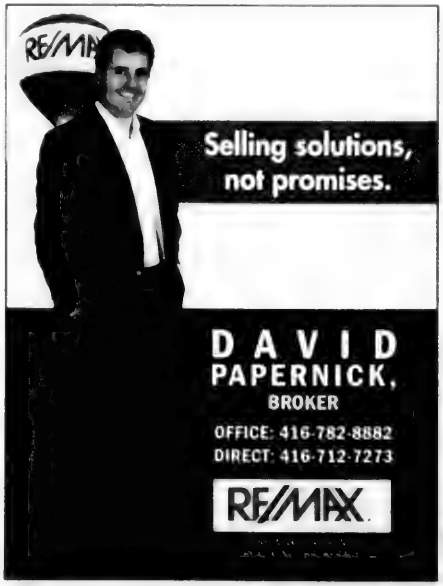

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In short, home renovations are a major headache. Why do we do them? Because they feed our addiction to beauty, and promise us more picturesque lives in prettier spaces. Sometimes, though, they're not entirely necessary. If budget restraints don't permit a full-scale reno but you can't resist the temptation to update your home, here are some shortcuts:

Call a decorator: interior decorators charge $100-to-$150 an hour but can offer the guidance you need to make dramatic changes without spending a fortune. Make a list of your biggest home gripes and ask a decorator whose work you respect to walk through your home with you. Jot down their comments along the way and ask for specifics. What colour paint would best suit your hallway? What style of handles would update your kitchen? Which piece of furniture needs to be replaced and how could a new light fixture add that je-ne-sais-quoi to your living room?

Say it with paint: interior decorators have told us time and again: there's no cheaper way to update than with a paint brush. A new colour on the walls brightens, freshens and modernizes a room, influencing its atmosphere. Visit websites like houzz.com and keep browsing and researching until you find a colour that works for you and adequately transforms the space you're trying to change.

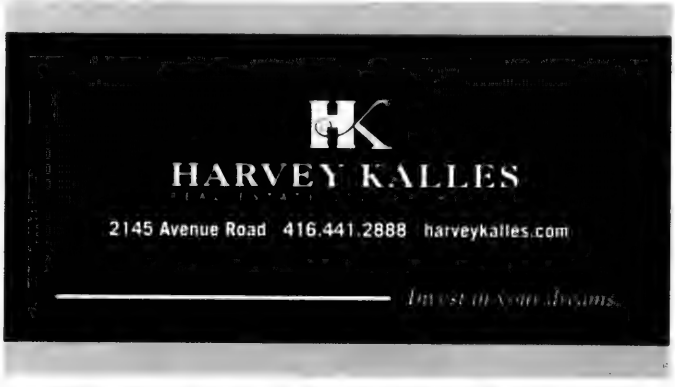
If you're looking for stainless steel appliances you'll know they always cost more than the same machines in white. If your old appliances are still in good shape consider disguising them with peel-and-stick contact paper that contains a stainless steel finish. The façade may be all you really need.

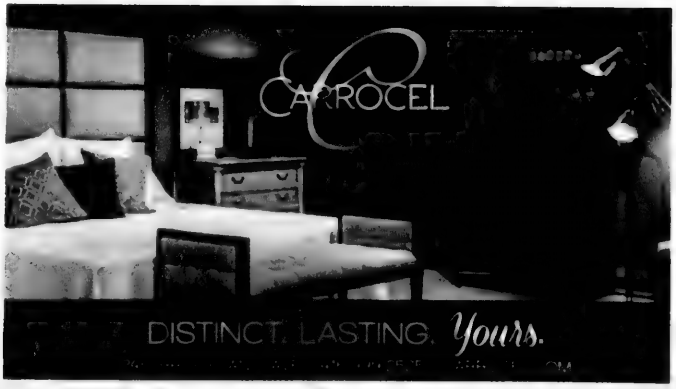
Nothing dates a house like ancient doorknobs, handles and switchplate covers on lights and electrical outlets. New equivalents are inexpensive and easy to do-it-yourself, but can make a dramatic difference to the look of your home.

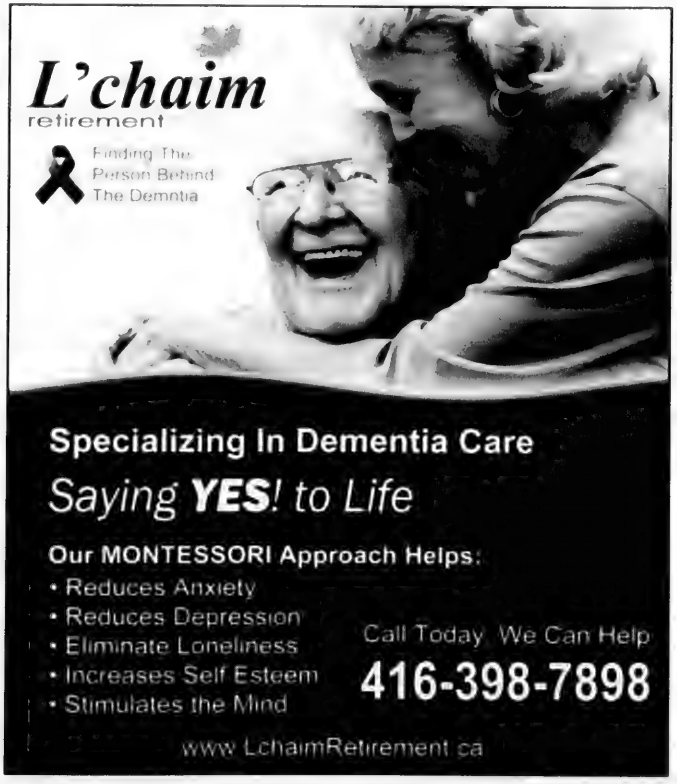
> *Once you've given a contractor permission to move forward, expect to take an active role in the project*

Blinding changes: take a good look at those dusty old one-inch vinyl blinds that have been hiding dead bugs for the past 20 years. Sure, they keep the light out, but that's about all they do. Switch them for two-inch wood blinds or new curtains. New window coverings, even inexpensive ones, can create powerful aesthetic changes.

Move things around: you have a lot of stuff – ask yourself if you really need to replace it or if rearranging it might be sufficient for now. By reorganizing the flow of your home, moving artwork from one room to another or turning the dining room table horizontally instead of vertically you create the feel that things have changed. And sometimes, that's all you really need. ■







Fresh herbs glorify garden and perk up menus

ELAINE COHEN
SUPPLEMENTS CO ORDINATOR

Parsley is an attractive herb and healthy to boot.

When empty nesters Karen and Allan Freedman downsized in 2012, they were convinced the two-bedroom apartment would serve their modest lifestyle. Nevertheless, the former suburban homeowners lamented the loss of their well-tended lawns and vegetable gardens.

Karen missed plucking leafy herbs from her backyard. "They always contributed a heady fragrance and flavour to our meals," she says.

Before long, the apartment dwellers realized their balcony, situated high above a busy Montreal city street, would suffice as a venue for home grown herbs. By potting plants in containers on the balcony, as well as making use of sun-filled window sills, they could count on fresh chives, dill, mint and rosemary throughout the year.

Herbs can be divided into two categories based on their stems. Those with tender stems are more grass-like, whereas herbs with woody stems sport rough leaves.

Karen garnishes platters with colourful fresh herbs, and relies on these leafy wonders to add a tantalizing tang to her homemade dips, soups, salads, fish, meat and other recipes.

"You don't need a green thumb to plant herbs, whether in the ground or in a container," she says.

Some herbs do better than others in cold climates, regardless of whether they are planted in or outdoors.

"Sometimes, I've had luck with parsley, basil and oregano but I advise novices to start with chives, mint, rosemary and dill," she says.

"In fact, when we had a garden, chives and mint sprouted automatically every spring, whereas most of the others had to be planted annually."

Every fledgling gardener wishes for a hardy crop but Karen cautions, "Be careful what you wish for. Now, we know better, but 15 years ago, mint dominated our entire garden. Remember, mint spreads,therefore, a little goes a long way."

Botanists note that consumers tend to confuse herbs with spices. Herbs are the leaves of fresh or dried plants, while spices are the aromatic parts of buds, fruit, berries, roots or bark, often dried from plants that thrive in tropical regions. Despite this distinction, both herbs and spices enhance the flavour of food. In some instances, herbs like dill contain seeds that can be used as pickling spices.

Chives are perennial winners in Quebec climates. They do well if planted late spring either in the ground or in plant containers on the balcony. They grow quickly in the sun or shade. Make sure the soil is moist but don't drown the roots in a pool of water. Remember, chives have thick roots and store water better than many other locally grown plants. To harvest chives, cut across the plant about an inch from the soil. Then the plant is ready to sprout anew. Chives can be stored in the refrigerator or freezer. A member of the onion, shallot and leek family, chives are rich in vitamins A and C. Chives are more delicate and contain less sulfur than onions. Although chives are available in the supermarket, nothing surpasses the freshness of the home cultivated variety. Chives spruce up vegetable dishes, omelets, salads and soups.

Parsley derives its name from the Greek word "rock celery." It comes in many varieties and though some local gardeners have more luck than others, it is well worth planting. Parsley, a biennial, flowers in its second season. Make sure the soil is moist but not soaking wet. To harvest, snip off the oldest branches giving young leaves sufficient space. Sprigs of parsley serve as a stunning garnish and complement soups, sides, and main course platters. Parsley is a source of vitamins A, C, K and a natural breath freshener.

There are 600 varieties of mint, an aromatic herb with grassy, menthol properties. It is used in recipes for sweet and savoury dishes. Spearmint and peppermint flavours grow well locally. The dark green leaves are closely set together. These hardy herbs are embodied with distinctive scents. They can become the alpha of the garden because the plants spread and dominate the scene.

Mint embellishes lamb dishes, salads, tea, fruit beverages and cocktails. It grows easily and will boost a fledgling gardener's confidence because it invariably takes root and blossoms without much puttering. For window sill success, place pots where mint is exposed to morning sun and some afternoon shade. Mint can be rinsed, placed in paper towel, tucked in a plastic bag and stored for a few days in the refrigerator. Consumers can purchase mint seedlings or plants and transplant them to a container.

Dill is prized for its seeds and leaves. The aromatic feathery, bright green leaves have multiple uses and can be used fresh, or kept in a refrigerator vegetable bin or in the freezer. To store fresh dill, wrap in a plastic bag and chill in the refrigerator. To freeze fresh dill, rinse, trim and chop the silky leaves. Allow it to dry thoroughly and then store in heavy-duty freezer bags, or fill each compartment of an ice cube tray with chopped dill embedded in water. Dill freezes beautifully.

When preparing soup, simply transfer the dill-filled ice cube to the broth and vegetables in the soup pot. Dill keeps fresh for 10-12 days in the fridge and four to six months in the freezer. A sprig of dill adds a dash of class to a fish platter and also dazzles the recipient's taste buds.

Rosemary grows well in the summer and lasts until Sukkot. This herb is averse to chilly weather conditions, so bring it indoors and transplant in pots facing the sun. Rosemary requires steady drainage, therefore, a terra cotta pot is ideal. Its pungent flavour adds a distinctive taste to poultry and vegetable dishes. ■

Create a dream kitchen in less time than you think

An updated kitchen does more than boost the value of your home. It is the central meeting place for most families. So no matter whether you make just a few changes or completely renovate the space, a kitchen that feels new is always refreshing and welcoming. From basic cooking to frequent entertaining, a dream kitchen should always look as good as it functions.

Since the modern kitchen design is ever evolving, so are the products available, say advisers in this field. Skip the fads and include features that are not only esthetically pleasing but will withstand the test of time. Here are a few easy updates to turn your current space into the one you've been dreaming about.

Go bold with fixtures: When remodelling a kitchen, remember to top off the highly used sink area with a fashionable and functional kitchen faucet.

With a great number of faucets on the market, there's a design for everyone. For a sleek, contemporary look at the sink, try the new Tilt kitchen faucet from Moen Canada. It features a distinct, top-mount handle – allowing the faucet to occupy a small horizontal space for the utmost in urban minimalism. The thoughtfully designed faucet also combines the best of style and functionality with its innovative pullout design and integrated swivel ball joint to make it easier to manoeuvre the wand in and around the sink.

Be smart with appliances: Unlike a rug or lamp, kitchen appliances are not simple to return, so be smart – not flashy –when upgrading these items. Before making a purchase, it's best to work with a professional for guidance, and to weigh all factors, such as who uses the kitchen, how many people are cooking at one time, and how often your family cooks.

If you're an aspiring chef, consider a gas range that allows you to control the flame with precision. If you're a busy mom, electric versions allow you to heat food and boil water faster. It's also important to consider finishes – if the rest of your fixtures are brushed nickel, you may want to opt for a stainless steel range, refrigerator and dishwasher for a coordinated look.

Add an island: Whether you're hoping for more storage, seating or cooking space, an island can do it all. Many homeowners choose to build an island within their kitchen as a place for family and friends to gather and socialize. A multi-level design with stools on one side can provide casual seating for guests, leaving the other side available for you to prepare food or serve appetizers.

If you like to cook and entertain, you may also want a design that includes a bar/prep sink and beverage faucet – this will aid in prep and provide fresh drinking water. The Sip beverage faucet from Moen offers a co-ordinating style for every decorating taste – traditional, transitional or modern. It provides cold, filtered water on demand, and with its high-arc rotating spout it delivers extra convenience when filling pitchers, coffee makers and more.

Amp up lighting: Merely changing out the decorative lighting fixtures over the breakfast nook or centre island can have a significant visual impact, creating a fresher, more up-to-date design.

For a warm and inviting environment, combine four layers of lighting: task, ambient, accent and decorative. This will help you obtain your desired style while still providing the appropriate light. The ability to adjust light levels is also important. When cooking or cleaning up, a bright punch of illumination makes the job easier. For lingering over a meal and conversation, dimmed lights help create ambiance.

Whether your dream kitchen involves a complete overhaul or a simple spruce up, take the necessary steps, plan accordingly, and make your design dreams become a reality. ■

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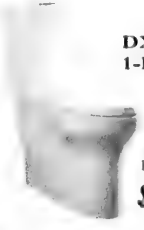

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Inside

Downtown shuls make amends – 100 years later

Spirit of co-operation heralds a new era for two historic synagogues. **PAGE 30**

Is intermarriage an opportunity for Jews?

Outreach worker says there's a bright side to Judaism's 'continuity crisis.' **PAGE 12**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	8:17 p.m.	9:29 p.m.
Montreal	7:59 p.m.	9:12 p.m.
Ottawa	8:08 p.m.	9:21 p.m.
Toronto	8:17 p.m.	9:28 p.m.
Winnipeg	8:49 p.m.	10:10 p.m.
Calgary	9:01 p.m.	10:25 p.m.
Vancouver	8:31 p.m.	9:50 p.m.

A time to be born, a time to die

The cost of a Jewish burial varies across Canada. Find out what you can expect to pay. **PAGE 8**

Plus, the challenge of burying interfaith couples, and the politics of cremation. **PAGES 28-29**

Germany and Israel share a unique bond

Two diplomats reflect on their countries' pledge to remember and forge a new future. **PAGE 10**

Breaking a code of silence in Australia

Manny Waks discusses sex abuse scandal at Yeshivah College. **PAGE 50**

Drag show explores Israeli identity

Cabaret addresses themes of victimhood, love and violence. **PAGE 35**

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Wheel of Conscience returns home, and Portman speaks her mind

Sculpture back in Halifax

After almost a year being repaired in Toronto, famed architect Daniel Libeskind's *Wheel of Conscience* Holocaust memorial sculpture is back at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax. The sculpture, which recalls that in 1939, Canada turned away the MS St. Louis and its 937 passengers fleeing the Nazis, had experienced technical problems since its unveiling in 2011. It was being repaired by its builders for the museum's reopening last week after extensive renovations. It's now on the ground floor and visible to patrons without having to pay admission.

Not a fan of Bibi

Israeli-born actress Natalie Portman discussed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and living in Paris as a Jew in a May 15 interview in the *Hollywood Reporter*.

Natalie Portman after her 2011 Oscar win

Portman is promoting the May 18 debut of her film based on Israeli author Amos Oz's *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, which was shot in Hebrew in Jerusalem. She told the weekly she was disappointed Netanyahu was re-elected and "find[s] his racist comments horrific." Asked whether she's nervous living in Paris with her French husband and son, 3, after the Hyper Cacher attack, Portman said "Yes, but I'd feel nervous being a black man in [America]. I'd feel nervous being a Muslim in many places." She also called Dershowitz, whom she worked for while a Harvard undergrad, "a good friend" who "has very different politics than I do."

Soccer head stands firm on Israel

FIFA president Sepp Blatter reiterated an earlier pledge that Israel won't be suspended from soccer's global governing body – and its sanctioned events, including World Cup qualifiers – as long as it fulfils "its statutory duties." Blatter met May 6 with Israeli soccer officials at FIFA headquarters in Zurich. The Palestinian Football Association wants a vote at next month's FIFA congress to suspend Israel for "racist behaviour against Arabs" in the form of travel restrictions between Gaza and the West Bank, saying they inhibit athletes' training. ■

Gematria

500,000

The number of people estimated to have visited Mount Meron in northern Israel to celebrate Lag b'Omer. Many came for the holiday tradition of visiting the grave of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a disciple of Rabbi Akiva who wrote the *Zohar*.

900

The number of homes approved last week to be built in the haredi neighbourhood of Ramat Shlomo in east Jerusalem.

Quotable

My Jewish identity has been strong and remains strong. I am a proud Jew and a proud Zionist, but I can call out when rabbis do the wrong thing. No one is above the law.

— Whistleblower Manny Waks on how revealing abuse allegations at a Melbourne, Australia, yeshiva has affected his faith. See p. 50.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Looking at maps

Prof. Mira Sucharov finds it "difficult to know where to begin" in explaining Israel's "military occupation over millions of Palestinians." What I actually find most difficult is to understand her rationale and the faulty analogies she derives from ignoring key facts ("Why is the Green Line not on our schools' maps?" May 7).

First, the reality is that Israel's borders do "span from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River." This reality, established by our historical connection to the Land of Israel, confirmed in the Mandate for Palestine in 1922 and reiterated in the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty of 1994, has unfortunately been blurred – if not totally forgotten – since the advent of the Oslo peace process and the emergence of a putative and hitherto unheard of Palestinian state.

Second, with regard to maps, we are not "doing the same thing [with our maps] we accuse our adversaries of doing." We are doing exactly the opposite: we are correcting a baseless fallacy and replacing it with a fully justified depiction of a reality recognized in international law 95 years ago.

Third, by referring to the "occupation," Sucharov falls into the trap planted by the Palestinians and their supporters, without realizing that in all logic, the whole of Israel would be viewed as equally occupied, because no one can make a rational distinction between territory acquired in 1967 and those acquired in 1948, both in response to Arab aggression.

No wonder then, that J Street, Rabbi Rick Jacobs' Union for Reform Judaism and Yachad – all ostensibly claiming to be "pro-Israel, pro-peace" groups – identify themselves more with the fake Palestinian narrative than with established Jewish territorial rights. That Sucharov supports the initiatives promoted by these groups is really difficult to understand.

Salomon Benzimra
Toronto

Funding for schools

Canada is a secular country, and the idea of supporting the Jewish separate schools with public money is outdated.

If it could be done politically, I would eliminate support for the Catholic school system in Ontario, but that would not be pursued by any political leaders.

I agree the Jewish separate schools need help, but it should come from within the Jewish community.

I am a secular Jew but the protection of Jewish identity is also important to me, and I would help with a donation in this regard. Maybe there are others who feel the same way. UJA Federation of Greater Toronto could act as the distributor of the funds, but it must be money designated for this purpose by the donors.

Murray Rubin
Toronto

French immigrants welcome

Whether it is boisterous singing emanating from sukkahs, sections of streets being closed down for dancing with the Torah on Simchat Torah, the scent of chametz being burned before Passover, or a lively party in the park for Lag b'Omer, we are a comfortable and proud community of Diaspora Jews. Moreover, we are comfortable displaying our Jewishness in areas of Montreal in which few Jews reside as well.

This comfort is not grounded in naiveté. Multiculturalism and religious freedom are core values of Canadian society, in opposition to the often oppressively applied concept of secularism.

I acknowledge that these values require a different balance in different places of the world. I am eternally grateful for having been born into a society in which the emphasis can be put on multiculturalism and religious freedom and their entrenchment into law have resulted in a peaceful and welcoming society.

Accordingly, I am extending my own invitation to the Jewish community in France. Quebec's immigration policy is most open to individuals who are fluent in French. In fact, the quotas imposed on the number of applications that the Quebec government will receive for consideration under the investor class or the entrepreneur class do not apply to prospective immigrants who can demonstrate advanced intermediate knowledge of French.

Furthermore, Montreal has an extensive network of Jewish organizations that help in the integration of new Jewish immigrants. We are here to welcome your friends and relatives, our brothers and sisters, with open arms.

Andrew Brownstein
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Maximum length is 200 words. Send to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters. Please include your full name, address and phone number.*

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Is the Torah literal or figurative?

Modern tools of interpretation can enhance our understanding of sacred texts without compromising our tenacity in maintaining Jewish practice

RABBI AVI FINEGOLD
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RABBI PHILIP SCHEIM
BETH DAVID B'NAI ISRAEL BETH AM CONGREGATION, TORONTO

Rabbi Finegold: Recently, several of my Orthodox colleagues have come under scrutiny for discussing the idea that the events of the Bible may not have occurred exactly as described in the text.

Critical Bible scholars also assert that they actually have a better understanding of how the text of the Bible came to be. While this is nothing new in liberal denominations, only recently have these ideas begun to be explored in Orthodoxy.

I want to reflect on this as we approach Shavuot, the holiday that celebrates the revelation at Sinai. Does one have to take a traditional approach to revelation in order to fully appreciate the Torah in the 21st century?

How can more liberal thinkers experience Shavuot and the daily practice of Torah? How should Jewish Bible critics relate to their traditional co-religionists?

Rabbi Scheim: In my student years, I lived out the conflict between the literalist approach of revelation – that all of Torah, written and oral, emanated from Sinai – and the critical approach – that Torah, while still sacred, had human involvement, over time, in its transmission.

My rabbinic studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary reflected the critical/scientific approach, while the time that I chose to spend in an Orthodox yeshiva offered the literalist approach. I found myself caught somewhere in-between.

I don't believe that Shavuot and Matan Torah (the Sinai revelation) is necessarily less relevant to one who holds the critical approach, given that the Judaism we practise is in many instances far removed from the Torah text and dependent upon the interpretation and creativity of the rabbinic sages. But it is incumbent upon "critics" to be fully respectful of their more literalist co-religionists, because it is their traditionalist passion, which is often lacking in more liberal quarters, that sustains Jewish practice and Jewish learning.

Rabbi Finegold: My experience seems to be woven into a similar tapestry. I grew up hearing a very literalist approach to the text, and eventually was exposed to the scholarship of Bible critics in university.

Thus my dilemma was how to reconcile the truth of my religious experience with the literary truth of the Bible. In other words, how could I retain the tradition I was taught with the multiplicity of voices in the text?

My approach, which was far from novel, was to recognize that, at a minimum, God could write in a multiplicity of voices for any number of reasons, exegetical or otherwise. While that may not be where I stand at the moment, it was a critical first step in embracing both sides of the equation.

As you put it so eloquently, I am not ready to lose the passion in favour of a Judaism that takes its cues from a God that only exists in the remains of an archeological dig or a literary analysis. Shavuot, then, is a time to celebrate the interpretation of the Torah, not just the receiving of a text.

Rabbi Scheim: "Saw you at Sinai," a popular web-dating site aimed at traditional Jews, reflects the understanding that every Jew ever to live was present at Sinai, when the Torah was revealed to the people of Israel.

I love the connection between Internet dating and Torah, which brings together cutting-edge technology and eternal Torah-based values. Rather than undermining Jewish tradition, "Saw you at Sinai" reinforces the link between 21st-century life and our ancestral faith.

Similarly, modern tools of interpretation have the power to enhance our understanding of Torah, of biblical and rabbinic texts, without needing to compromise our tenacity in maintaining Jewish practice. As long as we recognize the voice – or voices – of God in the texts we study, our faith will be enhanced by continuing to grapple with every word lovingly handed down to us from generation to generation. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Union members

Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union, Local 181, Toronto, 1937.

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE, ITEM 1620

SeeJN | Victory over Germany

FLASH 90 PHOTO

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was one of several Israeli leaders who marked the 70th anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany on May 7.

From Yoni's Desk

Behind the Jewish music

In the early 2000s, a band burst onto the scene and changed Jewish music forever. In honour of Jewish Music Week, currently ongoing in Toronto, this is their story.

As the four lads took the stage for their first show, little did anyone know that Jewish music would never be the same again. They had met in the day school system and spent summers together. Some of them had previously played together in other musical projects, but nothing could have prepared concertgoers for what they were about to witness.

In those early, formative years, members of the band that would come to be known as Shirayim ("leftovers" in Hebrew) honed their chops on Toronto's Jewish-events circuit. They played bar and bat mitzvahs, school carnivals and half-empty halls on second-rate Jewish holidays. Wherever the boys plugged in, controversy followed. They were met with anguished cries: "Turn it down," "Turn it down even more" and "For God's sake, please stop with that noise." But the band, now a five-piece, kept on truckin'.

All that time spent on the road, hauling gear from one synagogue to the next, helped the guys refine their trademark sound – raw, aggressive, in-your-face and utterly danceable. There was nothing else like it, and with every passing gig, Shirayim was winning over more and more fans. To the city's establishment, the band represented all that was wrong with young Jews; to a generation of teenagers, they were Jewish music's loveable bad boys.

Soon enough, they were headlining on Yom Ha'atzmaut and at the Walk for Israel. Shirayim had hit it big. But for these five 20-somethings, the question now became: What's next? Fame came with its fair share of benefits, sure, but the guys began to tire of the celebrity life. Some nights, they couldn't even hear themselves over the shrieks of the teenage throngs. They began to wonder if anyone was actually listening.

Shirayim had made its name playing for live audiences, but now the band retreated to the studio to write and record its magnum opus, a concept album called *Sons and Builders*. The new material saw Shirayim exploring its diverse roots in some unexpected ways. It was still intense and brash, of course, but also more introspective and, at times, verging on quiet.

As the record's release date approached, the guys wondered how their new sound would be received. They needn't have worried. Fans and critics offered high praise for *Sons and Builders*, and the band followed it up with a series of concerts across downtown Toronto. Orthodox youngsters lined up outside venues like the Horseshoe Tavern just to get a glimpse of Shirayim in action.

The band was now at the height of its popularity. And yet, after years together, the members of Shirayim were tiring of the grind. Our long, strange trip was over.

Music historians debate whether Shirayim ever officially broke up, or if its members simply drifted apart. Fans of the band still hope for one more show – a last hora, if you will. It's hard to say if that will ever happen, but at least we'll always have the music. Nothing can take that away. ■ — YONI

HISTORY

Il Duce's Jewish love affairs

Erol Araf

Although victory often eluded Benito Mussolini on the fields of Mars, it seldom abandoned him in the boudoirs of Venus.

A latter-day Casanova, Mussolini revelled in his deserved reputation as the quintessential Latin lover. His insatiable appetites led to two wives, hundreds of affairs, and numerous casual encounters. "There was a time when I had 14 women and took three or four of them every evening, one after the other," he once said.

Less known about Mussolini's affairs, however, are the passionate liaisons he had with three Jewish women. Clearly, despite his prejudices, Il Duce was an equal opportunity lover.

"From 1912 to 1914, Mussolini was the Che Guevara of his day, a living saint of leftism," writes David Ramsay Steele in *Mystery of Fascism*. A dedicated Marxist, Mussolini would mesmerize the masses with his magnetic personality, fierce penetrating eyes, courage, charisma and fiery oratorical gifts. Little wonder then that he caught the eye of Angelica Balabanoff, the socialite daughter of a Russian Jewish millionaire, who rejected her family's bourgeois lifestyle and proceeded to fall madly in love with Mussolini.

The pair met in Milan where Mussolini had begun his new job as editor of the leftist publication *Avanti*. He hired Balabanoff as his assistant editor because she knew Vladimir Lenin and was well respected in European socialist and labour movements.

In her biography, *My Life as a Rebel*, Balabanoff described their first meeting at an international celebration of the Paris Commune in Geneva: "He was one of the speakers. He sat tense and pale, nervously twisting his fingers, absorbed in himself and isolated from the crowd. He was more shabbily dressed than anyone else and more unkempt and dirty. But when he spoke, he acquired assurance, his eyes shone dark and fiery, and his square jaw pushed forward adding power to his words."

Their affair may well have been the reason behind Mussolini's decision to leave his long-suffering wife, Rachele, and their two-year-old daughter Edda in Forli when he moved to Milan. As discussed by Mussolini's biographer, Laura Fermi, a prevalent rumour of the time was that Edda might have been Balabanoff's illegitimate daughter adopted by Rachele to avoid a scandal. This was strenuously denied by both women and subsequently by Edda as well.

After Mussolini traversed from one ideological extreme to the other, a bitterly disappointed Balabanoff ended the affair. Later in life, as a committed anti-Fascist activist, she would reminisce about Mussolini's timorousness, lack of character, infidelity and "inspired mediocrity."

Of course, a clash in views was not the sole factor in their relationship's decline. While the ideological rift between the pair was certainly strongly felt, Mussolini's plethora of affairs could not have helped matters either.

Before Balabanoff entered the picture, around the time Edda was born, Mussolini experienced a torrid affair with a married Jewish woman of Polish descent, Fernanda Ostrovski. She too was a passionate socialist who gifted Mussolini with a son born in Trento. The child lived only a few months, and Ostrovski was heartbroken and eventually abandoned by Mussolini.

Mussolini later found solace in the arms of Margherita Sarfatti, a married Jewish woman who stood by him from his days as a socialist agitator all the way through to his ultimate rise to power.

Benito Mussolini

Their affair was unintentionally initiated by Sarfatti's husband, Cesare. When Sarfatti, already active in socialist causes, received a letter from Cesare in 1911 about "meeting a wonderful young man who [was] destined to dominate the party," she was instinctively attracted by the idea of a handsome youth unfurling the red flag and leading the masses to the barricades.

She finally met him in the salons of the left and became mesmerized by Mussolini's virile looks, intellectual energy and boundless self-confidence. Mussolini, too, was drawn to her as she was blonde, beautiful, wealthy, and the wife of a prominent jurist.

For more than 20 years, Mussolini and Sarfatti were involved in a love affair that saw the pair through political publications and intrigues, betrayal of close friends, changes of allegiances and coups d'état. To Mussolini, Sarfatti was an intimate friend, patron and adviser with whom he could share his innermost fears, ambitions and dreams in a way he could not with other women.

It was mainly thanks to her influence that he began to acquire bourgeois manners, shed his rough edges, alter his appearance and begin to take care of his personal hygiene, a trait not considered to be his forte. In short, as the only woman whose advice Mussolini actively sought out, Sarfatti played a key role in Mussolini's irresistible rise to fame and power. Indeed, she was so close to Mussolini that she can easily be described as one of the founders of Italian fascism.

However, by the 1930s, Sarfatti had lost her looks, and at the apogee of his power, Mussolini did not want to be encumbered by a Jewish woman from his modest past. Desperate not to lose him, Sarfatti converted to Catholicism and frequently reminded her lover that her son had died for Italy during World War I. Although her pleas fell on deaf ears, Sarfatti nevertheless remained steadfast in her love for and loyalty to Mussolini. Indeed, despite her former lover's anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic policies, she continued to write articles maintaining that there was no "Jewish question" in Italy and that Mussolini "would never follow Hitler's anti-Semitic policies."

Despite her claims that there was no cause for alarm, Sarfatti eventually had to escape to Argentina to save her life, and her sister Nella's family would go on to perish in Auschwitz. After the war, Sarfatti returned to Italy to resume her artistic career and published an unapologetic memoir in 1955. She remained in love with Mussolini all the way until she took her last breath in 1961.

Sarfatti's enduring love for Mussolini, even after the horrors of the Holocaust became public, confirms Thomas Mann's observation, "It is love, not reason, that is stronger than death." ■

Erol A. Araf is a Montreal-based Strategic Planning Consultant

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

How much does a Jewish funeral cost?

It depends on where you live in Canada

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

It's something none of us likes to think about, but we all know it's coming.

Death is inevitable, yet it remains a taboo subject in our society, surrounded by secrecy and swirling with the mystery of the unknown, even among many Jews.

In an effort to get some cold, hard facts *The CJN* did some research into the cost of Jewish burial across Canada. Not surprisingly, the price tag differs vastly according to the city in which you're laid to rest and the status of your membership at a particular synagogue in that locale.

Members of Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Halifax, N.S., for example, will pay $4,500 for Jewish burial, which includes burial fees of $2,000 and perpetual care of the gravesite for $2,500. The price also includes the cost of the coffin, the chapel fees for the eulogy service and the fee for the chevra kadisha. If you've not been a member of the synagogue for five years, or if you're not a member at all, the cost of burial jumps to $8,225. Extras in both instances are hospital pickup of the deceased, funeral home services and headstones.

In Winnipeg, a plot, Jewish burial and perpetual care costs $10,000 for members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek and $14,000 for non-members. Members don't have to pay extra for use of the chapel, but if you aren't a member, you'll be forking out more for that, as you also will if you hold the service at Chesed Shel Emes, a funeral home in the city, or elsewhere.

Saskatoon's Congregation Agudas Israel charges about $8,000 for Jewish burial for its members and $12,000 for non-members. Those prices are going up this year, warns Ralph Katzman, who heads the shul's cemetery committee, adding the fee includes the use of the synagogue's chapel and is a complete service, encompassing hospital or home pickup, coffin, taharah, a signing book and the burial plot. The price fluctuates with inflation and has gone up by about seven per cent over the past three years, he says. Another variable controlling the price of burial is the cost of the hearse, which is contracted out to a local funeral home.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEF'S FAIRLAWN MONUMENTS

If you're planning on dying in Vancouver, you'd better save up for the event. A plot at Schara Tzedeck Cemetery runs about $11,000 on average, though the price drops if you have a blood relative buried there or if you're a member of Congregation Schara Tzedeck. Less expensive plots can be found at other Jewish cemeteries in Metro Vancouver, like the one in Surrey, B.C., where plots cost $3,000 for synagogue members and $5,000 for non-members.

A funeral at Schara Tzedeck Cemetery, which includes use of the cemetery chapel, casket, halachic preparation, clergy fees, transportation to cemetery and administrative fees, among other items, adds another $11,000 to the equation. The costs include a licensed funeral director at $800, the chevra kadisha and halachic preparation at $1,260, and services of staff and overhead at $1,000.

Digging and filling the grave is an $1,100 expense, and having clergy at the funeral costs $800. One rabbi who spoke on condition of anonymity noted that he is paid $375 per funeral, but added that the rituals surrounding death are time consuming and involve visiting with family and preparing a eulogy. He estimated his total time at 10 hours.

For those without the funds, price is never a barrier to Jewish burial, says Howard Jampolsky, executive director of the Schara Tzedeck Cemetery board. When individuals or families can't afford the cost, efforts are always made to ensure that every Jew has a right to a Jewish burial. In the 2014 fiscal year, he estimated, the cemetery board subsidized between $150,000 and $170,000 worth of funeral expenses, including burial plots.

While expensive, the price of plots at Schara Tzedeck Cemetery is on par with other cemeteries in Vancouver, Jampolsky noted. "The City of Vancouver charges $22,500 for a two-person plot and at Ocean View Cemetery [in Burnaby, B.C.] they start at $32,000," he said.

In Richmond, B.C., Beth Tikvah Congregation charges members $14,000 for Jewish burial, including headstone and burial plot. But that's just for Jews who have been members three years or longer. If you've been a member for less than three years, you'll pay $19,000, and if you're not a member at all, $21,000. The synagogue refused to share a breakdown of how those costs were allocated.

Out east, in Ottawa, plot costs vary considerably by cemetery. At the Bank Street cemetery, plots cost $3,750, while at the Osgoode cemetery, they cost $2,400. Tammy Torontow, executive director of Ottawa's Jewish Memorial Gardens, said the funeral homes in the city handle coffin fees and hospital pickups for the deceased. Additional costs are for the opening and closing of a grave, which costs $2,700 in the winter and $2,200 in the summer.

In Toronto, caskets can range in price from $800 up to $35,000, according to Marc Benjamin, vice-president of operations at Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel. Established in 1922, the chapel takes care of everything related to the death of a Jewish individual. The costs can easily add up to $10,000-plus, and that's only for the least expensive burial plot and the cheapest casket.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

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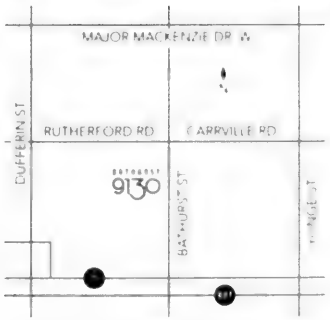

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The ties that bind Israel and Germany

DJ Schneeweiss and Walter Stechel

On Aug. 19, 1965, ambassador Rolf Pauls of Germany presented his credentials to Israel's president Zalman Shazar. The tension and solemnity of the occasion were evident. Formal intergovernmental relations were being launched between Israel and Germany in the dreadful shadow of the Shoah.

Three milestones paved the way for this historic rapprochement. The Luxembourg Agreement of 1952, which constituted the Federal Republic of Germany's assumption of responsibility for the consequences of the Holocaust; the meeting in March 1960 between David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, and Konrad Adenauer, Germany's first chancellor; and the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann.

The Luxembourg Agreement formed the foundation for opening a dialogue, which, after long years of deliberate, mutual and courageous effort, culminated in the meeting between Ben-Gurion and Adenauer. The Eichmann trial helped change the two countries' perception of each other, making it possible to look forward to a different future.

Formal diplomatic ties between Germany and Israel were established on May 12, 1965, a landmark day in the history of both countries. The 50 years since have been marked by the rapid development of relationships and contacts in all fields, and the burgeoning of a friendship that has become part of the bedrock of international affairs. German-Israeli ties now cover every possible field of human endeavour and achievement, from scientific research and technological innovation, to youth exchange programs, civic partnerships, municipal exchanges, cultural collaborations, sport, tourism and much more.

Today, a quarter of all Israelis have visited Germany, while more than 700,000 young people have participated in bilateral exchange projects. Meanwhile, a trade relationship worth a mere $100 million in 1960 has grown to $7.4 billion in 2013, making Germany Israel's third-most-important trading partner, after the United States and China. Israel, in turn, is Germany's second-most-important trading partner in the Near and Middle East.

At the government level, building upon the deep desire of both peoples, our countries have worked consistently to expand and deepen mutual trust and understanding, as well as the platforms for exchange and interaction that make it possible for these to flourish. Visits at the highest political levels have developed into regular exchanges, including annual government-to-government consultations and close co-ordination between trusted partners. Israeli President Reuven Rivlin was on a state visit in Germany last week.

At the core of Adenauer's and Ben-Gurion's efforts was the recognition on the German side of the need to demonstrate in the most concrete terms – to itself, to Israel and the Jewish world, and to the broader international community – that the country had detached from its Nazi past and was committed to the responsibility that the past had laid at Germany's door. For Israel, close relations with Germany were a geopolitical imperative for the young state, a matter of securing Israel's future in the family of nations, without forgetting the past.

The unique relationship built by our two nations in the five decades of our ties has helped both countries normalize our international standing, entrench our security and economic well-being, and make meaningful contributions to global society.

This success is founded upon three key principles: Germany's ironclad commitment to the security of Israel, for which every Israeli is grateful; our mutual commitment to remembrance and education of the next generation; and our mutual understanding that the well-being of our people requires that we work together to build a safe and prosperous future for all.

German-Israeli relations are built on this dual commitment to the past and the future. A unique trust and a real friendship have been courageously fashioned out of the abyss created by the horrors of the Nazi era. We are proud of what our two countries have achieved together and full of optimism for what lies ahead. ■

DJ Schneeweiss is the consul general of Israel to Toronto and Western Canada. Walter Stechel is consul general of the Federal Republic of Germany in Toronto.

What's the most powerful form of Jewish education?

Daniel Held

As parents make choices about their children's education, I'm often asked what is the most powerful setting of Jewish learning. Weighing day schools and daycares, supplementary schools and Israel experiences, youth movements, camps, the March of the Living, Birthright Israel, Diller, synagogue programs, JCCs and the dozens of other options, parents want to know what experiences will guide their children toward lives imbued with Jewish meaning.

The question is reasonable and rooted in concern for our children's Jewish future, but it's also rooted in the belief that Jewish education and identity development lies in the hands of others and not our own. That's not the case.

My response to these parents is that the most powerful setting of Jewish learning is the home. The character of a family's Jewish life is the most important predictor of a child's future Jewish life. Parents' modelling of Jewish living – in their own actions and in their decisions for their children – is a key ingredient in forming strong Jewish identities. The decisions to go together to synagogue, celebrate Shabbat, give tzedakah, and generally make Jewish decisions have a profound impact on the ways that children think about Judaism.

What's more, Jewish education – even in its most robust forms in Jewish day schools and other immersive environments – cannot stand alone. While a child may be able to master math or science, reading or geography in school without outside support, the same is not true for Jewish education. If learning is not reinforced at home, it loses its relevance to, and resilience in, a child's life.

There is no one-stop shop for Jewish learning. No one setting of education – not matter how strong – can be expected to stand on its own. Rather, the most powerful form of Jewish education is a cocktail of educative experiences.

Some time ago, I visited a synagogue which had an open playroom, but no educational children's program on Shabbat morning. When I asked why, I was told that the vast majority of children in the shul are day school students, so they don't need Jewish education on Shabbat. I've heard similar stories of families who say that their child "gets Jewish" throughout the year, so they take the summer off to go to a non-Jewish camp. This thinking places an unfair burden on the school. No one setting of Jewish education is the panacea. When a child has multiple touch points, with different curricula, different modalities of teaching, and, most importantly, different teachers and role models, the impact on his Jewish identity is multiplied.

Finally, in making decisions about our children's Jewish education, we must realize that it's not about one time in their lives. I've been asked when is the time to send a child to Jewish educational programs. Some would like to say that preschool gives the necessary grounding. Others argue that Jewish education up to bar mitzvah provides the basic literacy a child needs to participate in Jewish life, while still others argue that high school is the crucial period of identity formation.

These views are shortsighted. Jewish learning, to have a true impact on one's life, has to be lifelong. It begins at birth, when we read stories about Shabbat, the holidays and tzedakah and continues throughout life into adulthood.

The question of what is the most powerful form of Jewish education comes from a place of love and commitment to our children. The answer, however, is not as simple as selecting from a list of A, B or C, rather, it's D, all of the above. One researcher coined the phrase "the more the more" – the more time, the more touch points, the more role models a child is exposed to, the more her Jewish identity and commitment will grow. ■

Daniel Held is executive director of the Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Giving a voice to our Canadian sages

Jean M. Gerber

Passover is behind us, Shavuot ahead. But it was only after the seders that we were given a copy of the *Canadian Haggadah Canadienne*. What a treat!

We own over 50 different Haggadot: a huge facsimile of the Ryeland Haggadah and others from Spain and Ashkenaz, a tiny Maxwell House coffee one, a Ben Shahn one with an introduction by Louis Finkelstein, and the modern Moss Haggadah. Each comes with a wonderful back story.

But to have one published in Canada, with commentary from across the nation in French and English is unique. We received it too late for inclusion in this year's feasts, but there is always next year in Vancouver, if not in Jerusalem.

We loved the cover photo "Opening of the Manischewitz Co. Matzah Plant" in Quebec! Although we have noticed that, over the years, the matzot have gotten smaller – but no less, well, effective.

We looked for any photos from "the West." And there they were: Lipton, Sask.; Lethbridge, Alta.; Calgary, Winnipeg, Victoria, Prince George, Burnaby. And our own beloved Rabbi Pastinsky in Vancouver. Each picture seems to have been chosen to complement the text and commentary.

But the pictures are not the primary thing, although they do span a continent, creating a pictorial history of Jews in Canada. The main event is the commentary.

What a treasure-house. Not only do the pictures tell a transcontinental story, but the commentary spans Canada's denominational spectrum.

Naturally we looked for *Klei Kodesh* (community and shul leaders) from Vancouver. There they were.

Our own Rabbi Jonathan Infeld of Beth Israel Congregation had the opportunity to comment on the maror. The pictures symbolized some bitter lives, including a ragged prospector, Marco Zimmerman, in the Yukon c. 1920, who had a bitter life, indeed, but a chosen one. Not so lives of the slaves in Egypt.

As Rabbi Infeld writes, "Many Canadian Jews are Holocaust survivors or direct descendants of survivors [as he is]... But as we move further and further away from the terrible tragedy, the taste of the maror in the midst of a joyous celebration will help us feel the history of our people."

A favourite picture of mine is a parade in Toronto celebrating the new State of Israel. On the back of a "Reliable Movers" truck stands J.B. Salsberg, a one-time activist in the Canadian Communist party, above a sign that reads: "Greetings on this historical day of our people's victory... J.B. Salsberg"

The picture introduces the *Hallel* portion of the seder. Hallelujah!

Rabbi Andrew Rosenblatt of Vancouver's Schara Tzedeck synagogue comments on the portion of the seder featuring four rabbis discussing the telling of the Exodus story at night (really they are discussing time for the recitation of the evening *Shema*, but that is not the point here).

There is, he says, a historical Exodus, but also by telling the story we actually can participate in that Exodus: "the narrative of the narration is itself a form of Exodus."

There is so much more in this edition that we will explore next year, maybe in conjunction with the *New American Hagaddah* produced several years ago. Each will provide thoughts from current generations of scholars and laypeople.

If the Exodus event is our foundational event, the Haggadah is our most loved guidebook to it. Every year, we can find something new in this document, produced over the last 2,000 years. The Haggadah is itself a commentary on our peoples' history. Now Canadian Jewry is a part of that history.

Rabbi ben Lakish remarked: "Say not... how much better were the old days than these! Say not... if Rabbi Tarfon were alive, then I should go to study Torah with him. In the end, you only have the sages of your own generation."

Not that we lack for sages – indeed, we have our own, Canadian ones! And they are much in evidence in this Haggadah, as they should be. ■

Will Iran's support for anti-Israel forces increase?

Paul Michaels

It never fails. No sooner did Israel announce in late April that it was sending a team of 260 rescue workers and medical staff to Nepal in response to that country's catastrophic earthquake than the sniping began: how dare Israel divert attention from the terrible hardships of Gaza, where it has imposed a blockade since 2007?

"Easier to address a far-away humanitarian disaster than the nearby one of Israel's making in Gaza," tweeted Ken Roth, director of Human Rights Watch.

On the subject of Gaza's humanitarian crisis being "one of Israel's making," how does it escape Roth, among other "human rights defenders," that, as reigning authority in Gaza – despite its "unity" agreement last year with the Palestinian Authority – Hamas is the one that bears overwhelming responsibility for the state of misery it has brought upon its own people?

Then again, given Human Rights Watch's record of anti-Israel bias, it's simply too appealing for Roth to ignore Hamas' repressive and callous policies toward its citizens and instead place all blame for their plight on Israel.

Roth's attitude is outrageous. After all, it's Hamas that has chosen the self-destructive path of pursuing a campaign to eliminate Israel from what Hamas deems to be sacred Islamic land. This is the "occupation" Hamas "resists" no matter what the cost to its 1.8 million civilians.

Last summer, in the latest iteration of its "resistance," Hamas initiated another war against Israel by, among other things, launching scores of missiles, many from dense urban areas, indiscriminately into Israel. In an effort to stop the missiles, Israel targeted the launch sites and their command and control centres. Despite unprecedented precautions by Israel to avoid civilian casualties, hundreds of Gazans were killed and extensive damage was caused to homes and apartments – damage Hamas sought to showcase to the international community via the hundreds of foreign correspondents allowed into Gaza, by Israel, to cover the 50-day conflict.

Hamas' cynical, criminal tactics, including using its civilians as human shields, paid off handsomely: the longer the war went on, the greater the international reaction against Israel for "causing" a humanitarian crisis. Since not one of the hundreds of journalists reporting from Gaza showed a single missile being fired from there (even though according to an August 2014 Amnesty International report, between July 8 and Aug. 26, 4,881 rockets and 1,753 mortars were fired from that small territory), many in the West lost sight of the actual cause of the war, Hamas' missiles, and focused only on the effect, Israel's reaction.

In response to the approximately 100,000 Gazans left homeless, what has Hamas done? Instead of plans to rebuild destroyed homes for its people, Hamas brags only about building, with Iranian financial support and encouragement, new attack tunnels, 32 of which were discovered and destroyed by Israel during the war.

Con Coughlin, the defence editor of Britain's *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, reported last month that Iran was supplying Hamas with "tens of millions of dollars" to help rebuild its tunnel network, and is also funding Hamas with new missile supplies. At a time when battle lines are being drawn between Iranian-led Shia forces and Saudi-led Sunni forces in the wider region, the fact that Shia Iran is again supporting Sunni Hamas against Israel shows just how dominant the anti-Israel determination of both Hamas and Iran is, to say nothing of Iran's major Shia proxy, Hezbollah, on Israel's northern border.

If Iran, reportedly suffering under economic sanctions because of its illicit nuclear program, can fund Hamas and Hezbollah and, according to other sources, prop up Syrian president Bashar Assad with a billion dollars a month, just imagine how much more emboldened it will be this summer if it receives tens – possibly hundreds – of billions in sanctions relief following the signing of a U.S.-led nuclear agreement. ■

As this column goes to press, unconfirmed reports are circulating about indirect Israeli-Hamas contacts aimed at securing a three- to five-year ceasefire. We should soon find out if there's any validity to them.

News

Intermarriage is an opportunity, Oraynu speaker says

JODIE SHUPAC
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Paul Golin says he, his Japanese wife and "half-breed" daughter are "Hitler's worst nightmare."

Jews today rarely practise Judaism in the same ways that their grandparents did, so why do people cling to the idea that their hypothetical grandchildren must carry out the same brand of Judaism as they do?

Paul Golin, associate executive director of the New York-based Jewish Outreach Institute, an independent organization that reaches out to unaffiliated and intermarried families and helps the organized Jewish community better welcome them, posed this question to the audience at his May 4 talk about reframing ideas on intermarriage.

Hosted by the Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, the event was titled "Intermarriage: Optimism and Opportunity" and was held at the University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre, drawing about 75 people.

Golin's presentation stressed that rather than focusing on the fear that rising rates of intermarriage threaten Jewish continuity, as so many in the Jewish community across denominations do, Jews should be asking themselves "how we can show our Jewish kids and grandchildren that we value organized Judaism, not because we're afraid for its survival but because it brings us meaning?"

Golin began by sharing his personal experience of growing up and being told by his maternal grandmother, a Holocaust survivor, "If you marry someone non-Jewish, you'll be finishing Hitler's job."

Golin said that he "didn't buy this" from a young age, feeling that it clashed with the values he was learning about judging people as individuals and not according to their race or religion.

He eventually did marry a non-Jewish woman of Japanese origin, and the two have a son together, whom they raise to have a strong Jewish identity as well as a connection to his Japanese heritage.

"I actually think I'm living Hitler's worst nightmare," Golin joked. "I'm a free Jew, I'm married to a Japanese woman and we have a beautiful 'half-breed' – take that Hitler."

Though organized Judaism typically sees intermarriage and assimilation as part of a "continuity crisis," he said, they can be viewed through a more positive lens.

Jews in contemporary North America are "the most embraced, respected and powerful Jewish community the world has ever known," Golin maintained, and the idea that "we are being absorbed into a larger culture and becoming unrecognizable [as Jews]" is one he finds highly challenging.

"I feel both 100 per cent Jewish and 100 per cent American. I think you can be both – Canadian too – and that you don't have to choose. That's an amazing new thing for the Jewish community," he said.

Further, while intermarriage and other Jewish trends – such as a decreased sense of religiosity, diminished "ethnicity or tribalism" and the breakdown of "fixed Jewish denominational identities" – may change the way Judaism looks and is practised, it doesn't mean it will cease to exist.

Golin acknowledged that the 2013 Pew Research Center's Portrait of Jewish Americans caused something of a panic among much of the organized Jewish community for pointing to significant rates of intermarriage and assimilation, but he emphasized more optimistically that it also shows that "there are 6.7 million U.S. Jews right now, which is more than at any time in history."

For Golin, the "most damning number" in the report is that only 28 per cent of those surveyed ranked being part of a Jewish community as the thing that's essential to their Jewishness.

His organization works to counter this widespread sense of disconnect, he explained, "to understand the mindset of folks who don't see the value of being part of the Jewish community… and to show them the benefit of it."

While those who feel less connected are often those who have intermarried or are children of intermarried couples, Golin is optimistic that greater inclusiveness for mixed-faith couples and families and strong community outreach efforts can bring people back to organized Judaism – be it through religious, cultural or ancestral channels, or a combination of these elements.

Golin advised synagogues and other Jewish institutions that are interested in being more inclusive to explicitly say in their literature that "intermarried families are welcome," and to consider holding special programs for mixed-faith families.

"I also think it's important for us to have conversations about why we're maintaining certain boundaries," he said. "I would say [to institutions] to do an audit of all the boundaries you're maintaining and see which are authentic to who you are as Jews." ■

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COR asks labour board to rescind compliance order

PAUL LUNGEN
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The Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) has reserved judgment in a case that could re-open an issue over whether kosher supervisors, or mashgichim, can be considered management personnel exempt from overtime provisions of the Employment Standards Act (ESA).

Board chair Bernard Fishbein heard arguments last week from the Kashruth Council of Canada, which certifies kosher products under the COR label, and the Ministry of Labour's director of employment standards.

The Kashruth Council brought a motion asking the OLRB to rescind a March 5, 2014 compliance order by a Ministry of Labour officer that required the Kashruth Council to pay its mashgichim overtime pay. The Kashruth Council argued it should not be bound by the compliance order, because a June 17, 2013, OLRB decision found that mashgichim are part of the organization's management or supervisory team, making them exempt from the overtime pay requirements of the ESA.

Israel Balter, lawyer for the Kashruth Council, argued the director should be prevented from re-opening an issue that has already been decided.

But Katherine Ballweg, the director's lawyer, argued that the director was not present at the hearing that led to the June 2013 decision. That hearing was a one-sided presentation of the evidence and should not be relied upon by the OLRB, she said. Ballweg also argued that the ruling was specific to that case and should not affect the subsequent compliance order.

If the OLRB rejects the Kashruth Council's motion, a new hearing is likely, in which the status of mashgichim will be adjudicated.

The Kashruth Council has long argued that it pays its mashgichim beyond statutory requirements and offers greater flexibility in work hours than is required by law.

However, that hasn't stopped the Kashruth Council from being subject to labour proceedings involving its employees before. In 2012, an employment standards officer found that the Kashruth Council owed 58 employees more than $10,000 in overtime, vacation pay and other wages. The Kashruth Council settled with all the employees, except three, whom it paid about $140.

The Kashruth Council has argued that it is a religious organization and is exempt from the overtime provisions of the ESA.

A June 2013 OLRB decision, written by vice-chair Tanya Wacyk, recounted some of the legal proceedings involving the Kashruth Council. She noted that a hearing pitting the Kashruth Council against former mashgiach Morley Rand and the director of employment standards, had been split, with the first part held to determine whether the Kashruth Council was a holder of a "religious office" and so excluded from the provisions of the ESA. The OLRB ruled against the Kashruth Council in that part of the case, she stated.

Richard Rabkin

The second part of the case, which looked at whether the Kashruth Council's mashgichim are supervisory personnel, was held in the absence of the director of standards and of Rand, who gave notice he wouldn't attend. Rand had asked that Wacyk recuse herself from the case "on the basis of prejudice, personal bias and a lack of impartiality." Wacyk rejected Rand's request and heard the case.

Ballweg said she didn't know why the director didn't take part in the second part of the hearing. With the Kashruth Council the only party in attendance and giving evidence, Wacyk found that Rand "performed work of a supervisory or managerial character and that pursuant to [ESA regulations] he was not entitled to overtime pay."

In a statement provided to *The CJN* by managing director Richard Rabkin, the Kashruth Council said: "Our mashgichim are the lifeblood of our organization… This is why COR pays our mashgichim overtime, and our overtime practices have been found by the Ontario Ministry of Labour to be 'a greater right or benefit to the employees under the provisions of the act.'

"By treating mashgichim as 'supervisors'… mashgichim have more flexibility to work additional hours if they so choose, thereby earning more money. Our method of overtime payment, which has been recognized by the board as more generous than the minimum guidelines set out in the statute, is better for our mashgichim, for our caterers, and for kosher consumers." ■

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Film fest revises ad policy after Israeli flag complaints

LAUREN KRAMER
PACIFIC CORRESPONDENT

Jonathan Lerner

Shana Myara

The Vancouver Queer Film Festival has revised its sponsorship and advertising policy after being criticized for accepting an ad that included an Israeli flag.

The VQFF came under fire last summer for an advertisement by Yad b'Yad, a Vancouver-based group that supports the Jewish LGBTQ community. The ad, which appeared in a printed festival guidebook, depicted an Israeli flag alongside a pride flag and was congratulating VQFF on its 26th anniversary.

Out on Screen, which runs the Aug. 13-23 festival, announced a revision of its policy in an open letter to the community last month. "The issue that is of paramount importance to some members of our community is the festival's stance on Israel," the April 23 letter said. "There has been incredible and polarized debate regarding our choices when we've presented queer Israeli film, or when we've published advertising from a local group that presents the Israeli flag alongside a Pride flag."

The organization's policy now prohibits advertisements depicting "overt expressions of nationalism," including flags. The VQFF also says it will refuse funding from foreign governments, consulates or embassies, except for filmmakers' travel expenses.

The revised policy was a direct response to accusations of "pinkwashing" levelled against the VQFF for its inclusion of the Yad b'Yad ad last year. Three filmmakers withdrew their films from the festival, and they and other protesters criticized the festival for trying to distract attention from the plight of Palestinians in Israel by focusing instead on Israel's gay rights record. They demanded that the festival apologize for the ad, develop a "pinkwashing" policy and join the BDS campaign against Israel.

In its revised policy, Out on Screen refused to join the BDS movement, but said it would follow its own "anti-oppression framework" to determine its advertising and sponsorship policies and film curation.

Jonathan Lerner, spokesperson for Yad b'Yad, said his organization was deeply disappointed by the policy changes. "This prevents any nationality from expressing its own identity and support for the Queer Film Festival and curtails all national groups from demonstrating their country's pride for the LGBTQ community," he said.

"This is a policy of institutionalized censorship that does little to promote inclusivity, diversity and understanding and is contrary to the broad values expressed by LGBTQ communities in Canada and around the world."

Last year, Yad b'Yad was among a few religious and ethnic sponsors listed in the program. Others were Salaam: Queer Muslim Community of Canada and the South Asian Film Education Society. At the time, Lerner said the VQFF took the unprecedented step of donating Yad b'Yad's advertising fee to a third party. "They publicly stated they would not accept our money, and we were the only group treated as such," he said.

Since last August, he added, Yad b'Yad and Vancouver's Jewish community leadership have tried to engage the VQFF in dialogue to resolve this matter. "Each and every attempt was rejected and dismissed," he said.

As a result of the revised policy, only Israeli filmmakers who demonstrate "critical dialogues about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Israeli occupation" will be allowed to contribute to the festival, he noted.

"The VQFF has proactively and very publicly weighed into the Arab-Israeli conflict," Lerner said. "Its specific policies are aimed at silencing proud supporters of the LGBTQ community and of Israel, all while remaining silent on the plight of gays and lesbians in places such as Iran, Syria, China and even the Palestinian Authority. One can only judge the VQFF by its very public actions and obvious inactions."

Shana Myara, director of festival programming for Out on Screen, said in a statement to *The CJN* that the organization's "role in convening dialogue is not always easy, but it is essential. This process has enabled us to reflect on and clarify how we step up in ways to make space for everyone, and to curate with an eye towards those most often erased from the mainstream."

She added: "We now have stronger policies that will enable us to make sure all our partnerships reflect our values and allow us to focus on bringing people together through film – to put artists and their work forward to advance a more open, inclusive society."

She said the only funding the VQFF has received from consular sources was from the German Consulate, which gave less than $1,000 for its German film screenings. ■

Jewish war vets honoured 70 years after end of WWII

Eugene Kats, left, Valentin Rabinovich centre, and Arkadiy Novokolsky all served in the Soviet Armed Forces. They were among the veterans who were honoured May 8 at a community celebration marking the 70th anniversary of VE Day. BARBARA SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Eugene Kats looked very distinguished in his side cap and navy blazer, which was pinned with dozens of military medals.

Kats, 90, fought with the Polish resistance until 1944, when the partisans were absorbed by the Red Army. He was in the heavy gun division and part of the Soviet force that drove the Germans out of Russia.

Arkadiy Novokolsky, 93, was an engineer and pilot in the Russian air force. He developed a night-vision camera for reconnaissance work and flew missions to test the equipment.

Valentin Rabinovich, 93, fought in the anti-aircraft artillery corps of the Red Army and helped to break the siege of Leningrad, which lasted from September 1941 to January 1944.

Kats, Novokolsky and Rabinovich were among the Jewish veterans who were honoured May 8 at a celebration marking the 70th anniversary of VE Day, when Nazi Germany surrendered to Allied forces in Europe.

About 200 people gathered at the National Restaurant and Banquet Hall for this community event, which was an opportunity to highlight the contribution of Jewish veterans from the former Soviet Union, all of whom are members of the group Jewish War Veterans of Canada. Speakers included MPP Monte Kwinter, former city counsellor Norm Gardner, University of Toronto professor Anna Shternshis and entrepreneur Marat Ressin.

Shternshis noted that Jewish soldiers played a vital role in the fight against the Nazis. Of the 1.5 million Jewish soldiers who fought in the war, 550,000 were American and another third or 500,000 were in the Soviet Armed Forces. "Some of the soldiers who fought against fascism are here in this room."

She said that many Soviet Jews who served were over-represented in the infantry, where they were very vulnerable. Many of these Jewish infantrymen were killed.

However, Shternshis pointed out that Ukrainian Jewish infantrymen had a higher survival rate than their mothers, because Jewish civilians were targeted and killed by the Nazis. "Less than one per cent of the Jewish civilians who stayed in Ukraine survived war."

Kwinter stressed the importance of remembering the history of the war and the ultimate sacrifice made by so many soldiers. "Victory came at a high cost."

The evening's lead sponsor, the Steinberg/Brody family, provided funding in honour of the Soviet Jewish veterans.

Elen Steinberg, a philanthropist and entrepreneur, is also the founder of SovietJewishVeterans.com, a website that documents the individual histories of the Russian Jewish veterans who came to Canada.

She started the project in 2010 because there was so little information about Jewish World War II vets who had served in the Soviet Armed Forces.

Steinberg said she felt an urgency about moving forward on the project quickly because of the advanced age of the veterans. "I thought if not now, then when? We have to do something now to remember them. We're running out of time."

She did fundraising and also got money from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, so she was able to proceed with the website, which today has more than 60 stories, complete with subtitles in English.

Stacey and David Cynamon, were also key supporters of the evening as were Renee and Ralph Wolfe. The Wolfes sponsored the evening's entertainment in memory of Renee's mother, Nina Goldstein. She was honoured by the Soviet government for helping children during the siege of Leningrad. Her story can also be found on SovietJewishVeterans.com ■

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GUEST VOICE

The legacy of Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

A great rabbi was walking into the beit midrash, the study hall, when he heard a pay phone ring near the entry way. He stopped to answer the phone, and heard the voice of a young woman on the other end. The rabbi asked how he could be of help. She requested that he retrieve her boyfriend from the study hall, and the great rabbi – the academy head – obligingly sought out the young man in the study hall and informed him that he had received a phone call.

Stunned that his rosh yeshiva had taken time out of his busy schedule for this phone call, the young man sheepishly went outside and picked up the receiver. His girlfriend said hello, and asked him, "Who was the nice man named Aharon who spoke to me on the phone?"

Indeed, who was this great scholar and saint, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein?

Stories like this one have been spreading through Israeli and North American Jewish media in the weeks since Rabbi Lichtenstein passed away at the end of April. These stories rarely describe his stunning erudition, deep faith and masterful scholarship. Instead they portray a person of fine character and humble demeanour.

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein was born in Paris in 1933. He escaped with his family to the United States before World War II, where he studied in Yeshiva Chaim Berlin under Rabbi Yitchok Hutner and later under Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik and his brother Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik at Yeshiva University.

From a young age, Rabbi Lichtenstein was recognized as both a genius and an amazingly diligent student, as he quickly grew to prominence within the modern Orthodox community. After earning a PhD in English literature from Harvard University in 1962, Rabbi Lichtenstein served as a rosh yeshiva at Yeshiva University. In 1971, he answered the call of Rabbi Yehuda Amital to join him at the helm of Yeshivat Har Etzion, near Jerusalem. There, he taught and mentored thousands of students, authored hundreds of publications, and became the standard bearer for a vision of Judaism that engaged the complexities of modern life while remaining firmly rooted in Torah. Last year, Rabbi Lichtenstein received the Israel Prize, Israel's highest civilian honour, for Jewish religious literature.

But back to the stories.

One year during *tikkun layl shavuot* the all-night study session to celebrate the giving of the Torah – Rabbi Lichtenstein disappeared from the beit midrash. The students continued their learning, when suddenly they heard the voice of their teacher. They looked around but could not see him. No one knew where his voice was coming from. They students searched out and eventually found Rabbi Lichtenstein in the balcony, delivering a personal class to his daughter, Estee.

Here's another: A young Rabbi Lichtenstein was once playing basketball with his students when he suddenly stopped the game and said that he would not play anymore. The boys, he argued, were not playing ethically. When one of them asked what ethics has to do with basketball, he explained that if everyone did not put their heart into the game – working hard on defence and offence – then they were compromising on how the game should be played.

These stories, and many more like them, tell us something important about Rabbi Lichtenstein, and about the Torah and the Jewish People. They reveal that such fine personalities still walk this earth. They expose a Torah that is still capable of honing a man's character and generating unique human goodness. The stories show us that the genes and the culture that produced men like Rabbi Akiva still operate among us.

In an era such as our own, when so much cynicism surrounds authority figures, these stories are essential. They teach us that great men can still be good men. ■

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler is the rabbi of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation in Toronto.

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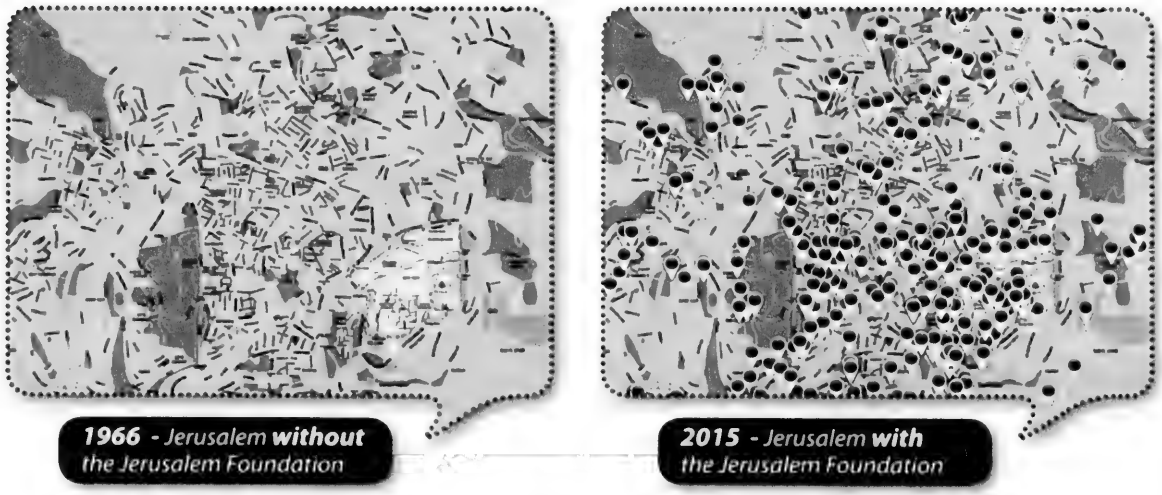

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IS A LAWYER NECESSARY IF ONE OF US IS KEEPING THE HOUSE?

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B. A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 33 years

Question: I have been married for 33 years. My husband and I are on the verge of divorce. We have a house worth about $280,000. We do not wish to sell it after the divorce, one of us will keep it on mutual understanding. Do we have to see a lawyer? If not, how do I go about this?

Answer: Should you see a lawyer? Does it snow in Calgary?

You should both see a lawyer if for no other reason than to draft the legal documentation to transfer one spouse's interest to the other and to ensure the transfer is properly registered with the government Land Registry Office. If one spouse is assuming the mortgage on the property entirely, the spouse who is transferring his/her interest should make sure that the transferor is being completely removed from the mortgage in case of a future fault. The lawyer will ensure that happens. It is best if the spouse staying in the home pays out the old mortgage by replacing it with a new one. However, before anything happens, unless that lawyer is knowledgeable about family law and can serve as a mediator, you should both obtain independent legal advice to ensure that an even split is appropriate. Even then, both of you will require two independent legal advice certificates before signing anything. If the home is the only asset, then at the very least the law recognizes that the fair market value incorporates notional costs of disposition, such as four to six percent in real estate commissions and $750-$1250 in lawyer's fees when the property is actually sold to a third party. But since the property is not actually being sold to a third party, lawyers normally agree to discount the market value of such notional costs of disposition once you and your spouse have agreed upon the figure.

Secondly, in many cases, after such a lengthy marriage it would not be unusual to divide the equity in such a home ***unequally***. After 33 years your husband may have accumulated a net worth that could include the value of an interest in a profitable business, a large private government pension, substantial RRSP's, significant real estate holdings and cash in accounts or securities that he acquired or that grew substantially during the course of the marriage. As a result, you may possibly be entitled to equalization payments to cover the difference between the increase in his net worth and yours. Accordingly, it may not be so simple as to split up the net proceeds before calculating how much he might owe you as a result of the marriage under Ontario family law.

You would be well advised to consult a competent family law lawyer.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, with experience in family law for 33 years. Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit

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Sponsored by the Community for Jewish Culture of B'Nai Brith Canada.

A night of fashion helps give cardiac care to kids

From left are models Samantha Sokol, Ally Krystal, Carly Diamond, Nicole Rose, Jaime Shedletsky and Rebecca Baruch LUMINOUS WEDDINGS PHOTO

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

It costs $10,000 to save a child's life, said Marni Brinder Byk, the new executive director of Save a Child's Heart (SACH) Canada, at a May 5 fashion fundraiser.

The event was the first event of its kind for the Israeli charity's Canadian branch, which works to raise awareness and funds to enable its Israeli partner organization to provide free, life-saving cardiac surgery to children from developing countries.

SACH also trains surgeons and medical professionals from developing nations so that they will one day have the knowledge and skills to establish independent treatment centres in their countries.

"A Night of Fashion from the Heart," held at Holt Renfrew on Bloor Street and hosted in collaboration with Holt Renfrew, included an in-store dessert reception, speakers from SACH in Israel, a mini-fashion show and an opportunity for attendees to shop at a number of the Holt Renfrew's luxury boutiques, including Gucci and Chanel.

With 10 per cent of profits from the evening's shopping going to SACH, Brinder Byk said that although final sales numbers were still undetermined, the event met its goal to bring in at least $100,000 in sales, which would enable it to fund at least one surgery.

"Ten percent of $100,000... covers the cost of bringing a child and their parent or guardian to Israel, including flights and accommodation, as well as the cost of care. With every $10,000, we can save the life of a child – that's our magic number," she said.

About 200 people – mostly women – mingled and sampled wine and hors d'oeuvres in the mezzanine of the store's shoe department before opening remarks by Holt Renfrew vice-president James Watt, SACH Foundation vice-chair Riva Grinshpan and Brinder Byk.

Brinder Byk then introduced guest speakers Dr. Hagi Dekel, an Israeli pediatric cardiac surgeon from SACH; Dr. Yayu Mekonnen, an Ethiopian pediatric cardiac surgeon at SACH, and Fatima Sarsour, the co-ordinator and translator for Palestinian and Arab-speaking families at SACH.

Mekonnen, who has been in Israel for the past three years on a fellowship at SACH, will, when he returns to Ethiopia, be the very first pediatric heart surgeon in the country.

"Ethiopia is a big country population-wise, but we've never had a pediatric heart surgeon before, so anyone who needs cardiac surgery has to go abroad if they can pay for it. And if they can't, it's very sad," he said.

He noted that SACH does open heart surgery for about 200 patients a year and other interventional procedures for about 50 patients a year, and stressed the importance of supporting SACH.

"It doesn't matter where you come from. Kids are the future of the world. What brought everyone together tonight is kids."

Sarsour, who lives in Israel in the Arab town of Kfar Kassam, has worked at SACH for the past seven years.

She has no reservations about working for an Israeli organization, she said

"I know for some people, who don't know about the complicated reality we live in, it sounds weird for an Arab girl to live in Israel, but no, we live together. I have many Jewish friends. I studied at Tel Aviv University. I have many Jewish friends at work," she said.

Sarsour said she has seen mutual understanding develop between Israeli and Palestinian parents of SACH patients. According to the organization's website, nearly half of all children treated by SACH come from the Palestinian Authority, and more than 1,500 Palestinian children have undergone open heart surgery there since SACH's founding

"Palestinian families often have to come through borders and need permits to come to Israel. They usually don't have relatives who can come to the hospital. They are alone," she said. "Sometimes I see co-operation between Israeli and Palestinian parents. A Palestinian family will say, 'My Israeli neighbour helped me watch my baby while I went to eat.' Despite the complicated reality we live in, I see this co-operation. There is still some hope."

The presentation concluded with six young women, all current or past SACH volunteers, modelling Holt Renfrew outfits. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

Toronto couple returns from Nepal after earthquake

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Toronto residents Yaacov Ben-Israel and Judy Rosenberg Ben-Israel returned April 30 from nearly two weeks in Nepal feeling extremely fortunate.

The couple, both in their 60s and both chiropractors, found themselves caught in the April 25 earthquake that devastated the country as they made their way back from a six-day trek in the Himalayas to the city of Kathmandu.

Though left physically unscathed by the earthquake, which registered 7.8 on the Richter scale and has killed more than 7,000 people to date, the Ben-Israels witnessed some of the destruction, chaos and human suffering that ensued.

"We were left intact, healthy and not injured in any way, but so many Nepalese lost their lives, relatives, houses, properties, so I feel very fortunate," Yaacov, who is originally from Israel, told *The CJN* a day after he and his wife had returned to Toronto.

Accompanied by a local guide and a porter, the Ben-Israels had stopped in an area just southwest of Kathmandu to eat lunch at a roadside restaurant that Yaacov described as "a four- or five-storey building on the slope of a very steep mountain," when the building began shaking violently.

Thinking that the building itself was the problem, they retreated to the road. "It wasn't the building that was the problem, it was the whole ground," Yaacov said. "We saw dust rising on the mountains and houses collapse... It was unbelievable. There was nothing you could do."

The shaking stopped and they got into their guide's Jeep to drive toward the city. Along the way, they were stopped by people asking them to take others who had been injured to the hospital.

Yaacov and Judy Ben-Israel on the morning of the last day of their six-day Himalayan trek, before the earthquake struck.

They did so, and Yaacov described the scene at the hospital as "unbelievable... people were outside in a field on stretchers... doctors were doing triage right there in the field."

They reached Kathmandu and began walking to their hotel in the neighbourhood of Thamel, a tourist centre, on foot.

They found their hotel badly damaged, with "plaster falling all over the place," and decided they didn't feel safe sleeping there, particularly since the Nepalese government was encouraging people to sleep in the streets while the country was being hit by aftershocks.

The Ben-Israels opted to stay instead at the Chabad House several hundred metres from their hotel. The Chabad compound was made up of a few low buildings located in an open yard that Yaacov said looked fairly strong and could easily be exited.

There they found themselves among hundreds of other people, mainly Israeli travellers and "other Jewish people."

That evening, Yaacov said, someone from the Israeli Consulate came and invited people to stay at the consulate. About half of the people moved, but the Ben-Israels stayed.

They and their fellow guests were given dinner and water by the Chabad rabbi and rebbetzin, who also made Havdalah.

"I'm not sure where they pulled all the food from. They fed everyone. No one went hungry. They pulled matzoh from their storage, fresh vegetables for salad, made cholent," Yaacov marvelled.

The next day, with their flight out of the country scheduled to depart at 9 p.m. but no Internet or phone connection to determine if the airport was open, the Ben-Israels retrieved their luggage from the hotel, which had been further damaged by a second earthquake the night before.

Walking through the city, where most stores and restaurants were closed, it was apparent that food was scarce, Yaacov said.

"Vendors were doubling, tripling and quadrupling their prices – it didn't make a difference to us, but for a Nepalese local who had to go from paying [the equivalent of] 25 cents to over a dollar, they often couldn't afford it."

They eventually made their way to the airport – which was "a zoo" – and discovered their flight was delayed until the following day, so they spent night in the lobby of an airport hotel, which Yaacov said, "was full of all kinds of people – nobody wanted to stay in the rooms."

They were finally able to fly to Kuala Lumpur the next day, and, after spending two days in Bangkok, they returned to Canada.

Reflecting on their experiences, Yaacov said they never felt afraid, and although they took precautions, they "didn't panic."

He said their thoughts are with the Nepalese.

"I saw people being pulled out of the rubble, some dead, some alive... You could really see the suffering and anxiety of the people."

He added that the Nepalese deeply depend on tourism, "and I don't know how many tourists will be going to Nepal for the next little while... I think we need to assist these poor people."

After seeing first hand the work being done by the rabbi and his wife, he has decided to donate money directly to Chabad.

"I saw them operate beautifully, so calm, cool, collected and supportive, taking care of so many people," he said. ■

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The Claire Friedlander Family Foundation

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- Must meet the income and patient eligibility requirements.
- Must not currently be receiving dental treatment in the GTA.

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- Participating dentists are members of Alpha Omega.
- Participating dentists practice in the GTA.
- Participating dentists represent a variety of dental specialties, including general, endodontics, oral surgery, and periodontics.

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ALPHA OMEGA

ALPHA OMEGA

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Program Donations are being accepted at the AO Canadian Foundation at *www.aofoundation.ca.*

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THE CLAIRE FRIEDLANDER FAMILY FOUNDATION

THE CLAIRE FRIEDLANDER FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Claire Friedlander Family Foundation is a Program Guardian supporter. Claire Friedlander was a child survivor of the Holocaust, hidden by righteous Christians in Poland to flourish in life in New York City. Oral care was one of her passions—and to provide integral support to this program that serves the neediest of survivors is our privilege and responsibility.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14 2015

Manitoba city twins with Israeli regional council

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

The central Manitoba city of Portage La Prairie and the communities that constitute the Valley of Springs Regional Council, Mo'atza Azorit Bik'at Beit She'an, in northern Israel's Beit She'an Valley are now twinned communities.

The official sister city partnership agreements were signed May 1, with simultaneous signing ceremonies in Portage and in the Valley of Springs.

Portage La Prairie is a city of some 13,000, about a 45-minute drive west of Winnipeg on the TransCanada Highway. The Valley of the Springs council is bounded by the Jezreel Valley in the west, the Lower Galilee in the north, the Jordan River in the east and the Jordan Valley and Samarian hills in the south. About 9,700 people live in the 16 kibbutzim and six moshavim in its municipal territory. The city of Beit She'an lies in the centre of the territory, but is an independent municipality.

"Our two regions have a lot in common," Portage Mayor Irvin Ferris said. "We both have an economy based largely on agricultural and food processing. We both have a food development centre. We are looking forward to technological exchanges related to agricultural as well as increased trade and perhaps some tourism. Also, perhaps schools in both places can get involved so children here and in Israel can learn about each other's culture."

Ferris said the shidduch between the two communities was arranged by Daniel Shindleman, a former resident of Portage La Prairie whose Winnipeg-based brothers, Sandy and Robert, are among Western Canada's leading property developers. The Shindleman family are also prominent philanthropists who have contributed greatly to their former home town.

Daniel Shindleman himself lives in Zurich, Switzerland, where he is director of Bridgemer Investment Properties Ltd., a Canadian-Swiss group that provides investment and financial advisory services to families and companies.

"We focus on agriculture, infrastructure and real estate, in Canada and globally." "As part of our search for new technologies to help agriculture, from seed to post-harvest, I have been making trips to Israel to meet innovative agri-tech businesses," he added. "These include startups as well as research institutes."

Signing the sister city agreement between Portage La Prairie, Man., and the Valley of Springs Regional Council in northern Israel, at the Canadian Embassy in Israel on May 1, are, from left, Zion Daco (behind), managing director of the Eden Research Station; Daniel Shindleman, president of the Bridgemer Group; Vivian Bercovici, Canada's ambassador in Israel; and Yoram Karin, mayor of the Valley of Springs council.

He said Bridgemer bridges the gap between idea and on-the-ground implementation of new technologies to improve the quality and quantity of agricultural production in a sustainable manner that does not impair the world's limited resources."We arrange field trials and do other work to have these innovations put in service. It is part of our agricultural investment program."

As part of his search for innovation in agriculture, Shindleman visited the Valley of Springs, including the Eden Agricultural Research Station, located there in early January 2015.

"When I was there, I realized how I felt at home," he said. "I looked around and saw field crops similar to what one sees on the Canadian prairies. And, in particular, it reminded me of my hometown. A sister city pairing made clear sense to me. Portage la Prairie in Manitoba, and Valley of Springs in Israel are prime agricultural centres, have significant nearby waterfowl and other bird populations, offer eco-tourism, and complement each other.

"Their respective advantages in agriculture can be applied jointly to pursue global goals of food security and expansion of markets. It is an innovation partnership to realize global potential. I am very excited about what can be done, and I am very happy to be a part of pursuing that potential. Portage has the land and skilled farmers. Valley of Springs has innovation and skilled agri-scientists. It's a great combination."

Although he left Canada in 1991, Shindleman notes, he still comes back regularly every year and always visits his hometown. ■

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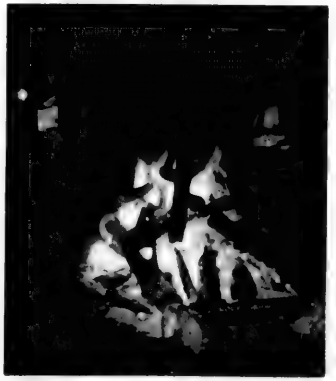

DAVID COLLIN PHOTO

Lag b'Omer bonfire

A Lag b'Omer bonfire celebration at Earl Bales Park May 6 attracted about 100 students and young professionals to an event sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Genesis Philanthropy Group, and the group Jewish and Modern (JAM). Participants roasted potatoes and marshmallows, and took part in a drum circle with musical accompaniment.

Get ready for French exodus, U.S. journalist says

JANICE ARNOLD
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World Jewry, and in particular the Montreal Jewish community, has to be prepared for a possible exodus of Jews from France, says American journalist and author Jeffrey Goldberg, who is deeply concerned about worsening anti-Semitism in Europe.

While Israel has been the destination for thousands of Jews already leaving France, Goldberg indicated Israel is not for everyone.

"Is it time for Jews to leave? I never want to tell any Jew where they should live, but the international Jewish community has to be prepared if the time comes when it is better they get out," said Goldberg, a staff writer for the *Atlantic* since 2007, specializing in the Middle East, who used to live in Israel.

He was guest speaker at a Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University gala dinner May 3 where businessman and philanthropist Alvin Segal was presented with the Mount Scopus Award, the organization's highest citation.

Goldberg continued: "Montreal is on the frontlines... A lot of French Jews may seek a haven here." France has the third-largest Jewish population in the world, with 500,000.

Europe, in total, has 1.3 million Jews, he noted.

"We have to be ready to help our brethren if they might need it in a dire and quick way," he said.

Goldberg said the situation for Jews in Europe is "deteriorating with every passing month... We are seeing something we never thought we would see again [after World War II]... Jewish people can't afford to make believe the world is something it's not."

Anti-Semitism has worsened in Europe over the past 15 years and soared in the last two or three, he said. "A virus that we thought had died has just changed shape."

What makes it especially dangerous, he thinks, is that this hatred represents the convergence of three strands: the classical canard of alleged Jewish power of the far right, the anti-Zionism of the far left, which seeks the elimination of the State of Israel, and that found in the Muslim and Arab worlds.

"Angry, disenfranchised Muslim immigrants" are responsible for most of violent anti-Semitism, but can't, he believes, be separated from the larger phenomenon.

What makes today different from the 1930s is that European political leaders are staunchly outspoken against anti-Semitism, foremost among them being German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

In contrast, North American Jews have never been "so at home, so assertive about their rights, or more enfranchised. We are more in control of their destiny than any time in our history," he said.

Segal is chair and chief executive officer of Peerless Clothing Inc., the largest supplier of men's fine tailored clothing in North America.

He played a key role in negotiations in the 1980s leading to the North American Free Trade Agreement, a fact attested to in a videotaped message from former prime minister Brian Mulroney.

"Alvin was on the frontlines of the battle... He felt it would be great for Peerless and great for Canada, and he was right on both counts."

With the U.S. market opened, Peerless rapidly grew from a small company serving a domestic clientele into an "empire," in the words of Lewis Dobrin, who delivered the homage.

Segal is also an exemplary donor, contributing $20 million in 2004 to the Jewish General Hospital for the creation of the Segal Cancer Centre, and millions over the years to the Segal Centre for Performing Arts, a devotion that grew out of his love of Yiddish theatre.

Despite his prominence, Segal was lauded for his humility, quirky sense of humour, and for being his own man. The tribute video was titled *Alvin Segal: The Enigma*.

He did not seem destined for such success. The Albany, N.Y., native's father died when he was seven. He was a poor student, and stuttered.

His widowed mother remarried Montrealer Moe Segal when he was 16, and the family moved there. Alvin changed his name from Cramer to Segal.

Alvin Segal, centre, is presented with the Mount Scopus Award by Hebrew University president Menahem Ben-Sasson, left, and dinner chair Ari Brojde, president of the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University, Montreal Chapter.

He never finished high school, but went straight to work in the clothing factory and immediately found an environment that suited him. Peerless is essentially the only job he's ever had.

In business, he has been a maverick, Dobrin said, unafraid of change and risk.

As a person, he is unassuming and always smiling. "Alvin is a real mensch, a decent, upright, honourable human being."

In keeping with that self-effacement Segal had his wife, Emmelie, read his words of appreciation.

Proceeds from the dinner benefit two programs at Hebrew University: brain research at the Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada and Revivim, a Jewish studies teacher training program.

Among the dignitaries at the evening, held at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, were Hebrew University president Menahem Ben-Sasson, McGill University principal Suzanne Fortier, Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre and executive committee member responsible for culture, Manon Gauthier, former Segal Centre executive director.

Segal's two siblings, Harriet Lazare of Montreal and Connie Solomon of Israel – two major influences in his life – were also present. ■

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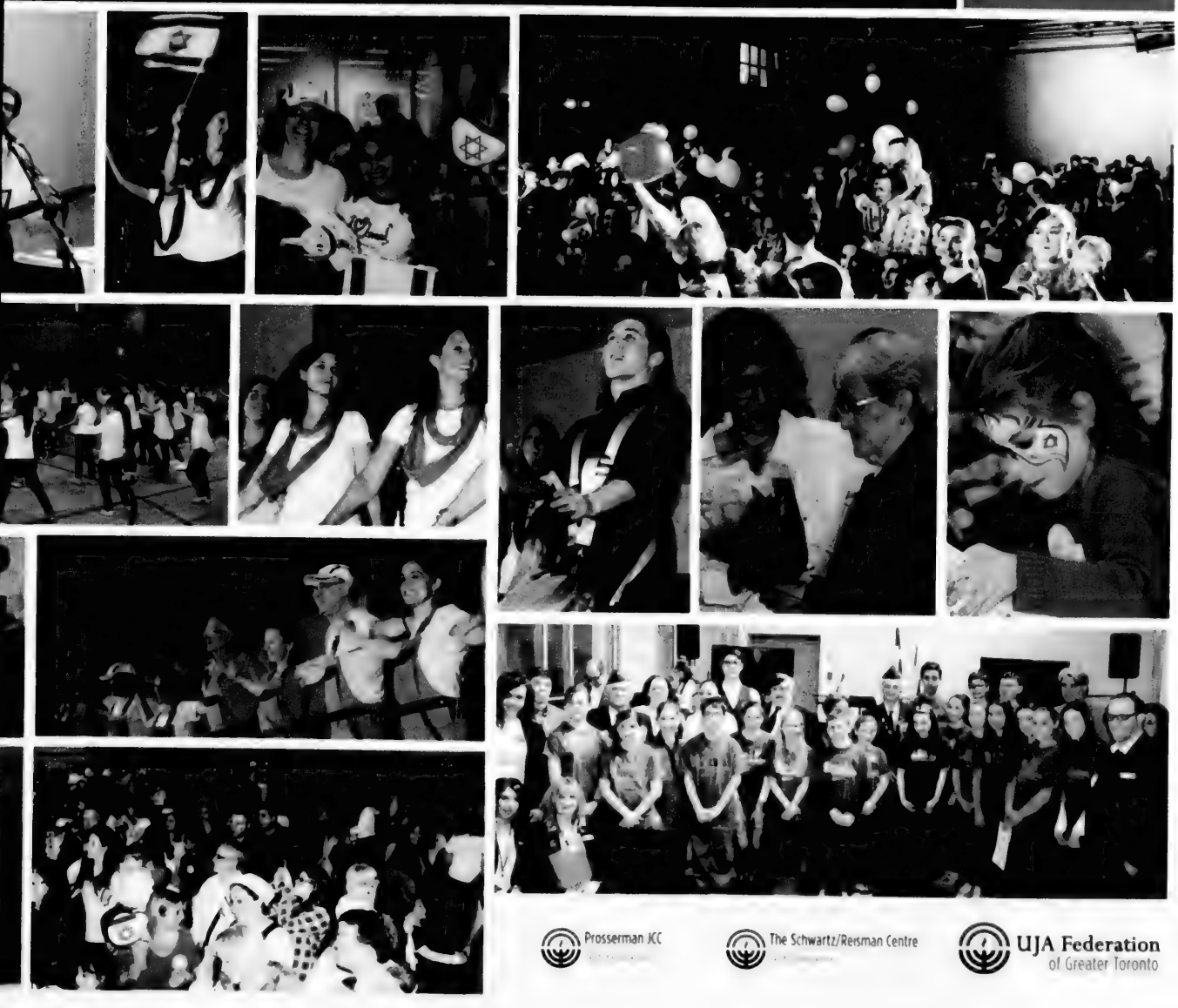

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

Cemeteries grapple with interfaith burial issue

LILA SARICK
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When Adam Dean's parents died within a year of each other, there was no question that they would be buried together, and in a Jewish cemetery.

"They were the most in love people you could imagine. They had to be buried together," said Dean.

Their faith in Judaism was a very big sustaining part of their life." It shaped the friends they made, their activities, their values and the way they raised their children, he said.

Being buried in a Jewish cemetery was absolutely everything to them. There would have been no other suitable choice period."

The couple had belonged to Toronto's Temple Sinai since 1980 and raised their children as Jews, but Adam's father had never converted to Judaism.

Until recently, the couple's desire to be buried together in a Jewish cemetery in Toronto would have been impossible to fulfil. The city's largest communal Jewish cemeteries, Pardes Shalom and Pardes Chaim operated by Toronto Hebrew Memorial Parks (THMP), do not permit the burial of non-Jews, including spouses, said executive director Howard Mammon.

That restriction is in THMP's bylaws. "Our rules allow us to only bury Jews. Unless there is a change to our bylaws, that will continue to be our policy."

Mammon said many of THMP's constituent groups — synagogues, temples and burial societies – are small "c" conservative, especially compared to their American counterparts, and many are not eager to see a change. "A large part of our membership wants the status quo," he added.

Changing the burial practice would also breach the trust place in THMP by those people already buried in the cemeteries, who expected to be interred in an exclusively Jewish cemetery, he added.

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, which appoints seven of the members on THMP's 14-member board, studied the issue last year, meeting with rabbis from across denominations and with funeral homes, said Jeff Springer, senior vice-president for corporate affairs.

Lambton Mills Cemetery was purchased by Temple Sinai specifically for interfaith families affiliated with the Jewish community. WIKIPEDIA

The question of interfaith burials raises a number of issues. Even if all the proper halachic preparations are made – for instance, providing gates and separate entrances – there is the question of the expectations of families who have already buried loved ones in the cemeteries, Springer said.

In the end, with no unanimity to be found, the federation decided to maintain the status quo and re-examine the issue in a few years. While the numbers of people who are currently looking for interfaith burial plots are not high at the moment, it's certainly an issue that will become more pressing 20 years from now.

"It's on the communal radar," Springer said.

Both the Conservative and Reform movements have ruled that non-Jewish partners may be buried in a Jewish cemetery. The Conservative movement's decision in 2010 specified that the interfaith section be separated from the rest of the cemetery by a small road. Both movements specify that only Jewish ceremonies are to be performed and that monuments cannot have symbols of other faiths.

Six years ago, Temple Sinai purchased a section of the Lambton Hills Jewish cemetery specifically for interfaith families who were affiliated with the Jewish community.

"If you've invested in our community, then our synagogue says we're going to invest in you. We're going to provide you the same level of choice any other family would have," says Rabbi Michael Dolgin.

It took several years for the cemetery to be licensed, and Adam Dean's mother was among the first to be buried in the new section in 2013.

"Creating the section allows for a much more compelling and sustainable form of Judaism," Dean said. " It allows for the commitment people make when they're married, to continue on after death."

Winnipeg's Shaarey Zedek Congregation, the largest Conservative synagogue in Western Canada, made a similar decision a few years ago and dedicated a small section of its cemetery to interfaith burials. The section has its own entrance and is surrounded by a fence, but "you don't feel it's violating any esthetic standards," said Rabbi Allan Green.

"These days there isn't a family without an intermarriage," said Rabbi Green. "We want to facilitate as much Jewish ritual as we can."

About 50 out of the 900 families who are members of Shaarey Zedek are intermarried, but the intermarriage rate for young Jews in the community is as high as 70 per cent, Rabbi Green said. "I have the feeling we're on the leading edge of this."

This approach to interfaith burials is not shared by all Conservative rabbis.

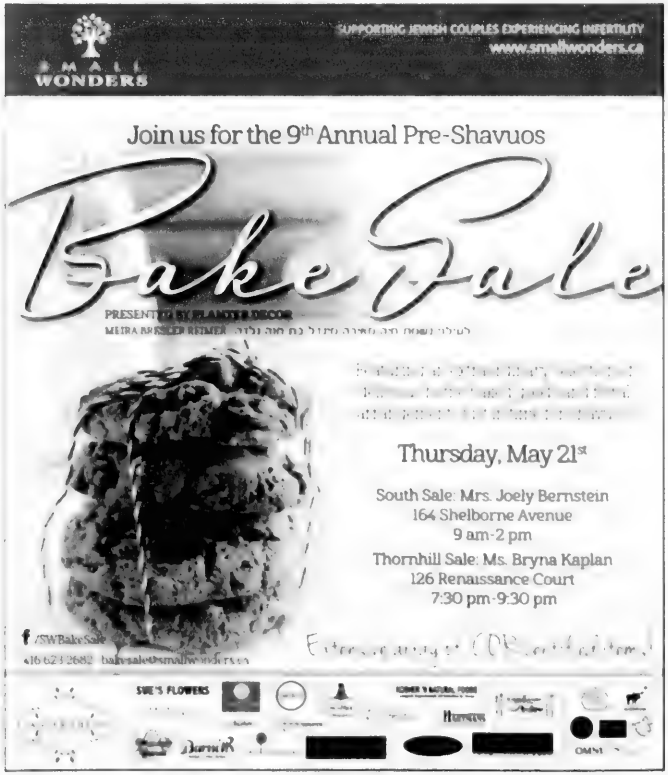
Rabbi Jarrod Grover, of Toronto's Beth Tikvah Synagogue, argues that reserving burial in a Jewish cemetery for Jewish couples is one of the few restrictions Conservative Judaism can still impose. And in some cases, it may be enough to nudge a non-Jewish spouse who has long affiliated with the community to consider conversion.

"This remains the only standard the community has in an age of intermarriage," Rabbi Grover said. "I have seen cases where couples re-evaluated conversion because of this."

In Toronto, intermarried couples can be buried together in a non-denominational cemetery, he said.

Rabbi Grover said he is one of the few Conservative rabbis in the city who will officiate for a Jewish spouse in these circumstances.

"We honour the dead. I don't leave people to keep calling until you find someone to officiate." ■



Cremation remains sensitive topic in community

LILA SARICK
lsarick@thecjn.ca

Cremation may be the final taboo for Jews. Most branches of Judaism discourage or forbid it, but even in denominations where it is encouraged, Canadian Jews overwhelmingly prefer to be buried in the ground.

Part of the abhorrence of cremation stems from the Holocaust and the Nazis' crematoria, where thousands of Jews perished.

"There's an acute sensitivity to this, post-Shoah, that changes the emotional tenor" of the discussion about burial options, said Rabbi Debra Landsberg, who serves as the rabbi at Temple Emanu-El and is chairperson of the Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto.

Even among unaffiliated Jews, tradition still holds sway when it comes to burials, said Rabbi Jennifer Gorman, executive director for Mercaz Canada and the Canadian Foundation for Masorti Judaism.

A Conservative rabbi for more than 20 years, she says she has never been asked to officiate at a funeral involving cremation. "We do a lot of funerals from people who aren't members of a congregation, and among those people, primarily they feel [burial] is the way Jews do death."

Jewish death practices hold that respect for the body is paramount, with an emphasis on burial as soon as possible. Cremation is seen by the Conservative movement as contravening the value of honouring the dead, she said.

Although the practice is not acceptable, some rabbis will officiate at a funeral before a cremation has occurred.

For the Reform movement, the answer is similar. Cremation is discouraged and not part of accepted traditional practice, says Rabbi Landsberg. Rabbis will conduct funeral services before the cremation, rather than send the family away from the Jewish community altogether, but in practice it rarely happens.

In Calgary, Reform Rabbi Howard Voss-Altman, sees cremation as a personal choice, although it is rarely exercised in his congregation.

"Reform prides itself on autonomy and personal choice," he says. While historically Jews have chosen burial, "some people for many different reasons do not want a traditional burial."

The few Jews who have chosen cremation, however, tend to want their remains interred, he said.

While many Jewish cemeteries do not permit the interment of cremated remains, his congregation, Temple B'nai Tikvah, has its own cemetery where cremated remains can be interred.

Toronto Hebrew Memorial Parks, which administers the two largest Jewish cemeteries in the GTA, Pardes Shalom and Pardes Chaim, does not permit cremated remains to be buried or scattered on its premises, said executive director Howard Mammon.

Even in the most liberal reaches of Judaism, where cremation is seen as a valid choice, few Jews choose it as an option.

"We're very pro-cremation, but the majority of our members prefer to be buried," said Rabbi Eva Goldfinger, life-cycles director at Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

From an ethical point of view, cremation is a valid choice, since it leaves more available for the living, she said.

"We don't have a religious position on it [cremation], we have an ethical and a choice position on it."

Oraynu has purchased a section of a non-denominational cemetery where it does traditional burials for members. Cremated remains can also be interred and the individual can be memorialized with a stone or a marker, Rabbi Goldfinger said. ■

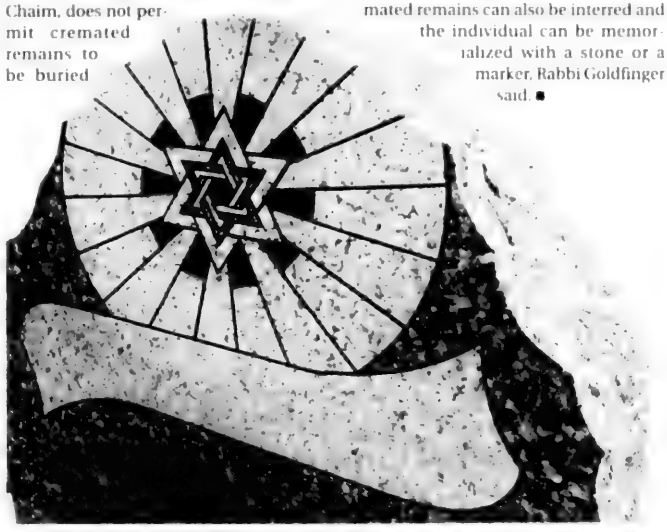


PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEF S FAIRLAWN MONUMENTS

Pre-arranging burial fees is a wise strategy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Families of deceased should anticipate fees including $900 in vehicle charges (which includes transportation of the deceased, registering a death at city hall, picking up the chevra kadisha and the provision of a funeral hearse for the cemetery), facility charges of $2,000, staffing charges of $2,000, chevra kadisha fees ($385 for taharah and $230 per calendar day for a shomer) and cemetery fees for digging, which range between $800 and $1,600 depending on the cemetery. And all fees are subject to HST.

Some 40 per cent of families have pre-arranged their burial fees, Benjamin said, a strategy that makes sense if you're planning a decade or two ahead of your death. "When you buy now, you get the prices at today's price, so for someone who makes the purchase when they're between 40 and 60, they could be saving several years of inflation," he explained.

For families that can't afford burial fees, or in the case of deceased individuals with no next of kin and no funds, Benjamin's has arrangements with local municipalities whereby they cover one-third of the burial costs and the memorial chapel covers the remainder.

The fees are similar at Steeles Memorial Chapel in Thornhill, north of Toronto, a 70-year-old community-run business. Anticipate chapel staff and funeral director services of $2,225, $525 for facilities to prepare and shelter the deceased, vehicle services at $825 (including hearse and transportation), documentation fees of $280 and the costs of casket ($965 up to $3,995), burial plot and cemetery fees. Don't forget taharah, the shomer, a tallit, the burial shroud and the cost of having a rabbi and/or cantor at the funeral.

When it comes to caskets, choices vary depending on where you are and whose services you use.

At the Schara Tzedeck Cemetery in Vancouver, there's only one type of kosher casket available, and it costs $480.

Where there is a range of options, casket costs vary depending on the wood used to create the casket, the workmanship involved, the finish and the colour. At the Star of David Memorial Chapels in New York, for example, halachically acceptable (all-wood) caskets range in price from $895 (US) for the most basic pine box, up to $11,995 for an African ribbon grain mahogany version – which has been designed "with rounded corners and a flat top foot end, giving it a majestic appearance."

At Benjamin's in Toronto, made-in-Canada caskets start at $800 and go up to $35,000. The choice for Jews is more limited at Canadian casket retailers such as Casket Outlet in Toronto and Montreal, and Casket Depot in Scarborough, Ont. Both companies retail a poplar casket that complies with Jewish law for $1,290. At Casket Canada, an online, Calgary-based distributor, a matte finish, poplar, standard-size casket costs $1,499, including ground shipping to major cities in Canada.

Co-founder Paul Frank, the company's, customer service director, said he and his two partners opened shop in 2013 after he buried a relative. "We couldn't believe what the funeral home was trying to charge us for a casket, so we started looking online," he said. After some research, he learned the funeral home was charging four times the price of the same casket he could purchase online.

Burying a loved one is a difficult time for most people, and few ask for a breakdown of prices or have the inclination, in their grief, to start shopping around. The company's caskets are typically made in Asia – mostly China or India – Frank said, because "you can't get the materials from a sustainable source in North America for that cost."

The "made in Asia" label shouldn't cause any alarm, though, he added. "We've had no returns and no issue with quality," he said. (Of course, returns are usually not possible, since once caskets are lowered into the ground, the point of no return has passed.)

Some Jews request that the base of the casket be perforated, in which case holes are drilled into the base. Marc Benjamin said all the caskets at Benjamin's contain six golf ball-sized holes in the base.

Curious about what size casket you'll need? A standard size fits an individual measuring up to seven feet tall and weighing up to 300 tall. People who are taller or heavier require a custom or extra-large casket. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

Downtown shuls unite after a century apart

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

On a crisp Thursday morning, a chorus of male voices reciting the *Shema* fills the domed sanctuary of the First Russian Congregation of Rodfei Sholem Anshei Kiev, a.k.a., the Kiever Shul. The service progresses under the watch of two red-eyed lions perched atop the elaborately carved Aron Kodesh.

The Kiever has been a Kensington Market landmark since 1927, but attendance declined significantly when the epicentre of Jewish life shifted from the area to the Bathurst Street corridor in the '50s and '60s.

For decades, the Kiever was only used on Shabbat and holidays. But a year and a half ago, it began co-ordinating mid-week services with Congregation Shaarei Tzedec, known as the Markham Street Shul, and that led to the Kiever's resumption of Thursday-morning services after a 40-year hiatus.

This spirit of co-operation heralds a new era for these two historic shuls. They were originally one congregation, but a family dispute split the group more than 100 years ago.

Dave Pinkus, 91, a lifelong member of the Kiever, heard the story as a youngster. He says Yehuda Leib Bossin, the patriarch of the Bossin family, left the Shaarei Tzedec around 1911 after a bitter dispute with his son, Zussy, an executive member of the shul. They quarrelled over burial rites for Bossin's wife. She ended up interred in the "paupers section" of the Roselawn Cemetery.

A year or so later, Bossin and his younger son, Mottel, became founding members of the Kiever, along with Pinkus' parents, Izzie and Mollie. "What really surprised me was to see the father and the son [Zussy] buried next to each other in the Shaarei Tzedec section of the cemetery on Roselawn Avenue," says Pinkus. "They healed their wounds around 1926."

Ironically, it took much longer for the Kiever and Markham shuls to make amends, say some of their younger affiliates.

"It took 100 years, but we can officially declare that the fight is over," laughs Jeff Phillips, a regular at the Markham Street Shul for more than 30 years.

Menashe Solomon, the second cantor at the Kiever, says nobody knew the details of the rift, but he understood that he was not to go to the Markham Street Shul.

"For 100 years, the members of each congregation refused to set foot in each other's buildings."

Turns out the notion of a century-long feud between the shuls is a Jewish urban myth. Pinkus says the animosity between them dissipated when the Bossins reconciled, but the congregations never reunited.

He surmises that some younger congregants may have wrongly concluded that the shuls' permanent division was rooted in some long-standing acrimony.

Dave Pinkus LEIGH SILVERSTEIN PHOTO

> *It took 100 years, but we can officially declare that the fight is over.*

A weekday Torah service at the Kiever Shul

Pinkus points out that at that time, all the synagogues "operated as separate entities" for practical reasons. "They didn't have much to do with each other, because they didn't want to lose members. They needed the membership for financial support."

Today, however, the interdependence between the older downtown shuls is a pragmatic way to ensure their survival, says Rabbi Yossi Holtzberg, de facto spiritual leader of Shaarei Tzedec.

He laments that getting a weekday minyan has become increasingly challenging, and the problem has worsened with the recent deaths of some older Markham Street Shul members. "The Orthodox community downtown is struggling. There's a lot of competition. You have the Minsker, the [First] Narayever, the Annex Shul, Makom, JUMP [Jewish Urban Meeting Place] and the minyan at the [Miles Nadal] JCC."

The collaboration between the Kiever and the Markham Street shuls has benefited both, says Rabbi Holtzberg. "It's working beautifully. We're sharing the same cake."

He credits Arie Ben-Dor, a young entrepreneur and community organizer, with bringing the congregations together. "He was the guy who pushed it. He saw that the Kiever was empty six days a week."

Ben-Dor acknowledges his role in bolstering attendance at the shuls. He was also key in getting the Kiever to host the Kensington Torah Circle (KTC), a study group that meets Monday evenings. He says KTC draws from the older Orthodox congregations, including the Minsker, along with Makom, the Annex Shul and JUMP.

The merging of the minyans for mid-week services is a serendipitous outcome of what was supposed to be a one-time event, says Ben-Dor. In December 2013, a client of his from Boston who was staying downtown wanted to attend a morning service on Rosh Chodesh and Chanukah. Ben-Dor asked Solomon if the service could be held at the Kiever, and Rabbi Holtzberg helped recruit a minyan.

It went so well that Thursday-morning services at the Kiever continued and the Monday-morning minyan at the Markham Street Shul was strengthened, recalls Ben-Dor. "Yossi [Rabbi Holtzberg] and Menashe [Solomon] are very well respected for their hard work, commitment and drive. And that draws people."

Rabbi Holtzberg, modest by nature, contends the kiddush is a major attraction. "To bring people to a minyan downtown, you have to serve food. People are expecting it."

Indeed, back at the Kiever on this cool Thursday morning, the service is followed by a sumptuous breakfast of herring, gefilte fish, fried eggs, kippers, baked beans, home fries, bagels, cream cheese, lox and pancakes.

A Markham Street Shul regular, who prefers to be known as Chaim ben Ze'ev, has been looking after the kiddush to free up Solomon. "Menashe was running up and down the stairs, back and forth between the sanctuary and kitchen. I told him, 'Give me a key and I'll come in at six in the morning to prepare breakfast.' "

The mood is upbeat as the men *fress* and shmooze. "A real camaraderie has developed between all of us," says Solomon. "It's a *mechayeh*."

After benching, a couple of people walk over to Nassau Street to visit Pinkus. The retired engineer has been president of the Kiever for 35 years. He attributes his commitment to his historic family ties and a tendency to be community-minded.

The synagogue was briefly put up for sale in the 1960s, says Pinkus, noting that some members who'd moved away wanted to sell the building. In the end, the membership voted to maintain the downtown congregation. In 1980, support from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Ontario government provided seed money for a partial renovation, but Pinkus stresses that the bulk of the work – ongoing for 34 years – has been funded by the congregation.

He has overseen all of the renovations. He says his involvement in other local community groups helped him realize the importance of conserving older buildings.

"Keeping the synagogue going was a way of preserving the historical roots of Toronto's Jewish community for future generations. I felt they could relate better to a structure than a plaque."

The Markham Street Shul has a similar history. The synagogue has been housed in a semi-detached three-storey corner home on Markham and Ulster streets since 1937.

Dr. Joe Greenberg, 92, took over as president of the board when the shul was on the verge of bankruptcy in the mid-1960s.

"We considered selling it," he recounts. "My brother Mutt said, 'I don't go to synagogue often, but when I do go I want it to be this one.' I said, 'OK. If that's what you want, that's the way it's going to be.' He's been our biggest contributor."

Over the years, Greenberg has spearheaded fundraising for renovations and ongoing maintenance. Pinkus calls him "the saviour of the Shaarei Tzedec."

Greenberg stayed downtown like Pinkus, which, at the time, was unusual for a man with a young family. He set up his medical practice and raised four children – who all went to day school – a block from the shul.

Greenberg also has a deep family connection there. His parents, Aaron and Sima, joined the Shaarei Tzedec shortly after their arrival from Russia in 1920. "I have been going there since I was three years old. I could never stand to let the place go. I could not imagine my life without it." ■

INTERNATIONAL

Narrow coalition poses challenges for Netanyahu

BEN SALES
JTA, TEL AVIV

Eight weeks after he won re-election, Benjamin Netanyahu finally secured a fourth term as prime minister.

With just 90 minutes until the deadline passed to form a governing coalition on May 6, Netanyahu concluded an agreement with the religious, pro-settler Jewish Home party that gives him the narrowest of parliamentary majorities – 61 of the Knesset's 120 seats.

Along with three other right-wing and religious factions – United Torah Judaism, Kulanu and Shas – the five-party Likud-led coalition skews right on diplomacy and defence and, for the first time in at least a decade, includes no parties that support the establishment of a Palestinian state in the foreseeable future.

The agreement represents something of a setback for Netanyahu, who called for new elections last year in order to strengthen his grip on a legislature he considered to be ungovernable. In the last government, Netanyahu's Likud headed a 68-seat majority coalition. In a statement late last Wednesday announcing the agreement, Netanyahu sought to emphasize the positive.

"Sixty-one is a good number," Netanyahu said upon announcing the agreement. "Sixty-one-plus is a better number, but it begins with 61 and we will begin. There's a lot of work ahead of us. I want us to go to work. It should be very successful for us and for the nation of Israel."

The new coalition is largely in agreement on the question of Palestinian statehood. Having previously voiced support for a Palestinian state, Netanyahu said before the March election that the Palestinians would not get a state on his watch (and then walked back those comments).

Jewish Home is ideologically opposed to any withdrawal from the West Bank and strongly supports settlement growth. Kulanu would limit expansion to major settlement blocs but says statehood is not feasible under the current Palestinian leadership. The haredi Orthodox parties have been agnostic on Palestinian statehood in the past, though recent years have seen the haredi settler population swell.

"We are against giving one centimetre of land to the Arabs, both from moral grounds and security grounds," Naftali Bennett, Jewish Home's leader, said in a Feb. 24 speech. "The biggest mistake is to copy and paste what happened in Gaza in Judea and Samaria," he added, using the biblical names for the West Bank.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at last Sunday's cabinet meeting. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

Despite agreement on that point, the new coalition is split on other issues, including economic policy and religious affairs, which could pose a challenge as Netanyahu works to keep his 61 lawmakers in line.

"It's a government that will find it hard to instigate much-needed economic reform and even to deal with more mundane affairs of state like passing a budget without being extorted by backbenchers in the coalition," Yohanan Plesner, president of the Israel Democracy Institute think tank, told *JTA*.

But Hebrew University political science professor Gideon Rahat said the small coalition may make the government more stable, as partners will avoid conflicts that could break up the government.

"In wide coalitions there are ideological differences and people in the coalition think you can disagree and the coalition won't fall," he said. "In a small coalitions they think that if you make small waves, the whole business can collapse."

Likud, with 30 seats, will control the Foreign and Defence Ministries in the next government, along with the corresponding Knesset committees. Economic policy will be run by the 10-seat Kulanu, founded last year by ex-Likudnik Moshe Kahlon, who will serve as finance minister.

Jewish Home, with eight seats, received the education and justice portfolios, while the seven-seat Sephardi haredi Orthodox Shas party will run the Religious Affairs Ministry. The Ashkenazi haredi United Torah Judaism, with six seats, will not appoint any ministers out of an ideological opposition to Zionism, though it will have several deputy ministers.

Netanyahu had a hard time just getting to 61. According to Israeli reports of the secretive coalition talks, Likud's prospective partners sparred with each other on policy and demanded top ministries.

The prime minister succeeded by granting significant concessions to his partners. UTJ demanded a rollback of religious reforms passed by the previous government, Shas received key ministries and Kulanu won the power to enact housing and land reforms.

On May 10, Israel's outgoing cabinet approved a proposal to expand the number of government ministers to more than the current 18.

The decision overturns a law limiting the number of cabinet ministers and deputy ministers.

Netanyahu reportedly plans to appoint 20 ministers and four deputy ministers, and possibly others, in the new government in order to keep all of his coalition partners, and his own party, happy.

The incoming justice minister will be Jewish Home's Ayelet Shaked, 39, who entered Knesset just over two years ago. As minister, Shaked will aim to limit the Israeli Supreme Court's power to overturn laws. Last year, the court invalidated a law allowing long-term detention of African migrants, one of Shaked's key issues.

Days before the May 6 deadline, coalition talks were rocked by the resignation of foreign minister Avigdor Liberman, who announced that his nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party would sit in the opposition. Yisrael Beiteinu and Likud were allies as recently as last year, but Liberman said the incoming government would be insufficiently hawkish.

Netanyahu may keep the foreign minister title for himself, holding it open should he persuade the centre-left Zionist Union, with 24 seats, to join the coalition. As of May 6, Zionist Union chairman Isaac Herzog said he would lead the Knesset opposition. On Facebook, he called the incoming government "a national failure government."

"We won't be a fifth wheel, and don't intend to save Netanyahu from the holes he's dug himself into," Herzog said at a Zionist Union meeting Thursday. "I won't be Netanyahu's corkscrew. And if he thinks he can dangle this or that [ministerial] portfolio, he's making a big mistake."■

Canadian tries to claim forgotten land

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

An article in *The CJN* in 1995 spurred a family's campaign to reclaim forgotten land in Israel. Now, after 20 frustrating years of bureaucracy, Meta Surchin, 91, fears she won't hold the deed to her grandfather's land within her lifetime.

"It's not understandable why it should take so long when we have done everything they've asked us to do," says Surchin, who lives in Montreal.

Surchin's grandfather, Abraham Levin, bought two parcels of land, a little under two acres, near Afula in northern Israel, in 1936. A staunch Zionist who attended the early Zionist Congresses in Europe, Levin also knew Chaim Weizmann. "He was there for the wedding of my father and mother," Surchin says. "They were very close friends."

Born in Lithuania, Levin lived most of his life in Montreal, where he founded Dominion Tassel and became one of the wealthiest members of the Jewish community. When the State of Israel appealed to Canadians for investments, he took the lead. "He bought potash mines, orange groves," Surchin says, "and he bought this land."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

New Israeli justice minister doesn't shy from controversy

JTA
JERUSALEM

Ayelet Shaked, Israel's newly appointed justice minister and a member of the right-wing Jewish Home party, has quickly risen to prominence having served just two years in the Knesset. Here's what you need to know about the 39-year-old political celebrity.

She's seen as a poster child for Jewish Home's efforts to reach beyond its Orthodox base.

A secular Jew from north Tel Aviv, Shaked is often described as a symbol of the Jewish Home and larger settler movement's effort to appeal to a wider group of voters, and to overcome stereotypes of settlers and their supporters as being religious, gun-toting fanatics. Although she herself travels on Shabbat, she supports Orthodox bans on public transportation during the Sabbath. However, she also played a key role in passing a law (one that now is expected to be reversed as a result of the haredi Orthodox party United Torah Judaism joining Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition) ending military service exemptions for haredi Jews.

Ayelet Shaked FLASH90 PHOTO

Before entering politics, she worked as a software engineer for Texas Instruments.

Shaked served as an instructor in the Israel Defence Forces' Golani Brigade, where she first became interested in right-wing politics. After earning a degree in electrical engineering and computer science at Tel Aviv University, she began working for Texas Instruments. Before running for Knesset with Jewish Home, she worked as Netanyahu's office director for two years, leaving together with Naftali Bennett, in 2008, reportedly because of conflicts with Netanyahu's wife, Sara.

Her Knesset record includes efforts to curb the High Court of Justice's power.

As a Knesset member, Shaked has pushed for passage of an amendment that would limit the High Court of Justice's power, and has been an advocate for deporting African migrants, defending the government policy of detaining them in a Negev facility. She also supported the controversial "Jewish state" law, which would enshrine Israel's status as a Jewish state into law. (Critics of the law said it undermined Israel's democracy.)

She's a fierce critic of Israel's left and its media.

In an op-ed she published in *Ha'aretz* (responding to one about her headlined "A Knesset member whose irresponsible violence belies her appearance") she described Israel's political left as "delusional" and having "lost every vestige of self-control."

She posted a controversial article on Facebook last summer, drawing a flurry of attention and criticism.

The day the bodies of three kidnapped Israeli teens were found (and the day before Jewish Israelis murdered Palestinian teen Muhammad Abu Khdeir in a revenge attack), Shaked posted an article by Uri Elitzur that called Palestinian children "little snakes" and argued that it was justified to bomb civilians when they give shelter to "evil."

She was named the best-looking female in the Knesset.

In a recent poll conducted by the Israeli Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Surgery, Shaked beat out former fashion model Orly Levy-Abekasis of Yisrael Beitenu, another right-wing party. ■

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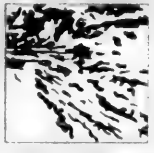

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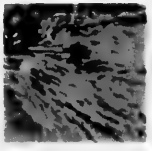

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GUEST VOICE

For Ethiopians ,life in Israel is frustrating and dangerous

Judie Oron

A few years ago, while waiting by the elevator in our Tel Aviv apartment building, an Israeli neighbour nodded sagely at my Ethiopian Jewish daughter. "I'm so glad Judie finally got someone in to clean for her," she said, nodding approvingly. Wuditu bobbed her head and shot me a quick grin.

"What country in Africa do you come from, dear," the neighbour kindly inquired. A flicker of pain was quickly replaced by a pensive expression in Wuditu's eyes. Knowing her penchant for irony, I thought, "Oh boy, this is going to be good.

"Africa?" my daughter inquired, the very picture of innocent confusion. "Why, I can't imagine why you'd think I'm from Africa. I'm from Russia," she replied. That comment did the trick - our ride up to the ninth floor was from then on blessedly quiet.

But the questions never seem to end when a white mother strolls about with her two Ethiopian Jewish daughters. My favorite one of Wuditu's retorts came after a lady on a bus walked over to us and asked, in Hebrew, "*aich mekablim ka'eyleh?*" Or, in English, "how do you get [girls] like them?" While I was trying to figure out how to answer the woman, Wuditu fired back: "Hurry, madam, because just for today, at the supermarket down the road, you can buy two of us for the price of one!"

In Wuditu's case, the word "buy" was not inappropriate, because 23 years ago that's just what I did: I bought Wuditu during a slave trade in a market town in northern Ethiopia. The transaction was cheap – $111.11. The child, when I found her, was emaciated and humbled to the point where she would bow down low whenever anyone looked at her. Clearly, this behaviour had been expected of a young captive.

So, imagine my pride as I watch Wuditu handling comments that range from the

Ethiopian children near Afula. ISRAEL SUN PHOTO

stupid to the downright malicious with a huge dollop of chutzpah and the poise of a standup comedian. In fact, I often can't help kvelling as I watch the girls navigate their relations with Israelis with quiet, rapier-sharp humour. Still, these and less innocuous comments hurt them and it hurts me to watch it happening.

For most Ethiopian Jews, life in Israel is galling, frustrating and even, as we saw last week, dangerous. Over the years, Israeli media have covered several reports by Ethiopian youths who've been attacked and arrested by police officers for reasons as ridiculous as sitting on a park bench late at night. Also extensively covered are reports of Ethiopian Israelis routinely refused entry to nightclubs and of children prevented from registering for a local kindergarten or school. Not so long ago, a building's residents even banded together to prevent the dreaded Ethiopians from buying or renting in their building

It would be too much to expect all Ethiopian Israelis to have developed the kind of *sang froid* that Wuditu has so painstakingly acquired in response to unrelenting racist interactions. But, does justified anger warrant the kind of violent protest we saw in the last few days? Clearly not, and it's a sad statement on their relations that the next generation of Ethiopians have come to believe that substantive change can only come after you raise your voice and, it seems, your fist.

Judie Oron is a Canadian/Israeli journalist and the author of Cry of the Giraffe: Based on a True Story – *the award-winning account of her daughter Wuditu's experience as a slave in war-torn Ethiopia.*

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Canadian trying to claim Israeli land bought 80 years ago

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Eight years later, when Levin and his wife died, there was no record of the land, and the property was completely forgotten.

Then, in 1995, Surchin's son Mark came across an article in *The CJN* titled "Many Diaspora Jews own unclaimed Israeli land." The article began, "Do you unknowingly own land in Israel? Before you reply in the negative, read on."

The article ended with a list of Canadian investors, including, to Mark's surprise, Abraham Levin. He notified his mother, and the family began the process of claiming the land.

Initially, things seemed simple. The family's lawyer told them, "You have to convince the authorities that your mother really is the heir of Abraham Levin." This seemed like a standard legal process.

However, as the situation evolved, over multiple trips to have documents certified at the Israeli Consulate, the picture became more complex. Part of the bureaucracy stems from Israel's "apotropos" system of guardianship, a term dating back to the Ottoman period, whereby the land is administered for absentee owners.

A local moshav has also been using part of the land since before Levin bought it. "It's unclear… what their rights are," Mark says. Surchin will probably need to buy them out before she can take possession.

"We've had a chicken and egg situation," Mark says. "Do we spend the money to put the land in her name and then see what happens, or look for someone to buy the land first?"

This year at last, the family finally found a buyer for the land. However, this seemingly simple real estate deal now hangs in a fragile balance. While the apotropos has finally recognized Meta Surchin's claim, the family is waiting for the Israeli land registry to put the deed in her name before the sale.

Haifa-based real estate lawyer Dena Slonim, who has dealt with many similar cases, although not directly with Surchin's, says the process of registering a claim on "ownerless" land under apotropos control can be "lengthy and complicated.

"There have been cases of unscrupulous persons taking advantage of the absence of the owner and fraudulently taking control of properties," Slonim told *The CJN*. The Israeli bureaucracy "does [its] best to prevent this, sometimes raising insurmountable barriers for legitimate heirs."

Meta Surchin, 91

Mark, who lives in Toronto, isn't sure how much the land will ultimately be worth. "Initially, we had no clue if it was worth anything… We just thought that if Abraham Levin bought it, we should honour his memory by putting it in my mother's name; that's what he would want."

"It's less than the average price of a house in Toronto," he says, perhaps somewhere just under a million dollars. The family will probably see much less. "There's the development levy… betterment tax, capital gains tax, legal fees. When all is said and done, I expect it'll be under $500,000."

Slonim said these charges can lead to further delays, particularly when families are unable or unwilling to pay. "Each case is unique, fascinating, and often tragic, as the history of the family, and of the Jewish People in the 20th century, comes to light," she says.

Zionism has always run deep in the Surchin family. Surchin's father, Leon Levin, was just as active in Israeli causes as his father had been. Her daughter, Eleanor Schneider, made aliyah in 1973 and is currently a lecturer at the University of Haifa. Levin now has descendants living all over Israel.

Given the family's unwavering loyalty to Israel, they've been stunned by the obstacles. "It has felt to us," says Mark, "like there's some kind of a conspiracy here."

Slonim believes that the delays have probably not stemmed from any official government stance. "The… Israeli government position on foreign ownership of land is more of an economic issue: I don't think that the difficulties imposed on foreign citizens trying to claim ownership… are related."

Regardless of the cause, Surchin herself is disappointed that Israeli officials have seemingly done all they can to stall the family's claim. "My grandfather would be very upset," she says. "It needs to be resolved." ■

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Jewish Life

Life in Israel is not always a cabaret

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

In 2010, Nir Paldi set out to create and star in a one-man show about his conflicted Israeli and Jewish identity, but after showing the piece he'd been working on to friends and colleagues, he felt it didn't adequately capture the depth of his feelings.

"The format of me standing there storytelling was so direct, there wasn't enough distance," Paldi said. "So I thought about having some sort of mask or coverup."

What emerged was *Ballad of the Burning Star*, a cabaret-style drag show that explores elements of the Israeli experience and addresses themes of victimhood, persecution, love and violence.

Paldi plays Star, an Israeli drag queen armed with a troupe of five divas, or "starlets," acted by an all-female international cast who also play the show's alternate characters.

Produced by Paldi and his co-artistic director and life partner George Mann's London-based theatre company Theatre Ad Infinitum, *Ballad* has toured in the United Kingdom and will have its North American debut at Toronto's The Theatre Centre May 19.

"I'm not the first person to discover that cabaret is an excellent vehicle for speaking about political themes," said Paldi.

The 32-year-old Israeli was raised in a Jewish settlement near Jerusalem, but at age 23, a few months after completing his military service, he moved to Paris to study theatre.

Framed by the device of cabaret, the narrative unfolds through the different characters put on by Star and touches on what Paldi referred to as "basic Israeli concepts."

The main story within the story is about a boy named Yisrael who lives on an Israeli settlement with his brother Eitan.

Various formative episodes in Yisrael's life, as well as both familial and historical incidences – including his brother being killed in a terrorist attack, aggression he faces at the hands of his Palestinian neighbours, his grandmother's Holocaust experiences, Israel's collective trauma during the Gulf War and Yisrael's sense of guilt and shame at having killed a Palestinian child during his military service – are told through what Paldi called "culturally specific melodies and dance routines."

In unpacking some of his early experiences to serve as fodder for the story, Paldi said he'd started to realize the effect the tense political climate in Israel had on him growing up, and began reflecting more on why he decided to leave the country.

"I remember being shocked at the strength of emotion it aroused in me when I started speaking about things in the collective consciousness of Israel rather than the personal, and found myself breaking into tears speaking about this to George, who's not Israeli and not Jewish," Paldi recalled.

All audiences can relate to *Ballad*, Paldi stressed, though how informed one is about the political situation in Israel will affect one's experience of the play.

"We always want to make sure the context is clear and that the piece is informative as well as entertaining and tragic," he said, adding that those with strong opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict tend to find the play provocative.

"Often, I'd finish performing and would be approached by a pro-Israeli person and a pro-Palestinian person at the same time and they'd both say, 'Don't you think this piece is one-sided?' And I'd walk away and leave them to discuss the piece with each other," Paldi chuckled.

This is what makes *Ballad* so strong, he emphasized, that it doesn't seek to give an answer to the conflict.

"I wanted to show how helpless one sometimes feels when faced with how complex and painful the reality there is." ■

Ballad runs May 19 to 24 at The Theatre Centre, co-presented by Acting Up Stage Company and Why Not Theatre in association with Koffler Centre of the Arts. Tickets can be purchased at www.theatrecentre.org

Nir Paldi in Ballad of the Burning Star
ALEX BRENNER PHOTOS

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

Yiddish singer grew up without connection to Judaism

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Singer Lenka Lichtenberg used to be known almost exclusively for her original Yiddish compositions and her delightful arrangements of traditional Yiddish music, but in recent years she has emerged as a world-music artist and a singer of cantorial liturgy.

A child star of music theatre in her native Prague, she was once a folksinger in Denmark and later became a lounge singer in Vancouver.

"I hadn't really found myself," she said.

It was on Masada, during a visit to Israel, that she resolved to become a Yiddish singer. "I needed to make my life more meaningful," she explained, adding that since Yiddish is a dying language, she wanted to do her part to keep it alive.

Lichtenberg grew up without a connection to Judaism or Jewish culture. In fact, until she was eight years old, she had no idea that she was Jewish. She was on her way to perform at a Jewish community centre in Prague, when her mother, a teenage survivor of Theresiendstadt, told her about her true identity. Both of Lichtenberg's parents were raised in assimilated families, and her mother, Renee, a philosophy professor, was baptized Roman Catholic.

To become a Yiddish singer, Lichtenberg listened to the music on record and took Yiddish language lessons. But she had the nagging feeling that she was an outsider, a "pretender," because of her background.

"Most Yiddish singers have parents who speak Yiddish," she said. To help overcome her unease, she focused on pronouncing the Yiddish words she sang correctly.

"It's not authentic to me, not having grown up in it, but I had to make it as authentic to me I could," she said.

Lichtenberg went on to record three solo Yiddish albums. A member of the popular Sisters of Sheynville, she provided the arrangements of Yiddish swing and klezmer for the group's award-winning CD, *Sheynville Express*.

But Lichtenberg found herself becoming creatively restless and wanted to explore other musical avenues, so she began experimenting with Middle Eastern rhythms in her songs. On her spellbinding 2010 recording, *Fray* (also the name of her band), you can hear the rhythms of the Middle East, as well Indian and Brazilian styles. *Fray* includes Yiddish poetry, which was set to music by Lichtenberg.

"The melodies and words are always in some way or other coming from the Jewish treasury," she said. She followed up *Fray* with another world-fusion release in 2013, *Embrace*, for which she won a Canadian Folk Music Award.

Lenka Lichtenberg

Lichtenberg also immersed herself in cantorial study and now co-leads Shabbat and High Holiday services at the Reconstructionist synagogue, Congregation Darchei Noam.

"I found a congregation where I'm at home," she said, adding that they've allowed her to learn on the job. "At first, I couldn't read Hebrew, but they let me participate. Every year I know a little more of liturgy and I set goals for myself."

Her sublime 2012 release, the award-winning *Songs for the Breathing Walls*, is made up of Jewish liturgical poems and prayers set to music written by Lichtenberg and other composers. Recorded in 12 synagogues in the Czech Republic, the 17 tracks are blended with Arabic, Jewish and Celtic arrangements.

"Each synagogue had its own history. Somehow I felt I was connecting with the long-gone community," she said. She is planning to record the second volume of *Songs for the Breathing Walls* next year in different synagogues in the Czech Republic.

Lichtenberg, who has a master's degree in ethnomusicology, took another musical detour recently, which led to the release of *Lullabies from Exile* last year at Ashkenaz. *Lullabies*, which has been nominated for an Independent Music Award, includes Yiddish and Iraqi Jewish music, as well as traditional Czech lullabies.

She's holding a European launch of *Lullabies* on June 28 in the Jerusalem Synagogue in Prague, one of the few synagogues that's still used as a place of worship in the Czech Republic.

This fall, Lichtenberg and her band Fray will play a few Ontario dates before they tour the United States. An EP of remixes she's working on is set to be released this September.

For more information about Lichtenberg, visit www.lenkalichtenberg.com. ■

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Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

KING OF KOSHER GOSPEL PERFORMS AT BETH DAVID SYNAGOGUE

Joshua Nelson, the celebrated "king of kosher gospel," has spread the joy of spiritual music to audiences from New Jersey to Jerusalem. Blessed with a voice as powerful as the late **Mahalia Jackson's**, Nelson and friends perform here this week in a Yom Yerushalayim concert that also includes **Cantor Marshall Loomer**, **Lisa Sonshine**, **Rebecca Finkelstein**, **Gal Fuchs** and the **Nafshi Band**. Beth David Synagogue, 55 Yeomans Rd. $50. Sunday May 17, 8 p.m. Tickets, 416-633-5500, ext. 0.

• • •

Names in the News: Conductor **Boris Brott**, composer **Aaron Jay Kernis**, musicologist **Neil Levin**, conductor-composer **Steven Mercurio** and composer **Ana Sokolovi** have been named as jurors for the Azrieli Prize in Jewish Music and the Azrieli Commissioning Competition, two new prizes each worth $50,000 established by the Azrieli Foundation. The winning works will be performed in Montreal in October 2016.

Names in the News II: Ron Cohen Mann, a gifted oboist and English hornist, has been named the recipient of Temple Sinai's 2015 Ben Steinberg Musical Legacy Award, which encourages the careers of young Jewish artists in the Canadian community and performance of music by Jewish composers. He performs a free concert at Temple Sinai, Wednesday May 27, 8 p.m.

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Arts in Brief

• *Dancing Arabs*, **Eran Riklis'** feature film based on **Sayed Kashua's** semi-autobiographical novel, tells a coming-of-age story on the theme of personal relations between Palestinian and Jewish Israelis at a time of heightened tensions. In Arabic and Hebrew with subtitles; opens May 15 in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

• *Ballad of the Burning Star*, Theatre Ad Infinitum's explosive journey into the core of a conflicted Jewish state, gets its North American premiere this month courtesy of the Koffler Centre. The edgy musical piece, which has been described as "a theatrical hand grenade," runs at The Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. W., May 19 to 24. $40, $35, $30 (preview), $19.99 (students and arts workers under 30). kofflerarts.org, 416-538-0988.

• Local Sherlockians **Clifford S. Goldfarb** and **Hartley R. Nathan** put **Sherlock Holmes** under the magnifying glass in a talk about the famed literary detective's Jewish connections. $4. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday May 21, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

• **Katherine Barber** presents a three-part series on Jewish contributions to the world of ballet. Series $40, or $16 drop-in. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays June 1, 8 and 15, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• • •

At the Galleries

• The late Canadian artist-cartoonist **Josh Silburt**, whose first job as a cartoonist was with the *St. Catharines Standard* newspaper in 1937, is the focus of two exhibitions this summer in the Niagara-on-the-Lake region. "Artist in Turbulent Times" is at the Riverbrink Art Museum, 116 Queenston St., Queenston, from May 15 to Oct. 25, while "St. Catharines 1937: A Snapshot in Caricature" is at the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre, 1932 Welland Canals Parkway, St. Catharines, from May 16 to Dec. 31. www.joshsilburt.com

• Award-winning Toronto artist **Julie Gladstone's** first solo exhibition features *Infinity Pool* and another two dozen of her recent "sublime-pop paintings." Navillus Gallery, 110 Davenport Ave., May 28 to June 27. Opening reception, May 28, 6 to 8 p.m.

• The Koerner Foundation of Toronto has given $2 million to the National Gallery of Canada Foundation for its Canadian Artists in Venice Endowment Fund, which provides ongoing funding for Canadian artists to be exhibited at the Venice Biennale. In appreciation, the National Gallery is renaming its Water Court the Michael and Sonja Koerner Family Atrium.

Clarice Carson

Passages

Prominent Canadian opera singer **Clarice Carson (nee Katz)** died in Toronto on May 2 in her 86th year. A Montreal native who had lived in Toronto for the past 27 years, Carson sang her first operatic roles in 1959. She made her New York debut at the New York City Opera and toured with the Metropolitan Opera National Company. A magnificent soprano, Carson is remembered for her title role in *Tosca* for Radio-Canada television in 1970 as well as *Aida*, *Desdemona* and many other roles performed internationally with some of the greatest names in opera. ■

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Klezmer Conservatory Band still popular 35 years later

The Klezmer Conservatory Band. Hankus Netsky is second from left.

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

When the Klezmer Conservatory Band put on its first concert in 1980, musician Hankus Netsky says he thought it would also be their last live performance.

The band consisted only of him and 15 others, mainly students from the New England Conservatory of Music and musicians from the local Jewish community in Boston. After a rapturous reaction from that premiere concert, Netsky says he got offers for three more performances – all paying gigs.

"Many people were affected by [the music] so viscerally that they knew this was something that could really have a wide audience," he told *The CJN* on the phone from Boston.

Thirty-five years after Netsky started it, the Klezmer Conservatory Band (KCB) is still going strong. It will return to Toronto on May 13 for a concert of klezmer and Yiddish music at Holy Blossom Temple.

When Netsky started the group, klezmer music was mostly defunct in the United States. Netsky credits its recent resurgence in North America and Europe to the interest among Jews in reconnecting to their ancestry.

As a teenager, Netsky said he felt as if he was missing an integral part of his heritage, as he was not learning much about where the Jews came from.

"The very languages, the Yiddish and the Ashkenazi Hebrew… they were buried at that time," he said. "The accents of my grandfather, my father even, were not what I was learning in Hebrew school."

He also knew that his grandfather and uncle had played in klezmer orchestras back in the 1920s, so the traditional music intrigued him.

Netsky said that watching Irish musicians jam together to revive their own culture influenced him to embrace his ethnic roots in music.

"Any of us who were attuned to culture or the arts, we tended to want to work for something that might resonate with where we came from and who we were," he said.

Although members have come and gone, nearly all of today's nine-piece band have played with the KCB for 25 years. Bassist Jim Guttmann and frequent vocalist Judy Bresler have been with the band from the beginning.

The group still works constantly. Last summer, members of the band worked on a film score for a documentary, *Theodore Bikel: In the Shoes of Sholom Aleichem*.

In April, they unveiled an updated version of *In the Fiddler's House*, with Itzhak Perlman and Andy Statman, at Carnegie Hall in New York. Netsky said he hopes the band will bring that concert to Canada.

Netsky also has a new book coming out in June: *Klezmer: Music and Community in Twentieth-Century Jewish Philadelphia*. Meanwhile, Netsky has a personal connection to Holy Blossom cantor Benjamin Maissner. As a young man, Netsky said he has fond memories of Maissner, who worked in his hometown of Philadelphia. Maissner was a hip cantor in the city's Jewish community, doing services infused with rock and jazz music that were popular with young adults.

"I did not belong to his synagogue," Netsky said. "But if you wanted to hang around with interesting kids who were fun to be with, you went there."

Like Netsky, Maissner had ancestors connected to a Jewish music scene. His great-uncle, Israel Alter, was a chief cantor in Hanover, Germany, before World War II.

Without an Ashkenaz Festival this year, Maissner said he wanted to bring the group back to Toronto. The KCB has performed at Roy Thomson Hall in recent years for Chai Life fundraisers.

"The music that they play is very nostalgic, reminiscent of Jewish and eastern European culture," Maissner said, adding that their performances are more traditional and less jazz-infused than those of many current bands that play Yiddish music. "It's a very unique sound." ■

Winnipeg film fest channels Sophie Tucker

MYRON LOVE
PRAIRIES CORRESPONDENT

The 2015 Winnipeg International Jewish Film Festival showcases a menu of outstanding films on themes incorporating the Holocaust and modern Israel, with a side dish of the legendary Jewish performer Sophie Tucker.

The 12th edition of the festival runs May 26 to June 6, presented by Asper Foundation Performances and the Rady Jewish Community Centre.

"We are excited to have the producers of *The Outrageous Sophie Tucker* with us for a question and answer session after the screening," said Tamar Barr, the Rady Centre's assistant executive director. "We don't often have the producers/directors of the films attend the festival."

The producers, Susan and Lloyd Ecklер, based their documentary on several hundred recently discovered personal scrapbooks in tracing the 60-year career of the legendary Jewish star of vaudeville, Broadway, radio, television and the movies. The Ecklers spent seven years researching their documentary.

Another coup for this year's festival was being able to secure the Academy Award-winning *Ida* (2015, Best Foreign Language film of the year). The joint Polish, French, Danish production is about a young novitiate nun in 1960s Poland, who is on the verge of taking her vows when she learns of her Jewish parentage and goes off with a surviving aunt – a Communist party functionary – to try to find out what happened to the younger woman's parents.

Ida will be presented at Winnipeg festival.

From South America come two films with Nazi connections. The Academy Award-nominated *The German Doctor* is also set in the early 1960s. A joint Argentinian-French-Norwegian-Spanish production, the drama connects the notorious Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, an Argentine family who entrusts their young daughter to his care and an Israeli secret agent in pursuit of the evil doctor.

Comedy is also featured. *Mr. Kaplan* is a story about an elderly Jewish man living in Uruguay who comes to suspect that a quiet older German man is a wanted Nazi and plots to kidnap him and smuggle him out of Uruguay to Israel.

Heye Shalom, Peter Schwarz is a joint Israeli-German production about a sister and brother – Holocaust survivors – who were separated at war's end with the sister, Michla, going to Israel and the brother, Feiv'ke, presumed dead. But he ends up living in East Germany in the shadow of the concentration camp where he was a prisoner – married to a German woman. The film presents the Holocaust as seen through the third generation, uncovers family secrets and shows that it is never too late to rediscover one's heritage.

A second American entry in the festival is *Above and Beyond, the Untold True Story* about Jewish American pilots who fought for Israel in 1948. The film examines the motivation of the volunteer pilots (both Jewish and non-Jewish) and their role in the young Jewish state's survival.

Most of the other films are Israeli-made. *The Gett,the Trial of Vivian Amsalem* is an eye-opening view of the difficulty that Israeli women have in getting a Jewish divorce, a *get*, from their estranged husbands.

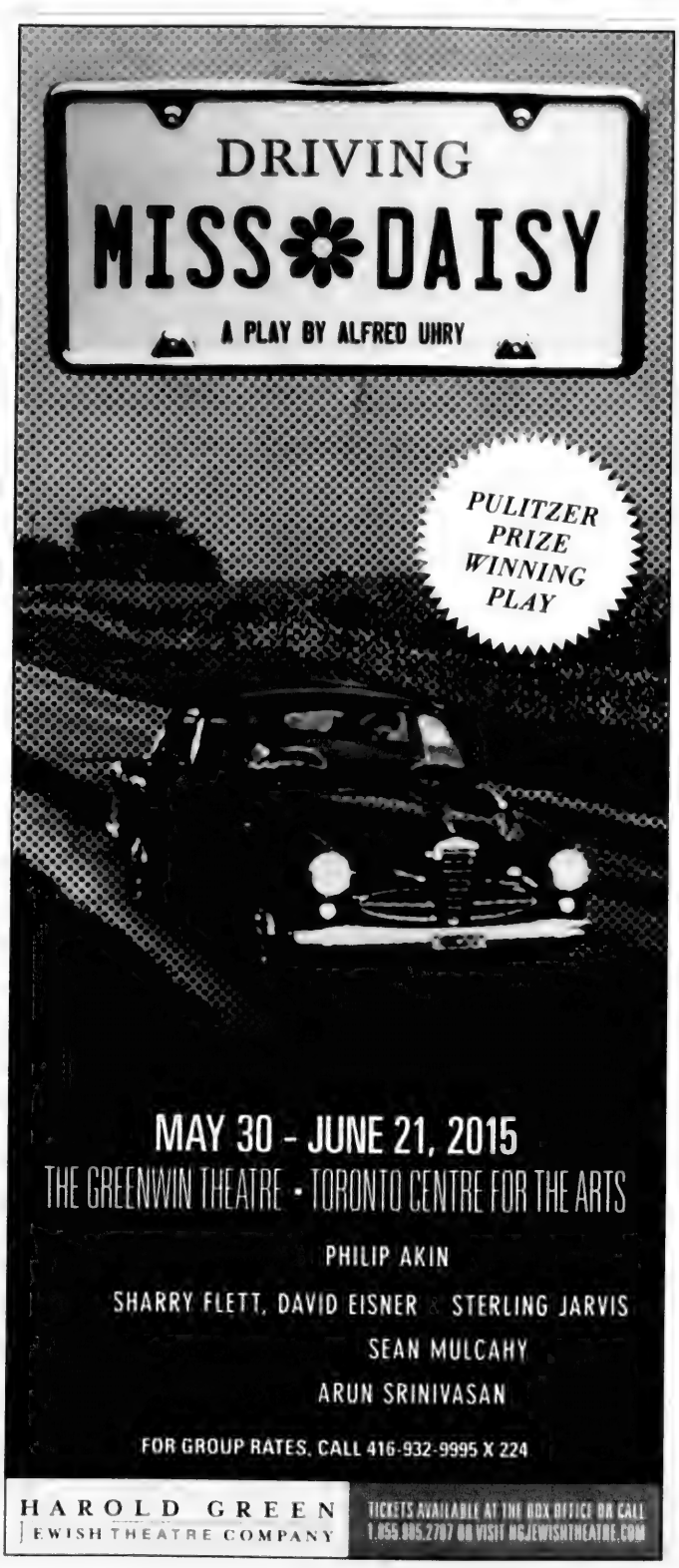
Magic Men, also from Israel, is a father and son road trip in Greece that takes the father back to his youth in Nazi-occupied Greece, where he was hidden by a local magician.

Bethlehem, Israel's Academy Award entry in the Best Foreign Language category last year, is an examination of the complex relationship of an Israeli intelligence officer and his Palestinian informant.

Zero Motivation is a humorous look at daily life for a group of young, female soldiers in a remote Israeli desert outpost.

Then there is the French documentary *24 Days*, the harrowing account of young French Jew Ilan Halimi, who was kidnapped, tortured and murdered by an Arab gang early in 2006, and the unsuccessful search for him. The doc focuses on what his parents went through during the time he was missing and how the authorities bungled the case.

Barr notes that many of the films usually sell out well in advance. ■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Dancing Arabs explores life as a minority in Israel

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

As Israeli director Eran Riklis's new drama, *Dancing Arabs*, has screened around the world, distributors have danced with trying to get the title right.

Dancing Arabs, opening in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal on May 15, is the original title, from one of the two Sayed Kashua novels that inspired the film. In France, the title translates to *My Son, My Heart Dances* is its name in Germany. The United States has the film listed as *A Borrowed Identity*.

"I think [*Dancing Arabs*] is a great title," Riklis tells *The CJN* on the day of the film's premiere at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, where it was the opening night pick. "I think distributors are afraid of the word 'Arabs.' They fear it will categorize the film as being political."

Although his drama does contain political content, Riklis says he hopes audiences are open to hearing a story from one of the 1.6 million Arabs that live in Israel. Arabs comprise 20 per cent of Israel's population, but Riklis says a lot of Israelis ignore their presence.

Danielle Kitzis and Tawfeek Barhom as Naomi and Eyad in *Dancing Arabs*.

The "dancing" of the title is not literal, but a reference to how Arabs must learn to move and orient themselves as a minority population.

Dancing Arabs tells the story of Eyad, played by newcomer Tawfeek Barhom. Eyad is a brainy kid who gets accepted into a top Israeli high school, only to realize he is the only Arab in his class. Although Eyad tries to fit in, he soon falls madly in love with a Jewish girl, which complicates his life.

The story of this cultural difference was not just inherent to Kashua, an Israeli-Arab journalist who wrote the source materials and the screenplay. Riklis says that Barhom also identified with Eyad's journey.

"He also went to boarding school... he had an affair with a Jewish girl," Riklis says of his leading man. "I also needed an authentic Arab kid, but someone that you wouldn't [automatically] associate as Arab. You feel [Barhom] could be anybody, and in that sense, he was perfect."

Barhom actually lived in the village of Ein Rafa as a child – the same place where Riklis shot his 2004 film *The Syrian Bride*. As a pre-teen, Barhom would visit the set. Upon meeting Riklis for *Dancing Arabs*, Barhom told him that watching the filming of that production made him fall in love with cinema.

Dancing Arabs was supposed to have a splashy premiere at last summer's Jerusalem Film Festival, says Riklis, who is one of Israel's top directors after films like *Lemon Tree* and *Zaytoun*.

However, the conflict in Gaza muted the opening. The festival debut was scaled back and the film's planned summer release date was delayed until November.

One central theme of *Dancing Arabs* is the shortsightedness of education. In the film, the teachers in both classrooms – the Arab primary school he attends as a boy and the prestigious Israeli high school explore a selective history of Israel.

These two different perspectives suggest reluctance on educators' parts to explain the other side of the story. Riklis says there are a lot of mistakes being done in both classrooms.

"Education is the basis for change for younger people," he says. "If you don't get the education right, no good can happen later on."

Riklis is currently working on more films that take place in or are connected to Israel. He says that an upcoming project deals with the aftermath of the Six-Day War.

Although the director says he would not object to telling stories derived from other places, he wants to keep his focus on social and political life in Israel.

"It's a little bit of a duty to expose these kinds of stories, because otherwise, they go unnoticed." ■

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Zoe follows in the path of her singer/songwriter parents

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Zoe Sky Jordan's songs have been featured on the TV series *Less Than Kind* and *Lost Girl*, on the soundtrack of a CBC retrospective on 60 years of hockey and in Starbucks cafes around the world.

One of the first songs she wrote, at 17, was placed in the TV series *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. That song, *Tonight*, was the first she ever played for her parents, Amy Sky and Marc Jordan, who are both renowned Toronto singer-songwriters. Sky Jordan, 24, said she'd written songs before penning *Tonight*, but she'd been hesitant to play them for her parents because she felt the songs were inferior.

"My parents weren't going to encourage bad songwriting," she said, speaking on the phone from Nashville, where she's recording her new album.

When Sky Jordan, whose musical education included analyzing songs on radio with her parents, played *Tonight* for her parents, she was confident they would like it.

"My dad said it was good," she recalled, adding that her mom fixed the bridge and, as a co-writer, took 20 per cent of the writer's royalty.

After *Tonight* was placed on *Degrassi*, Sky Jordan's music became a staple of the show's soundtrack. Since then, her songs have also been released online. Her 2012 six-song EP, *Restless, Unfocused*, what she calls her "first, solid, solo release," was picked up by Starbucks and played worldwide in their stores.

Footsteps, a song she wrote with Colleen Dauncey, her partner in the synth-pop band Petty Victories, was featured on the soundtrack of a CBC retrospective on 60 years of Hockey Night in Canada during the opening game of the 2013 season.

Earlier this year, Sky Jordan lived and worked in Los Angeles, where she co-wrote the song *In Another Life* with electronic-music artist Kyler England. It'll be part of the soundtrack of the TV show *Switched at Birth*.

Sky Jordan writes dreamy melodies with lyrics that paint a picture. Like her father, Marc, Sky Jordan, is dyslexic and so the songs she writes are sometimes inspired by visual images, including movies.

"I love old movies, and maybe because I'm dyslexic, I like visual stuff. That triggers my mind. I get more visual metaphors than anything else," she said, adding that she likes to "write about a small moment and make it a really big deal."

Zoe Sky Jordan KATHERINE HOLLAND PHOTO

Her voice can be either sultry or haunting, depending on the mood of the song she's singing, but she's also comfortable performing emotionally charged songs in higher ranges.

Sky Jordan, who performed with her parents while she was growing up, says singing came to her naturally. The first time she was on stage with them she was three years old. "I just kind of wandered on stage where my parents were playing. My family always encouraged that kind of stuff," she said.

In early April, Sky Jordan arrived in Nashville, after driving from Los Angeles, to record her first full-length release. She came with her demos and picked out some of the songs for the new recording in her first week in the songwriting capital of the world. She expects to launch the yet untitled recording in Toronto this summer.

A collector of vintage clothing, jewelry and bric-a-brac, she plans to sell vintage merchandise at her launch. "It's sort of like having an Etsy store at the show," she said.

While she's in Toronto, she'll also be performing at venues around the city, including at the Cameron on Queen Street West, with her boyfriend, singer-songwriter Liam Titcomb, who is doing a residency there this summer. She is also featured on Thomas Fiss' newly released single, *Orbit*. ■

For more information about her, visit zoeskyjordan.flavors.me or contact her through Facebook.

RadyJCC

Youth Program Coordinator

The Rady Jewish Community Centre (Winnipeg) is seeking an experienced and creative individual to play the key role in organizing and coordinating youth programs and activities for the Rady JCC with a key focus of maintaining and fostering our leading youth program BBYO.

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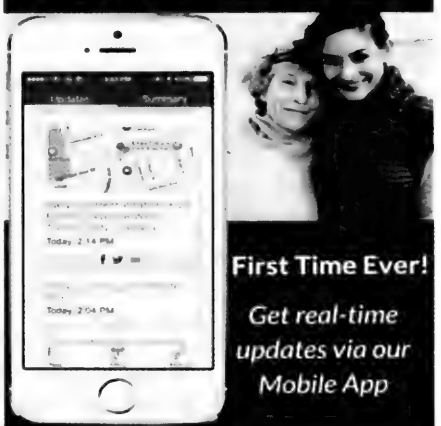

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

The war in all its facets

NORMAN RAVVIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Once it was said to be the poor who were always with us, but nowadays it seems it is the war that we cannot be without. Anniversaries abound – VE-Day, the liberation of Dachau and of Auschwitz. The obituary pages are full of the longest-living among survivors of wartime events.

Most recently, 95-year-old Jozef Paczinski died; a Polish inmate of Auschwitz, his responsibility through much of his time in the camp was to cut the hair of camp commandant Rudolf Höss.

Movies and books about World War II appear apace, in what must be seen as a new wave of creative grappling with the subject. Canonical writers – Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Tadeusz Borowski and Anne Frank – lurk in the wings demanding rereading.

In Germany, *Look Who's Back*, the first novel by satirist Timur Vermes, has sold over 1.5 million copies. Its would-be comic feature is the resurrection of Hitler in a field in Berlin. What follows is hijinks – this is the only word for Vermes' use of a Hitlerian monologue to critique cooking shows, the Internet and present-day German politics.

If *Look Who's Back* offers an example of the new lowbrow view of wartime themes, Anthony Doerr's Pulitzer Prize-winning *All the Light We Cannot See* is a recent contribution to a serious tradition of novelistic investigations of the war. Its back cover copy informs us that the novel was "10 years in the writing," an argument, one might guess, for the fact that Doerr has done his research. But unlike other novelizations of historical events, Doerr does not include a list of "additional reading" to allow readers to follow his research.

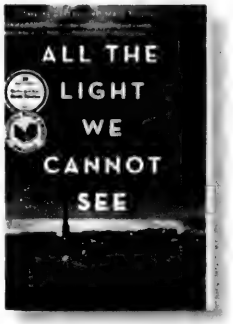
All the Light We Cannot See opens by entering the historical fray in the summer of 1944. It is the beginning of the Allied bombing campaign over Brittany's walled citadel of Saint-Malo, and the Germans are holed up as part of the last gasp of their occupation of western Europe.

The novel is pieced together like an ingeniously edited film, stepping forward and backward in time, though the bulk of its action takes place between 1940 and 1944. Its short chapters shift between a portrait of a blind Parisian girl's arrival at Saint-Malo, and that of Werner Pfennig, a German child prodigy who ends up at an elite school where boys are taught the scientific, racial and violent creed of the new Germany.

A thoughtful review of Vermes' *Look Who's Back* relied on an influential piece of literary criticism penned in the 1920s by E.M. Forster: "The historian deals with actions, and with the characters of men only so far as he can deduce them from their actions." The novelist, on the other hand, must "reveal the hidden life at its source: to tell us more about Queen Victoria than could be known…"

It is telling – each reader will have their own sense of this – that our reception of blind Marie-Laure, her fierce love for her father, her preternatural way of learning the layout of neighbourhoods, her experience of the destruction of Saint-Malo – does not make us wonder about Doerr's ability to get things right historically. Like Roberto Benigni in the Jim Jarmusch film *Down by Law*, Marie-Laure is proof that we live in a sad and beautiful world.

But when it comes to Werner and his proto-Nazi school chums, the brutal male teachers and mincing female support staff of the Reich's heyday, I hesitate. Here, Doerr must rise to Forster's challenge "to tell us more about" the German Nazi outlook "than could be known." The challenge is worthwhile, but it's difficult to know if we're being served anything like the real thing.



All the Light We Cannot See,
Anthony Doerr
Scribner

Unlike Vermes – who pitches a darkly humorous mass murderer – Doerr presents a likable and idiosyncratic young German at the centre of his tale. Werner Pfennig is no hero – his shame at not standing up for his weaker compatriots is clearly drawn. But the swiftness with which he is drawn into the elite institutions of Nazi culture irritates even his devoted sister. "You'll become," she tells him, thinking of the sycophantic boys in their circle, "just like Hans and Herribert."

The initiation and instruction methods at Werner's boarding school are brutal. The weak fall away. Science is taught with an eye on the country's need for jet propulsion rockets. Teachers view the strong and smart as cogs in the national machinery demanded in "exceptional times."

One of the strengths in Doerr's approach is his willingness to write contrary to most Holocaust-related fiction, which offers detailed depictions of victims but little examination of actual Germans. Because of the hierarchy of guards, kapos and ghetto police in German camps and ghettos, the average inmate had little interaction with the German SS. Even privileged prisoners, like the non-Jewish Pole Tadeusz Borowski, encountered SS at Auschwitz as stoic, distant overseers of a host of prisoners forced into the system of killing Jews and political prisoners.

Doerr's portraits of wartime German types are of interest. The lead teacher at Werner's school is a voluptuous sadist, reminiscent, at least physically, of Hermann Goering. A technical sciences teacher called Hauptmann operates in relation to Werner as Dr. Frankenstein did to his monster, opting to turn his favoured student into a disciplined servant of the science of war.

When Werner and a friend travel to Berlin for a school holiday, the friend's mother affects an aristocratic Nazi politesse. In her apartment full of "sleek and shiny" modern accoutrements, she is quick to report that the building's last Jewish tenant, Frau Schwartzenberger, "will be gone by year's end."

Here one encounters one of the oddities of Doerr's portrayal of the "hidden life" of wartime Germany: we are halfway into a rather long novel before the first notable encounter with an actual Jew. Frau Schwartzenberger makes her appearance as a companion in an elevator ride. Afterward Werner marvels to himself, "A Jewess," choosing a word that is prime bait for readers prone to wonder if this is how Germans spoke to themselves in 1941. (Is the anachronistic word "Jewess" meant as some approximation of a prissy German word, or is it simply an awkward choice, a infelicitous term as dead in the linguistic water as poetess?)

These are good readerly challenges. Doerr takes on Forster's proposition and works with fierce and poetic detail to render the Bretons of Saint-Malo and the Germans of the ascendant Reich, even if there are points at which the narrative demands "additional reading." ■

Norman Ravvin is a writer and teacher in Montreal.

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Making Phoenix was necessary for German director

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

German director Christian Petzold and actor Nina Hoss were still recovering from jetlag when they arrived at the Elgin Theatre in Toronto. They had flown in from Germany for the second night of the Toronto International Film Festival last fall. Even though they were dazed from the time shift, they were alert. It was the night of the world premiere of their latest collaboration, the postwar drama *Phoenix*.

Many of the thousand or so ticket buyers sat, hushed and mesmerized by the film, which opened theatrically in select Canadian cities on May 8. However, during the film's climactic scene, Petzold and Hoss were taken aback by how many in the audience had started laughing.

"I was like, Oh my God. What's happening?" Hoss tells *The CJN* the afternoon after *Phoenix's* premiere. "I really had to think about [the laughter]. Did we do something wrong?"

The actor's doubts soon vanished when the crowd gave the film a rapturous applause as the end credits rolled. The disorienting reaction to that big reveal, which I would hate to spoil, was appropriate for a film about lies and deception.

Phoenix tells the story of Nelly (played by Hoss), a survivor of Auschwitz. The war is over, but Nelly's face is badly disfigured.

Phoenix, starring Ronald Zehrfeld and Nina Hoss, received amazing reviews at TIFF.

After surgery gives her a new look, Nelly sets out to find her husband, Johnny (Ronald Zehrfeld). Nelly believes that he may have had sold her out to the Nazis. Underneath her new guise, she tries to find out the truth.

To prepare for this character that has just gone through intense trauma, Hoss says she chose not to speak with Holocaust survivors or read testimonies. She was worried that she didn't want to go through such sensitive material.

Instead, she watched documentaries, including Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, to immerse herself in the despair and darkness of war. One moment in that film, a barber talks with a bit too much volume and glee about how he cut people's hair before they stepped into the gas chambers. Then, as he is working, his wife walks by.

"His voice is gone," Hoss says of this unnerving moment. "[As an actor], I can take so much from looking at someone's eyes, when you see this horror coming back and you're not able to go over it with a loud voice."

Reading books and watching documentaries was the key to getting her into the mindset of a woman trying to figure out a new, foreign world around her. Hoss says she did not read the novel *Phoenix* – loosely based on Hubert Monteilhet's *Return from the Ashes* – until after the film finished production.

Petzold originally read that book in German after learning about it in the magazine *Film Critic*, which mentioned it in an article about the Alfred Hitchcock film *Vertigo*. At the time, he says he thought it would be impossible to make a film that combined Auschwitz and Hitchcock.

Just a few years ago, though, Petzold was reminded of this novel when he attended a screening at the Berlin International Film Festival, of documentary footage Hitchcock shot from Auschwitz. That film was infamously never released, as the director was so devastated by the material. (A new restored print with that footage is slowly finding an audience at film centres around the world.)

Petzold said that making such a film was necessary for him to deal with the "big historical cut" before and after the war. Due to the rise of Nazism, much of German culture, including art, music, film and fashion was lost, resulting in a hole between the generations.

"You make a period picture to research around this cut," he says. "For someone in the cinema business in Germany, they ask, 'Where are the comedies? Why don't we have musicals or genres like film noir?' It's because we destroyed it."

Alas, the desire to laugh as relief from a tense postwar story probably helps to close that gap too. ■

Jewish book awards to go on despite Koffler hiatus

BILL GLADSTONE
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

As they watch the usual awards get handed out, book lovers who attend the upcoming Canadian Jewish Literary Awards ceremony next October will likely have reason to ponder the familiar question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?"

In a plot twist reminiscent of *Mutiny On The Bounty*, a group of jury members is preparing to stage the awards at York University next October even though the hosting organization, the Koffler Centre for the Arts, recently announced that the 27-year-old awards would be taking a hiatus in 2015 while Koffler rethinks their future.

"We're putting on the awards because we want to fill a void," said Ed Trapunski, one of six jurors who say it would be unfair to authors and publishers if the awards were to miss a year.

Koffler declared the hiatus last December after the jury seemed unwilling to accept some proposed new guidelines and changes for the awards, which included set terms for jury members and a reduction in the number of categories from the present nine (and more in some years) to only four.

"They wanted to eliminate the Yiddish, Holocaust and Scholarship categories," Trapunski said. "Those of us on the jury felt very strongly that these are very strong aspects of Jewish books, and we wanted to maintain these categories."

The matter arose after a 10-year sponsorship arrangement for the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards ended in June 2014. Unwilling to run the awards at a deficit, the Koffler had proposed fewer awards and higher cash prizes that would raise the media profile of the awards. The Koffler contends that the proposed changes – more in keeping with the idealized model of Canada's famous Giller Prize – would make it easier to find new sponsors.

With the assistance of juror Sara Horowitz, acting director of the Jewish studies program at York University, financial and logistical support for the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards is to be supplied this year and perhaps into the future by the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University and other Jewish studies programs at Concordia, McGill and the universities of Toronto, Ottawa and Western Ontario.

Meanwhile, the Koffler Centre has indicated it will release its plans for the awards in early May. "We decided to put the awards on hiatus to figure them out," said Koffler executive director Cathy Jonasson. "We fully intend to continue with them. We want people to pay attention to them."

Founded by then-professor Adam Fuerstenberg about 1988, the Canadian Jewish Book Awards began as an independent entity and operated as such for many years, even after it fell some years ago under the auspices of the former Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, which supplied administrative assistance.

Did the committee lose its independence when the Koffler Centre took it over after the BJCC's demise? "That's a good question," Fuerstenberg said. "I don't really remember. I was just told that we were being moved over, but there wasn't anything like an actual written contract that I recall."

The point may be moot, however, since Trapunski indicates the current six-person steering committee would be glad to turn the awards back to the Koffler in 2016. "We're not anti-Koffler in any way," he said. "We just want to fill a void without suspending the awards for a year."

Natalie Kertes, Koffler's director of literary programs and daughter of prominent author Joseph Kertes, said, "I wish them the very best of luck. I'm of the mind that the more support there is out there for Canadian Jewish books, the better the audience numbers will be and the better the book world will be for it. I think, in general, authors deserve as much recognition as they can get."

The Canadian Jewish Literary Awards are being sponsored and administered by York University's Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies and partners. Submissions deadline is the end of May and the awards ceremony is slated for Oct. 18. The committee is also seeking donations. Please visit the website cjlawards.ca for more information. ■

What's New

MAY 14 - MAY 21

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, May 14

HUMANISTIC JUDAISM
Oraynu Congregation holds a session on "Introduction to Humanistic Judaism," 7:30 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC.

INTERFAITH DISCUSSION
Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich, Beth Sholom Synagogue, **Rev. Rachel Kessler,** Grace Church on the Hill, **Timothy Glanotti,** American Islamic College, discuss "The greater threat, fundamentalism or secularism?" 7 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue $15. Sponsored by the Neighbourhood Interfaith Group. For tickets, mollie_rothman@yahoo.ca.

HAGGAI AND THE SECOND TEMPLE
Rabbi Wayne Allen discusses "Haggai: the unknown hero of the Second Temple," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Sunday, May 17

YIDDISH BARBERSHOP QUARTET
Julius, a Yiddish barbershop quartet, performs at Temple Sinai, 7 p.m. Tickets, $18/$20. 416-487-4161.

YOM YERUSHALAYIM CONCERT
Joshua Nelson, the King of Kosher Gospel, and others perform at Beth David Synagogue, May 17, 8 p.m. $50/$100. For tickets, 416-635-5500, ext. 0.

JERUSALEM DAY
Celebrate Jerusalem Day with a carnival 11 a.m.- 3 p.m., May 17, York Hill District Park, Thornhill. Sponsored by B'nai Brith Canada.

SHAVUOT BAKE AND LEARN
Children can make cookies and learn about Shavuot, 2 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. $5/$10. Email agol@shaarshalom.ca.

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of May 28 is May 18. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Cholent champion

Shabnam (Shaby) Heltay won the Village Shul's cholent cook-off by making a *dafina*, a traditional Moroccan-inspired version of cholent. Holding the winning trophy with her are, from left, her husband Evan and kids Aviva, Ezra, Nechemia, and Akiva Heltay. More than 300 people came to the Village Shul April 25 to try the 12 cholents, and Shaby will be making her winning recipe for the congregation on a Shabbat this month.

Tuesday, May 19

LUNCH & LEARN
Shalom Bard discusses "Conducting the TSO Youth Orchestra," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15 p.m. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

TORAH THROUGH FEMALE EYES
Loretta Tanenbaum teaches "Torah through female eyes," 10-11:15 a.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. Today, "You shall not see my face."

CHUG HATANACH
Rabbi David Aronson teaches Chapters 92 and 93 of the Book of Psalms, 8 p.m. Beth David Synagogue.

TEMPLE SINAI READS
Temple Sinai holds a brainstorming session for a new format for a book club. Discussion led by book club expert, **Peter O'Brien,** 7:30 p.m. RSVP programs@templesinai.net.

Wednesday, May 20

DJC READING CIRCLE
Danforth Jewish Circle discusses *My Promised Land* by **Ari Shavit,** moderated by **Susan Sachs,** 7:30 p.m. Location provided upon RSVP. djcReadingCircle@gmail.com

POMEGRANATE GUILD
Laya Crust leads a workshop on fold books with the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, 7:30 p.m., Temple Sinai. To learn more, info@pomegranateguild.com

THE RELATIONSHIP OF TORAH
Rabbi Ben Hecht discusses "The relationship of Torah," 7 p.m., B'nai Torah Congregation.

THZ BOOK CLUB
The Luminous Heart of Jonah S., by **Gina Nahai** will be discussed at Temple Har Zion, 7:30 p.m.

COOKING AND TASTING DEMO
Daniella Silver and **Norene Gilletz** present a kosher cooking and tasting demo based on their new book, *The Silver Platter Cook Book*, 7:30 p.m., Beth Radom Congregation. $65/$35. Reserve at www.bethradom.com

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
"Is honesty always the best policy? Judaism's teachings on truth," is the topic discussed at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8 p.m. Sponsored by Jews for Judaism, 416-789-0020.

Thursday, May 21

GENOMICS FRONTIER
Genetic counsellor **Jill Davies** discusses "The genomics frontier," 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $15/$20 416-635-5340, ext. 308 or louise@adathisrael.com

BAKE SALE
Enjoy a kosher, pre-Shavuot bake sale, benefiting Small Wonders, at 164 Shelborne Ave., Toronto, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. and 126 Renaissance Crt., Thornhill, 7:30-9:30 p.m. For more information, email bakesale@smallwonders.ca

Coming Events

PEACE OF MIND GALA
Peace of Mind, a program developed by the Israel Centre for the Treatment of Psycho-Trauma, holds a gala June 2 at The Warehouse. $118. For tickets, email pomcanada.com/tickets

S.Y. AGNON LECTURES
Rabbi Jeffrey Saks discusses the work of the only Hebrew Literature Nobel Prize winner, S.Y. Agnon, June 8 at Kehillat Shaarei Torah, and June 9 at Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto Congregation, 8 p.m.

BOOK EVENT
Nora Gold discusses her novel *Fields of Exile*, May 26, 7:30 p.m., with National Council of Jewish Women, 4700 Bathurst St. $5/$10. 416-633-5100.

ISRAEL GUIDE DOG BENEFIT
Randy Bachman performs at a benefit for the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind, June 9, 7:30 p.m., Koerner Hall. For tickets, 855-985-2787 or www.rcmusic.ca

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CHAMPAGNE WITH CHARLES

Butler **Charles MacPherson** shares his expertise, in support of the David Cornfield Melanoma Fund and Beth Tikvah Women, May 27, 7 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $30. 416-221-3433, ext. 353.

HIGH PARK WALK

Canadian Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel holds a free guided nature walk in High Park, June 14, 10:30 a.m. RSVP by June 1, spnicanada@gmail.com

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE

Stephen Berk discusses "The Second World War in historical perspective," May 28, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue May 29-31 at Beth Tzedec Congregation Shabbat dinner, "Putin: the practice of power" (call to reserve by May 26); May 30, "A tale of two elections (Israel and USA)"; May 31, at 10 a.m., "After 70 years: Auschwitz and anti-Semitism."

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted.

- Mind, body connection for women: an 8-session group for women to learn meditation and mindfulness. Starts May 14, 1-2:30 p.m.
- High conflict divorce: a workshop for parents to develop strategies to deal with a high conflict situation. Not for individuals in an abusive situation. May 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Effective Parenting: a 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-10. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m.
- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: a 4-session group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9. May 20, audiologist **Tracy Saunders** discusses hearing loss, noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Social games club, May 21, 11 a.m. Free but RSVP one week in advance, 416-924-6211, ext. 155. Bring your lunch and stay for a lecture on "Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and the Jewish Connection," 1:30 p.m. $4. May 28, **Janice Masur** discusses "Growing up Jewish in Uganda," 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Barber/hairdresser, May 14. 10 a.m.; High tea with big band music, May 27, 2 p.m.; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; Balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.; Massage Tuesdays 11:30 a.m., call for appointment.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. May 19, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Hedy Lamarr: the most beautiful Jewish inventor," 10 a.m.; May 21, **Lisa Thompson** discusses "Removing the terror from the senior licence renewal process," 1:30 p.m.; Mondays, current events with **Harvey Skolnick**, 10 a.m.; Mondays, June 1-29, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Being a mensch in Hollywood: the highs and lows of four distinctive Jewish-American actors," 1-3 p.m.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Adath Israel Congregation**. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or **Judi** 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth**. Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve, 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmichaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin,** Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Beth Sholom**'s seniors group meets for lunch and exercise every Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- **Kathryn Chelin** teaches "Drawing for the terrified beginner," July 13, 17, 9 a.m.- noon.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Pioneering women artists of the modern era," June 9, 16, 1 p.m.
- Casual Yiddish conversation, Mondays, 1:30-3 p.m.
- **Jordan Klapman** discusses "Hollywood's Oscar-winning Jewish songs," June 4, 11 at 1 p.m.
- **Carol Lypsze** discusses her book of short stories, *The Saviour Shoes*, May 28, 7 p.m.
- Osteofit-safe exercises for those with osteoporosis, Wednesdays, 11 a.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- How Far Can you Go? Dance performance and film screening with Israeli dance artist **Sharon Fridman,** May 14, 8 p.m., Al Green Theatre. Tickets $16/$20 www.reasondetre.com
- KatKa Team: A program for children in grades 2-6, co-sponsored by Camp Gesher, Habonim Dror, May 17, 1 p.m. Free. Email: Shaliach.Gesher@gmail.com
- Student art for Jewish Music Week is on display at the gallery until May 18.
- Downtown Tikkun Leil Shavuot, May 23. Family dinner, 5:30 p.m.; Kids and teen programs 8 p.m.-11:45 p.m.; Main event 8:30 p.m.- 6 a.m.
- **Katherine Barber** discusses "Jewish contributions to the world of ballet," June 1, 8, 15, 1:30 p.m.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147
- Register for Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singers edition, seeking male voices, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17-21. Ext. 250
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025

- Beer and cheese pairing workshop, July 16, 7 p.m
- The JCCs go to the Shaw Festival to see *Sweet Charity*, June 25
- **Suzanne Metz** offers a "Non-traditional life drawing workshop," July 14-16
- Bridge level 1 and 2 starts the week of June 22.
- **Suzanne Metz** teaches "Experimental mix media," May 20-June 10, 7 p.m.
- Intermediate and beginner mah-jong start the week of June 22. ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

MARRIED WITH KIDS

My pen pal, the jailbird

Lauren Kramer

"Are you ready for Shabbat Hagadol?" The question arrived in the mail, in the monthly letter I receive from my new buddy, a Jewish inmate at a U.S state prison. In his early 40s, he's a much more religious Jew than I am, and his observance is challenged by the hostile environment that surrounds him.

"There's hate and chaos everywhere in here," he confides. "Everything from stabbings and fighting to rape. A lot of ugliness. When I leave my cell, I bring my siddur and tfillin with me, find a quiet corner and recite our prayers twice a day."

From the time I learned to write, I loved having pen pals and would sit for hours, carefully recording my thoughts in letters that would be folded, enveloped, stamped and mailed to different parts of the world. Regrettably, the Internet and email changed all that, and the time and care my pen pals once took to reflect on their lives and send a letter I could touch and hold, evaporated overnight. One by one, we lost touch. The mailman, once a messenger whose satchel promised fabulous insights into the lives of people I loved, became an ordinary guy who delivered bills.

Then I heard about a pen pal program run by the Aleph Institute, which works with the 5,000 Jewish men and women in American prisons. "This is your opportunity to perform a mitzvah for the cost of a postage stamp," the program coaxed.

I was hooked right away, and with a few cautionary steps (I sign with a pseudonym rather than using my real name, and send all correspondence via the institute in Florida, rather than providing my real address) I volunteered to become a pen pal to an inmate who wanted one. My jailbird wrote his first letter within a couple of weeks, and our correspondence began.

I admit that I was relieved to learn he was jailed for fraud rather than murder. I'd rather not delve into the psyche of an individual who killed someone else, and the fraud charge felt softer, safer. We moved quickly from being strangers to a friendship, of sorts, one wherein it felt safe for him to confide the anguish his imprisonment had caused his family and his difficult route from drug addiction to sobriety.

I responded with stories of my weekly goals and challenges, my favourite books and my addiction to the fitness routine P90X. When I re-read my letters, their contents sound more than a little trite compared to the darkness of his daily reality in jail, and I have to remind myself constantly that it was his personal choices that landed him there. No need for me to feel guilty or trite for having made much better choices in my life.

Do I trust him? Well, I like the way my pen pal sounds on paper. He's full of regret and perspective on his past actions, and it touches me profoundly that Judaism brings light and hope into a jail sentence filled with anti-Semitism and repulsive behaviour. I hope that through our letters I can add even a glimmer of more light, a somewhat "normal" voice from the outside world that doesn't judge, belittle or scorn, but rather offers words of kindness, support and camaraderie.

Still, I'm not willing to divulge my real name or contact details. He'll be behind bars a long time, but disclosing my identity carries a risk I'm not willing to take.

Our correspondence delivers a stark contrast between my life and his, reminding me that our Jewish roots don't guide everyone in an ethical or honest direction. Those roots are always there, though, providing a lifeline of spiritual hope and promise, even in the direst environments. ■

Interested in participating in the Aleph Institute Pen-pal Program? Visit jewishpenpals.com or email penpal@aleph-institute.org

Family Moments

Congratulations Martha and Marion, on your new bundle of joy, Gabriel.

Mazel tov Bernice & Harry Stein on celebrating your 65th wedding anniversary. Love, your children and grandchildren!

Happy second birthday to Ephram Gabriel Winteron April 27! Love from Big Bro Sammy, Mom Michelle and Daddy David!

Happy 100th birthday to Belle Aronovitch, a wonderful and loving lady. With all our love and happiness from your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, family and friends.

Mazel tov to the girls and their families on their upcoming bat mitzvah! Kayla Jaslow, Jessika Lang, Kaylee Feldman, Vanessa Melkul and Faith Mamann

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Mazel Tov!

מזל טוב!

Parshah

Behar-Bechukotai | Leviticus 25:1-27:34

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier explains how innocuous words can hide negative intentions
Rabbi Denise Handlarski reflects on the practical and metaphorical meanings of shmittah
Rabbi Yirmi Cohen wonders why Mount Sinai was chosen as the location for Mattan Torah

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier

Why does the Torah instruct us not to harm – *lo tonu* – our fellow Jew in two separate verses in this week's parshah? (Leviticus, 25:14 and 17)

In explaining the apparent repetition of the same idea, Rashi writes that the first instance refers to mistreating another person in matters of finance. The second concerns wronging someone with words: "that one must not provoke his fellow, nor may one offer advice to him that is unsound for him."

Similarly, when the Torah uses the same words – *lo tonu* – concerning our treatment of strangers (Leviticus, 19:33), Rashi explains that "one should not taunt the stranger with words." Rashi's example is that one should not remind a convert that he practised another religion in the past.

Why would this example be wronging the convert? Isn't it simply stating fact? It could conceivably even be meant as a compliment to show the growth and journey of the stranger! Perhaps, however, once these words are said, we are dismissing the convert, and reminding them that, in our eyes, they might never be "one of us" when it comes to trust and inclusion.

Maimonides offers another interpretation of wronging someone with words. He writes, "If a question regarding a point of knowledge was raised, one should not ask a person who has never studied that field of knowledge: 'How would you answer this question?' or 'What do you think about this matter?'" (Mechira, 14:14)

The category of *ona'at devarim* – wronging someone with words – has many different applications. What unifies the interpretations is that the intent of the speaker could be understood in a negative, critical manner. Even if the intent is positive, the effect of the words could be deleterious. Whether we are challenging another in areas of knowledge, speaking to strangers about their history or offering advice in business, innocuous words often hide negative intentions.

The Torah asks us to ensure that our speech, though the words might sound helpful, does not mask malicious motives. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

In this double parshah, we have the rules for leaving the land fallow on the shmittah, the sabbatical year. We know that land requires time to be left fallow in order to maintain good soil quality. But there are ways in which the agricultural can give rise to the cultural. Many of us are considering the idea of shmittah metaphorically, especially now, as we are currently in a shmittah year.

We live in an age when there is a lot of talk of mindfulness, of living in the present moment. And yet, we simultaneously live with the expectations of being able to multitask, of being constantly accessible, and of being able to manage our many roles seamlessly. We are overworked, overcommitted and overwhelmed.

Devices meant to make our lives easier often make us feel that we can never take a break. They are there to enable us to be "connected," and yet I believe there has never been a time in history when people feel less connected to their families and communities.

Shmittah literally means release. What if we released ourselves from some of our fear, guilt and obligation? What if we asked ourselves, "What can I let go of?" Fields that give us food and sustenance, if overworked and overwrought, will stop producing. And we are the same. If we are overworked and overwhelmed then we will be unable to be fully available to those we love. We, too, have a limit.

And in this culture, which measures goodness by productivity, it is good to remind ourselves that rest breeds productivity. Just as the harvest will be better if we rotate our crops and let the land rest, we will be better if we have a chance to rest and recuperate as well. ■

Rabbi Denise Handlarski is assistant rabbi with Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism in Toronto.

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen

This week's Torah portion is Behar and Bechukotai "Behar" alludes to Mount Sinai, where the Torah was given.

Why is it important to stress that the Torah was given at Mount Sinai? The other mountains boasted about their height and greatness. But God chose Sinai, the smallest and humblest of mountains.

This teaches us to be humble, like Sinai. But then why did God give the Torah on a mountain? He should have given it in a valley, to teach humility.

The lesson is twofold: one needs to be humble, yet one also needs to be proud. We need to be proud Jews. Not arrogant, but proud for being chosen to get the Torah and its mitzvot. The world will respect us when we respect ourselves. We should stand firm like a mountain when facing obstacles.

On the theme of mountains, recently, with the tragedy in Nepal, our community, was notified through social media about a friend, originally from Toronto, married with kids, who was caught in the avalanche of the earthquake when he was climbing near Mt. Everest. We gathered at his parents' home for prayer, and with tears, we recited psalms and gave charity for his safety. For two days, he was missing. Finally, he messaged, "I'm alive and well." He barely missed having huge boulders crash down on him.

How proud and inspired we felt, seeing tiny Israel set up a field hospital to save every life they could in Nepal.

Let's not wait for crises to come together, but let's be united at *all* times.

As we approach Shavuot, let us re-accept the Torah. Shavuot is likened to the marriage of God and the Jewish People. We got the Torah, our ketubah. Mt. Sinai was our chupah. Let's all be in shul for the Ten Commandments on May 24.

Chag Sameyach. ■

Rabbi Yirmi Cohen is rabbi of Ohalei Yoseph Yitzchak Congregation in Toronto. Email: yirmicohen@sympatico.ca

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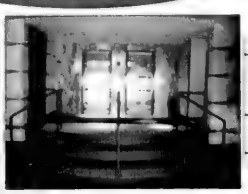

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Make Shavuot exotic

RANDY FINGRUT
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The Far East has never been so popular. Asian-inspired food and décor are reaching into all aspects of contemporary life. Exotic "travel" themes are in vogue for all kinds of occasions. Using an Asian theme will transport your Shavuot dinner to another part of the world in just minutes.

A dinner party with a little imagination is a great way to share a journey with friends or family without actually having to make the trip.

You can begin your voyage by considering a few simple ideas. Think about using a rich colour scheme of red, black and gold to infuse the table with richness and flavour. Then add a few traditional accents while remembering that Asian decor is very sleek and minimalist. For the centrepiece, consider using a dark wooden box as a pedestal to hold decorative items – an Asian-style teapot, a glass cylinder vase, either wrapped with a bamboo placemat and filled with palm leaves, or simply filled with water, and presented with a few bamboo stocks.

Many décor items are readily available locally to create an Asian style tabletop: colourful fans, paper lanterns and take-out boxes provide instant ambiance. Offer chopsticks and serve your fare on simple white or clear glass platters. Using these ideas will bring an interesting but pleasant and relaxing mood to your Shavuot dinner.

Chocolate Banana Wontons

- ❑ canola or coconut oil spray
- ❑ 1 large ripe banana, cut into slices
- ❑ 1 milk chocolate bar, approximately 50 g.
- ❑ 24 wonton wrappers
- ❑ 1 tbsp. icing sugar

Prepare a baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. Spray with the oil spray.

Prepare a small fruit nappy with cold water.

Place a slice of banana topped with a 3/4-in. piece of milk chocolate near a corner of the wonton wrap. Wet all the sides of the wonton wrapper with water and fold the wrapper so that the top corner meets the bottom corner. Make sure it is completely sealed. Place on prepared pan. Continue until you have used up the wrappers.

Make sure the wontons do not touch each other on the baking sheet. Spray the tops of the wontons with additional oil spray.

Bake in the oven at 350 for 12 minutes or until edges are golden brown.

When cooled, sift icing sugar over wontons before serving.

Almond Cookie Mini Sundaes

- ❑ 1 cup butter or margarine
- ❑ 1 cup sugar
- ❑ 1 egg
- ❑ 1 1/2 tsp. almond extract
- ❑ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ❑ 1 egg white, beaten with 1 tsp. water
- ❑ 2 tbsp. sliced almonds
- ❑ ice cream: vanilla, mango, coconut…
- ❑ garnish with berries, sliced almonds and/or shredded coconut

Preheat oven to 325. Prepare baking sheets with parchment paper. In food processor, cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in 1 egg, almond extract, baking powder and salt. Add in the 3 cups of flour. Process until the batter is blended well.

Divide batter into 1-in. balls, or use a mini ice cream scoop. Place cookies 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Lay a sheet of parchment paper over top of the balls of dough and flatten with the bottom of a glass. Brush the top of the cookies with the egg white mixture and sprinkle almond slices on top of the cookie. Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until the cookies begin to turn golden brown. Cool cookies to a wire rack.

When ready to serve, use a mini ice cream scoop to make ice cream balls. Place one ball on top of each almond cookie that you plan to serve. Garnish. ■

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 14, 2015

Manny Waks: Film blows whistle on yeshiva sex abuse

PAUL LUNGEN
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Manny Waks comes from an Australian Chabad family that has had to leave Chabad after he went public in 2011 with revelations of sexual abuse at Chabad's Yeshivah College in Melbourne. Waks, who has served as vice-president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, also testified at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which included a close look at Yeshivah College. He was in Toronto last week to present *Code of Silence*, the film about his ordeal which aired at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

Tell us about *Code of Silence*.

Code of Silence is an award-winning documentary undertaken by Danny Ben-Moshe. It won Australia's most prestigious award, the Walkley Award, in December last year.

I'm the main subject, as the victim of child sexual abuse in the Jewish community. I'm often described as a whistleblower. It focused not only on the abuse itself and the subsequent coverup, but it also follows the ongoing intimidation that myself and my family experienced, particularly my parents. It follows their story as well, ultimately culminating in them having to leave Australia.

Where are they now?

They're in Israel. They still spend half the time in Australia. My mom still owns a wig shop, and they still own the house, which is not an easy thing to sell, because it's right across the road from the Yeshivah Centre.

Tell us about the abuse you suffered.

I was 11-years-old. There were two pedophiles in my case. The first is [prominent in the Chabad community]. He abused me for the first time ever on Shavuot night, when it's customary to remain awake all night to study the Torah. He abused me inside the Yeshivah Centre synagogue. Subsequently he abused me several more times in another synagogue where my family and I used to go every week. That lasted about six months. Subsequently, from the age of around 12 to the age of around 14-1/2, I was repeatedly sexually abused by David Cyprys, who's currently sitting in jail for the crimes committed against me and many other boys at the Yeshivah Centre.

What happened to the other guy?

He is in New York. And the police have investigated him. What we're waiting for is further evidence to come forward.

You said the abuse continued until you were 14-1/2. Did you come forward to your parents at that time, or the police?

The only time I shared my abuse with anyone was when I was around 12, in relation to the first perpetrator. I shared it with a classmate. Ultimately he betrayed me. He disclosed my abuse to some of my classmates and within a few days I was being called gay, a *poofter* – which is a derogatory term for homosexuals.

Manny Waks

How did your family react to this? Did they know what was happening to you?

Until I was 18 I was within the yeshiva framework, which means I was doing religious studies full time. I started to rebel. I guess now, in hindsight, a lot of it probably related to the abuse. I was turning the lights on and off on Shabbat. I was eating non-kosher. I demonstrated complete disinterest in my bar mitzvah.

And the response of my parents and the school was really about trying to push me to become even more Orthodox and focus on religious studies.

But you didn't mention to them that you were abused?

No. I shared it with a friend and I saw the consequences of sharing that. But it was clear that a lot of people in the school environment, in the Yeshivah Centre, were aware of the abuse, not just the students, but in some cases also the adults, in some cases the teachers. People were calling me names and rumours were circulating that I had been abused.

What did you do next?

At the age of 18, I wanted to escape from that community, that lifestyle, so I made aliyah to Israel with the aim of going into the Israel Defence Forces.

When I was 20, my sister was getting married. I had a month's leave to go to Australia, visit my family and go to that wedding. When I was there, I happened to hear on the radio that a police operation was addressing child sexual abuse. I remember them saying if you have any information to please come forward.

Right after that I went to my father and shared what happened to me and he called the police., which to his credit is not something that necessarily happens in the ultra-Orthodox world. Often, they start asking questions about how much they believe you and even if they believe you. There are [stories] that parents try to encourage the child not to go to the police, that they'll deal with it or it really didn't happen.

What explains that denial response?

I think there are multiple reasons. Some genuinely believe in the concept of *mesirah*, which is about handing over a fellow Jew to the authorities or telling on them. This comes from eastern Europe when the pogroms and anti-Semitism were rife. Often the entire community would bear the brunt of these allegations.

Other reasons are that it may bring trouble to the family. In other cases, it's about trying to protect the victim. You won't have good marriage prospects, for example. Your whole life will be ruined, you'll be seen as a victim.

What happened to the abusers?

I went to the police when I was 20 in 1996. The first perpetrator was overseas already at the time, so they couldn't interview him. David Cyprys, they could interview him and at that stage it was my word against his. So for lack of evidence, they left the case open pending further evidence that might came to light.

At the same time I went to the head rabbi of the Yeshivah Centre, the late Rabbi Yitzchok Groner, and his response was they were aware of the allegations about him, they were dealing with it. Essentially he urged me not to take any actions against him.

Did they do anything about it?

In 2000 I went to Rabbi Groner a second time. I had a conversation in his office, which I remember vividly. The way the conversation ended was that he made it clear they were addressing it, that Cyprys was seeing someone, a psychologist, there are improvements.

Did more victims came forward?

In 2011, I read an article that the police were looking at historical cases at the Yeshivah Centre and in particular they were looking to extradite David Kramer from the United States.

Kramer was a U.S. and Israeli citizen who had been brought to the Yeshivah Centre around 1990 to be a teacher. Basically, he turned out to be a pedophile. The allegations were that he sexually abused 50-60 children.

As soon as the allegations surfaced, my father acknowledged that two of my brothers were victims of Kramer as well.

As soon as the Yeshivah Centre heard about it, their initial response was to do nothing. Subsequently, at a meeting, parents were threatening to go to the police, the Yeshivah Centre stepped in and decided to send him overseas.

They sent the problem elsewhere?

That's exactly right. They sent him to Israel with his family – he had about 10 children – and he was someone else's problem. Soon after he went to America, to St. Louis, where he re-offended.

Was he ever extradited to Australia?

He was extradited to Australia and ultimately four victims came forward in his case, including two of my brothers.

When I saw that police were looking to extradite him to Australia, that's when I felt, I have a leadership role. I'm a victim myself of two perpetrators. If I don't come forward publicly about this issue, to address it appropriately, no one else would.

It became a front page newspaper article in one of Australia's most prominent publications, in *The Age* newspaper.

After that, I was inundated by victims, media, people around the world, community leaders and victims and family members of victims who shared their stories. People were genuinely shocked.

Did you get responses from other yeshivahs around the world?

I had people contacting me on that day and subsequently from ultra-Orthodox yeshivas all over the world. I also had people from modern Orthodox and progressive communities and elsewhere. I had secular Jews contact me to say good on you for speaking out on this issue. It's about time. We all know it happens in our community and we need to address it.

How did all this affect your faith and your Judaism?

I went through an evolution of sorts. I was at one period very anti-religious. Now, it's live and let live. I respect and admire many rabbis and I have close relations with many rabbis.

What speaks to me is that my Jewish identity has been strong and remains strong. I am a proud Jew and a proud Zionist, but I can call out when rabbis do the wrong thing. No one is above the law. No one is above reproach and when we do things that are inappropriate, we need to be held to account. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.
See a longer version of this interview on www.cjnews.com

The agunah of Odessa

Backstory

RABBI YIRMIYA MILEVSKY

There is no greater mitzvah than trying to find a way, within the halachic system, to free the agunah, a woman who is "chained" to her marriage.

When rabbis try to resolve agunah cases, they face challenges. Sometimes the challenges are circumstantial, other times they are halachic. And in some situations, politics is the great impediment. Such was the sad story of the agunah of Odessa in 1884.

After 36-year-old Michel Alter Genner died of typhus, his young wife Sarah started to rebuild her life. A local rabbi informed her that since the couple was childless, she was required to perform *chalitzah* – a ritual that involves the taking off of a brother-in-law's shoe by the widow, through which she becomes free to marry whomever she desires – before she could marry anyone else.

After some research, it became clear that Alter Genner had a brother, Philip Duptchak, a Christian convert. Sarah turned to the local preacher and the official rabbi of the town, Rabbi Shimon Aryeh Schwabacher, for help. The rabbi contacted Duptchak, who in turn informed Rabbi Schwabacher that he could not participate in a Jewish ritual without permission from the Russian Orthodox Church, who told Rabbi Schwabacher that since Duptchak was now a practising Christian he could not perform any ritual associated with another faith.

Rabbi Schwabacher next turned to the learned Rabbi Avraham Yoel Abelson, who was living temporarily in Odessa. Rabbi Abelson ruled that Sarah was free to marry without a *chalitzah*. He based his reasoning on a minority Jewish opinion that the rule does not exist when the living brother is an apostate. In addition, since at the time of marriage Sarah made it clear that she did not want to enter into the relationship with her husband if indeed he had a brother who was an apostate, the marriage was a "mistaken acquisition" and retroactively null and void.

Rabbi Abelson recognized that his ruling was a novelty and sent it to other great scholars for concurrence. The most recognized was the rabbi of Kovno, Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, considered the preeminent halachic authority of his time. In late 1885, Rabbi Abelson informed Rabbi Schwabacher that he had received several letters from prominent rabbis, including Rabbi Spektor, agreeing with his ruling. It seemed Sarah Genner would now be free to remarry.

Although Rabbi Schwabacher was the official rabbi in Odessa, he was viewed with skepticism by the more traditional elements in town. And when they got word of the lenient ruling, they claimed that prior to Rabbi Schwabacher's involvement they had made contact with Duptchak. They claimed he was willing to perform the *chalitzah* if paid appropriately.

As a result, letters were sent from a group of rabbis in Odessa to all the great rabbis who agreed with Rabbi Abelson, demanding that they retract their decision. Based on published letters sent back to Odessa from rabbis responding to this group, it seems several threats, including financial repercussions, were issued as well. Sources indicate that Rabbi Abelson suffered verbal and even physical abuse from the parties who were against him. Yet the most significant blow to his cause was a letter of retraction from Rabbi Spektor.

Rabbi Schwabacher, in his capacity as the official rabbi, permitted Sarah Genner to remarry without a *chalitzah*. The dissenting rabbis reacted by declaring publicly in the synagogues of the town that according to Jewish law Sarah was prohibited from marrying. The saga continued, with the differing rabbis being charged in court, and found guilty, for proclaiming a ruling against Rabbi Schwabacher.

Reviewing sad chapters in our history serve no purpose if we do not learn from them. By looking back at the fights of our past, hopefully we can inspire ourselves not to repeat them. ■

Rabbi Yirmiya Milevsky is the spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Torah in Toronto.

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Tuesday, June 2, 2015

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WILLS & SOLICITORS' NEGLIGENCE

The June 2, 2015 B'nai Brith Canada's Estates and Trusts Group upcoming seminar will, in part, address solicitor's negligence claims. This is a very important topic given that approximately 7% of all law suits against lawyers relate to estates.

Charles Wagner

The format of the seminar will be a moot trial. In our scenario, an elderly illiterate woman speaks only Russian and Yiddish. She met with a lawyer played by Heather Hogan of Whaley Estate Litigation. The first meeting lasted 10 minutes with the lawyer schmoozing and then taking instructions. The second meeting took 15 minutes. The lawyer schmoozed, translated the documents and witnessed them being signed. No questions were asked about her health, or about the size of the assets, the reason for disinheriting one child or why she transferred her house only to the son. The disinherited daughter says that had the lawyer asked proper questions she would have recognized that her client neither had capacity nor understood or approved of the will. Moreover, there were the red flags of undue influence. For example, the person who was inheriting everything was the one who brought his mother to the office and was there when his mother was giving instructions. The new will was totally different from past wills which split everything equally. Evidence suggests that mother had Alzheimer's, couldn't ever remember her name, what she owned and that she had a daughter. Ms Hogan's lawyer will argue that Heather knew the testator for many years, that she satisfied herself that the testator's memory was fine and that the documents were so simple that anyone would have understood their meaning.

Craig Vander Zee

Heather Hogan

In our moot court, Craig Vander Zee of Torkin Manes LLP will be examining Ms Hogan in chief and Ian Hull of Hull & Hull LLP will be cross examining her. That should be very interesting given that Ian Hull and Craig Vander Zee are both certified as specialists by the Law Society. The exercise will be very helpful to highlight steps that should be taken by the drafting lawyer and demonstrate how a seasoned estate litigator conducts cross examinations.

Ian Hull

The event will take place on June 2nd, 2015 at Shaarei ShomayimSynagogue at 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5N 1V8. Registration is at 7:30am and the moot court will begin at 8:00am. The event is open to lawyers and accountants. Those lawyers and/or accountants interested in attending may contact Elyse Gruenspan at B'nai Brith Canada at (416) 633-6224 or email at egruenspan@bnaibrith.ca .

Charles B. Wagner, of Wagner Sidlofsky LLP, is a certified specialist in Estates & Trusts Law. He chairs the Estate and Trusts Group, Lawyers Division of Bnai Brith that created and runs this annual continuing legal education program for professionals dealing with estate and trust issues.

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Inside

Social media and the battle against lashon hara

Jewish schools struggle to prevent anonymous bullying on popular apps. **PAGE 7**

Remembering Alan Borovoy

Free-speech advocate spoke up for democratic principles he held dear. **PAGE 26**

Plus, honouring Canadian Jewry's lovable rebel. **PAGE 27**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	8:24 p.m.	9:38 p.m.
Montreal	8:07 p.m.	9:22 p.m.
Ottawa	8:16 p.m.	9:30 p.m.
Toronto	8:25 p.m.	9:36 p.m.
Winnipeg	8:58 p.m.	10:22 p.m.
Calgary	9:11 p.m.	10:38 p.m.
Vancouver	8:40 p.m.	10:01 p.m.

THE MEANING OF SHAVUOT

The festival stands as a reminder that the Torah was not intended for one Jew or another, Rabbi David Stav writes. Rather, it was designed with every Jew in mind, to be embraced and internalized by all of us. **PAGE 8**

Rabbi Donniel Hartman heralds a renaissance for the 'People of the Book' **PAGE 23**

Seymour Epstein explains how the Festival of Weeks got its name **PAGE 47**

CJN staff pick their favourite Jewish texts for your all-night study session **PAGE 6**

Have your (cheese)cake and eat it, too: Healthier ways to enjoy the holiday **PAGE 35**

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WJC to honour *Woman in Gold* star, and Israelis tout new approach to pot

Education award for Mirren

Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren will get an award for helping to educate the public about Nazi-looted art. The World Jewish Congress said May 12 that the star of the film *Woman in Gold* will receive the inaugural WJC Recognition Award later this year. The film tells the story of Maria Altmann, an Austrian-American woman who made headlines in 2006 for winning her legal battle against the Austrian government to reclaim five Gustav Klimt paintings, among them the famous *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I*, nicknamed *Woman in Gold*. Following its restitution to her, the painting was acquired by WJC president Ronald Lauder and has gone on display at the Neue Galerie in Manhattan.

High time to decriminalize marijuana?

Israel's top cop says it's time to rethink his country's pot laws. "More and more citizens are demanding marijuana use be permitted," Yohanan Danino told high school students last week in Beit Shemesh. "I think it's time for the police, along with the state, to re-evaluate its traditional position." A number of MKs have spoken out in support of decriminalization or legalization, including at a Tel Aviv march earlier this month. Danino said he's spoken to several new MKs and advised them to re-examine the current policy.

Helen Mirren.

More than just a Peeping Tom

In addition to secretly recording women undressing at his shul's mikvah, Rabbi Barry Freundel engaged in sexual encounters with several women and videotaped them, prosecutors say. That's one of several new details about the mikvah-peeping rabbi to emerge from two documents filed in a Washington, D.C., court May 8 – one each by the prosecution and the defence – that shed new light on Rabbi Freundel's behaviour and offer some particulars about his life since his arrest last fall, including that he has resumed some rabbinic teaching. Rabbi Freundel has pleaded guilty to 52 counts of voyeurism for installing secret cameras in the shower room of the mikvah at Kesher Israel, the prominent Orthodox synagogue he led for 25 years. ■

Gematria

17%

The percentage of U.S. Jews who say they were raised in another faith, according to a 2014 study on religion from the Pew Research Centre.

2

The number of Nazi-looted paintings a German court authorized last week to be restituted from the collection of the late German art collector Cornelius Gurlitt.

Quotable

I think there's no longer space for the demonization of gay and lesbian people in the Orthodox world

— Rabbi Steven Greenberg, the first openly gay Orthodox rabbi. See full interview on p. 46.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Branch out from blintzes and explore more Shavuot dairy delights with Jewish & Digital columnist Mark Mietkiewicz.

Inside today's edition

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Letters to the Editor

Obama no friend to Israel

Mordechai Ben-Dat is absolutely correct ("A shameful moral silence on Iran," May 7). The conduct of the Obama administration has been shameful on just about every front since U.S. President Barack Obama first took office in 2009. Obama's overt campaign to undermine Israel's security, coupled with his determined efforts to weaken America's standing on the international stage, has increasingly put the (erstwhile) free world in danger.

Disquietingly, this behaviour could not have been sustained without it having been tacitly approved, aided and abetted by a herd-like acquiescence on the part of about half the American electorate.

Of equal concern for Israel is that a large proportion of America's Jewish population has persistently sided with this charlatan and generally stood in line with the left wing of American politics.

Clearly, Israel can no longer rely on the United States being its steadfast prime ally and must fend for itself. Ironically, the leading Gulf Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, are now allies of Israel in a concerted effort to contain Iran.

We can be thankful that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is the polar opposite to Obama and that he will continue to do whatever is necessary to ensure Israel's survival. The world community, including the United States, will ultimately come to learn that its salvation has been secured by Israel's survival.

David Green
Thornhill, Ont.

The joy of Shabbat

In response to Daniel Held's article ("What's the most powerful form of Jewish education?" May 14), I agree that the home plays an important part in a child's Jewish education, just as the school does.

I want to articulate one point, though, regarding Shabbat. Held states that a family's decision "to go together to synagogue, celebrate Shabbat" etc. all have a profound effect on a child. In the Torah, it states emphatically "*shamor et ha Shabbat*" often translated as guard, or keep the Sabbath. Nowhere does it say to "celebrate" Shabbat.

Teaching children what it means to "keep" the Sabbath is fundamental to Judaism, and I believe to Jewish continuity. Though in many circles keeping Shabbat may seem onerous, the truth is far from it. By not participating in so many activities we normally do participate in, we are giving ourselves a mini vacation. In fact, Shabbat is an incredible gift we should all cherish, and when it is "kept" properly, it does indeed carry the spirit of celebration to which Held refers.

Rinat Orr
Toronto

Marrying within the faith

Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton's article is truly disturbing ("Is there a future for intermarried rabbis?" May 7.) It's time to get our heads out of the sand and realize what is happening to our Jewish faith.

Intermarriage rates are unprecedented. Day school enrolment is declining, and synagogue attendance is at an all-time low. Does she truly think that allowing rabbis to intermarry will make things better?

The survival of the Jewish faith is dependent on couples marrying within the faith and having Jewish babies who will, in time, have Jewish babies. Let's be clear: a child born to a non-Jewish woman is not Jewish. If you want to save our faith, then marry a Jewish woman and have Jewish children. It's that simple.

Leon Elmaleh
Toronto

Pondering the Green Line

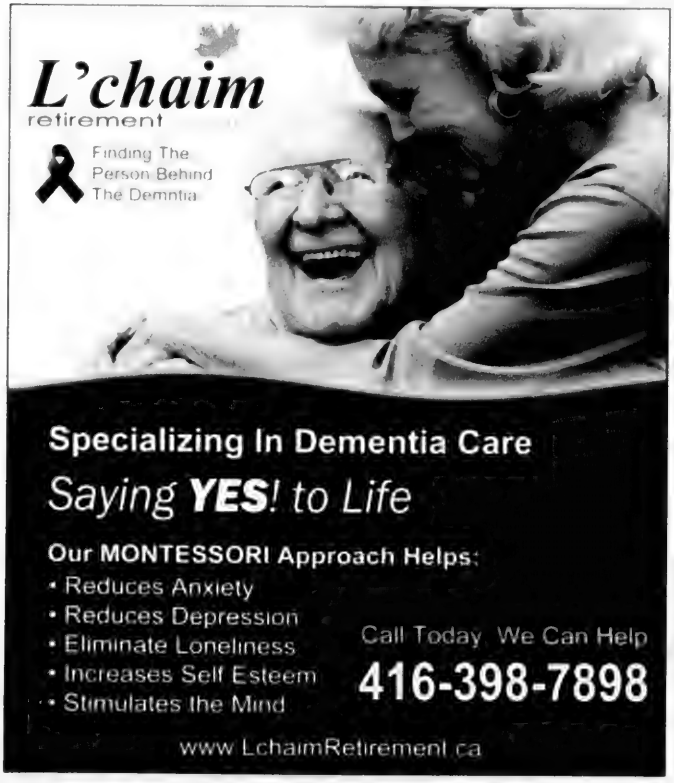
To answer Mira Sucharov ("Why is the Green Line not on our schools' maps?" May 7), the only reason to put the Green Line on a map today is to show where the armistice line between Israel and Jordanian-occupied Palestine stood for 19 years. It is a matter of history, just as one could put on a map the legal borders created by the UN partition plan, which stood for 19 minutes.

There is almost no physical evidence of the Green Line left in the Holy Land today, and it will never again be a border between anything. I certainly hope I will see a two-state peace in what I have left of my life, but I am far from optimistic. However, if it does happen, the border will not be the Green Line. It will be negotiated.

Incidentally, in Palestinian schools it is not shown either. The Holy Land is one country called Palestine.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*



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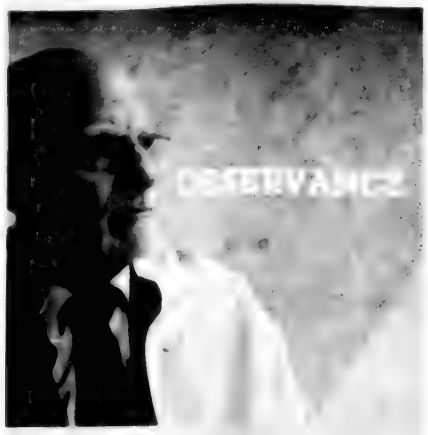

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RABBI-2-RABBI

Are bar and bat mitzvahs created equal?

Egalitarianism is crucial to liberal Judaism, but Orthodoxy differentiates between girls' and boys' rites of passage out of a belief in the Torah's unique roles for each gender

RABBI N. DANIEL KOROBKIN
BETH AVRAHAM YOSEPH CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI LISA GRUSHCOW
TEMPLE EMANU-EL-BETH SHOLOM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Grushcow: Recently, these pages have spurred conversation about the phenomenon of group bnot mitzvah. Our congregation currently is re-examining what it means for young people to become bnei mitzvah in our community, and we are asking lots of questions about what we want the kids to learn, what expectations we have of them and what we can offer them.

In all this discussion, one point of absolute agreement has been the commitment to egalitarianism: we ask of our girls what we ask of our boys. Both our boys and our girls become bnei mitzvah individually at services, and both read from the Torah. They always rise to the occasion. In Montreal, though, we are well aware that many families choose group bnot mitzvah for the daughters, through their day schools or other community institutions. I'm curious as to your thinking on this issue.

Rabbi Korobkin: We're worlds apart on this one.

In liberal Judaism, the 11th commandment is, "Thou shalt be egalitarian." In traditional Judaism, the differences between the genders don't just stop with physiology and morphology, but run far deeper in the way we function, the way we think and the way we relate to God.

As we approach Shavuot, we can look at how the Torah was presented to the Jews at Mount Sinai. The Talmud teaches that God offered the Torah separately to each gender – women first and then men – precisely because of the differentiated roles of men and women in the home, community and synagogue. So while egalitarianism is an overriding concern for you, our shul differentiates between bnei and bnot mitzvah precisely because of the Torah's unique respective assignments to men and women.

That said, we do our utmost to individually highlight the unique talents and achievements of each and every bar and bat mitzvah. We make every effort to ensure that no one feels "less than" or "more than."

Rabbi Grushcow: It seems to me that you are presenting the conversation as follows: your approach to Judaism is true to the Torah, while mine is shaped by external values. But as we both know, there is more than one way to understand the Torah.

Two examples leap to mind. First, the Creation story. There are actually two: one, with both man and woman made simultaneously in the image of God, and the other, with Eve formed from Adam's side. This tells us that there were different understandings of gender even at the beginning of human history.

Second, I am always struck by how Moses' instructions to the Israelites as they prepare for revelation vary from the instructions given by God. Moses says the people (here, addressing the men) must not go near a woman. God says nothing of the sort. This passage suggests that all this focus on gender may be a human invention, rather than divine intention.

If Torah is central to our shared tradition, how can we say that a girl not reading from the Torah at a bat mitzvah is not "less than" a boy reading Torah at a bar mitzvah? Where else do we accept "separate but equal" as an answer?

Rabbi Korobkin: If the sole focal point of religious life were the synagogue and only boys were called to the Torah and not girls, then you'd be right.

But traditionally, there are three focal forums of religious expression: the home, the study hall and the synagogue. The synagogue, which is the forum for public prayer, is the least important of the three. In the study hall (or school), girls have the same opportunity as boys to excel in their religious studies. And the home is the purview primarily of the Jewish woman, who maintains the religious environment and spiritual warmth necessary to foster Judaism and Jewish identity for her entire family. It is that role which is the most important of all, and that is why girls are not "less than" when they don't read from the Torah in shul.

The fact that the Jewish woman's role is so vital to the continuity of our people is precisely why God offered the Torah to the women first, knowing that their role in perpetuating Judaism would be the more important of the two gender-specific assignments. Looked upon in this light, the modern-day pantheon of "equality" is truly a non sequitur. ■

How to reach us

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From the Archives | Hadassah convention

OTTAWA HADASSAH CONVENTION, (1940S). ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, ITEM 1639

Photograph of a table of women at an Ottawa Hadassah convention in the 1940s. Pictured, from left, Adeline Levine, Ruth Swartz, Sylvia Cherney, Bea Collis, and Bernice Henry.

SeeJN | Treating teddy bears

MIRIAM ALSTER/FLASH 90 PHOTO

Israeli kindergarten children treat teddy bears as part of a project titled "Teddy Bears Hospital," at Soroka hospital in Be'er Sheva May 12. The project aims to reduce children's fears of medical teams in clinics and hospitals, and was organized by the Medical Student Association in the Negev, along with Soroka Hospital and the municipality.

From Yoni's Desk

Our favourite Jewish texts

Ahead of Shavuot, I asked my *CJN* colleagues about their favourite Jewish texts. Some are classics you'll immediately recognize, while others are decidedly less traditional. Either way, if you're planning to stay up all night studying on the first night of the holiday, you might want to consider these texts.

Sheri Shefa, reporter: "Who is wise? One who learns from every man… Who is strong? One who overpowers his inclinations… Who is rich? One who is satisfied with his lot… Who is honourable? One who honours his fellows" (*Ethics of the Fathers*, 4:1). This Mishnah touches on universal human desires – to be open-minded, to achieve lasting happiness and inner peace, to be respected and valued by ones peers and loved ones, and to be humble enough to respect and value everyone around you.

Lila Sarick, reporter/proofreader: "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). It's the brachah I give my kids on Friday night. I bless my daughter in the name of the matriarchs and my boys in the names of Ephraim and Menashe.

Carolyn Blackman, supplements editor: Hirsh Glick's *Zog Nisht Keynmol*. Ever since I was a child at Workmen's Circle Camp Yungvelt, this song has been a symbol of strength and optimism to me.

Ella Burakowski (aka Ask Ella): "A righteous man falls down seven times and gets up" (Proverbs, 24:16). It's all about picking yourself up, dusting yourself off and rising to the challenge. It's not as much about the result as it is about the journey.

Elias Levy, reporter: Tractate Shabbat, 88A. A powerful reflection on the issue of liberty. We find in the choices given by God to the Jewish People as they stood at Sinai a dilemma that humanity still faces today: the challenge of making important choices in life that change the future.

Jodie Shupac, reporter: *Transparent*. This television drama tells the story of three adult children of a Jewish family struggling to come to terms with their father's new identity as a woman. *Transparent* gives a more nuanced picture of secular Jews navigating the complex interplay between traditional family values and personal freedoms and pleasures.

And three of my personal favourites:

***Shmirat Halashon*, Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan:** A compendium of the laws of lashon hara (evil speech), this is a text I keep coming back to, because it's so fundamental to human relationships. An essential reminder of the great power of language.

"For there is no righteous man on earth who does good and sins not." (Ecclesiastes, 7:20): This text suggests that not only is imperfection inevitable, it might even be a good thing. The way I read it, in order to become righteous, one must sin along the way.

***As A Driven Leaf*, Milton Steinberg:** A historical novel about the life of Elisha ben Abuyah, the rabbinic sage who committed heresy and was expunged from the Talmud. The story implicitly asks how we reconcile Judaism and the modern world. We're still searching for the answer.

Chag Samayach. ■ — YONI

FEATURE

Schools struggle with social media apps and lashon hara

Hannah Ziegler

Is the rise of social media encouraging Jewish young people to engage in activities such as bullying and lashon hara that go against the values they're learning in Jewish day schools?

With apps that are predominately used anonymously – such as Ask.fm, which has grown in popularity over the last few years and now has 150 million users worldwide, and Yik Yak, an app that also boasts millions of monthly users and has recently sparked controversy in schools globally – the problem is growing.

Yik Yak in particular has come in for scrutiny in many schools after a number of recent incidents. One public high school in Ottawa went into lockdown last January after someone posted a message on Yik Yak that there was a gun on the premises, and there have also been multiple fire-alarm pranks linked to the app, in which students said they'd pull the alarms if enough people liked their posts.

The app allows users to anonymously post updates that can be viewed by anyone within a 10-mile radius. Posts, including negative and hurtful ones, can be "up-voted" or "down-voted." If a negative post gets at least five "up votes," it will remain visible, while posts that get a minimum of five "down votes" are deleted.

Anonymous apps like Yik Yak, which are very popular among teens, have been implicated in cases of bullying and suicide in a number of high-profile cases in the United States.

As a result, some high schools have banned their use, either by blocking them from a school's WiFi network or by using so-called "geofences" that prevent their use in certain geographic areas.

The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto set up a geofence this past winter to block Yik Yak in order to head off problems with bullying and lashon hara.

Students say they have mixed feelings about the move.

One Grade 12 student at TanenbaumCHAT's Wilmington campus who asked to remain anonymous believes social media apps in general allow teens to exercise their freedom of speech, and anonymous ones let shy people be more open with their views. "There are a lot of positives to social media – we're globally connected, we have instant communications, and so many talented people have platforms for projects they never would have been able to afford otherwise," she says.

But she also admits that apps such as Yik Yak can be harmful, yet still thinks teens can exercise good judgment.

"[These apps] are awful, and they do contradict the Jewish values we learn, but using the morals we have learned, we should decide ourselves what constitutes a good or bad act."

Another TanenbaumCHAT Grade 12 student agrees social media apps can be a positive or negative force, depending on how they're used. "Social media is a great way to keep up with people who you're not in the same city with, and you are able to get news right away," he says.

But although he likes the anonymity of Yik Yak, he recognizes that it's often used for cyber-bullying. "There is no good that can come out of it," he says.

Karen Sitnik, Judaic studies principal of Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin campus in Thornhill, says that anonymous cyber-bullying even occurs among younger children.

"Kids have phones and do stuff anonymously in grades 4 and 5," she says. "Because it's anonymous, people think they can

hide behind it, and suddenly someone who might have been more quiet is saying things because they think they can't get caught."

Sitnik says Associated has strict anti-bullying policies and a "technology usage plan" that both parents and students sign and limits Internet use at schools to academic purposes only, but the anonymous nature of Yik Yak and similar apps can make it very hard to identify bullies.

Social media expert Randall Craig, author of seven books and president of the Internet consulting firm 108 ideaspace, says part of the problem is that parents don't always understand the technology their kids are using. "Who teaches who about how to use social media apps and sites? Very often parents might not be aware of all the things that their children can do," he says.

Another problem for parents is keeping up with the latest trends.

According to Craig, there are currently more than 500 social networking apps and sites. "There are new ones that pop up every day and old ones that close every day. And while apps like Snapchat, WhatsApp and Yik Yak might be popular now, [we] have to realize how fickle social media is."

Tamara Rebick, co-director of student activities and Israel engagement [illegible] TanenbaumCHAT's south campus, admits that it may be "hard to foresee what the next app of the day will be," but parents and educators must try to stay current.

Also, technology education should start early, she says. "In terms of teaching values I think that is something that starts at the core, like kindergarten, and I just want to use Jewish values as a teaching method that has to start in the beginning in the Jewish day school system, so by the time you get to being old enough to have your own phone, you know what to do with it."

Sitnik agrees, emphasizing that the earlier kids are taught how to use apps responsibly, the better.

Her advice to parents? "Sit with your kids and teach them. It's really about education and proper teaching, because the phones aren't going away, so we need to use them as a tool to improve our education."

Rebick also believes social media can have a positive effect in building a school community. "For example, last year we created a hashtag for our Shabbatons, and just creating a forum for pictures of the Shabbaton helps Grade 9 students who don't know what to expect take a look at [them], and it helps open up the eyes to the community that's waiting."

Avital Aharon, director of educational technology at TanenbaumCHAT, says she doesn't think social media apps are necessarily in conflict with Jewish values.

"Jewish values are not against social media. Jewish values are about sharing. It's OK to share, but you have to do that responsibly. You have to know how to do that in a positive way and prevent lashon hara." ■

Hannah Ziegler is a Grade 12 student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

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Torah for all: Shavuot's lesson for modern-day Judaism

Allowing the minority but powerful Israeli chief rabbinate to control religious observance is alienating too many Jews, rabbi argues

RABBI DAVID STAV
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Among the Jewish holidays known as the Shalosh Regalim, (the Three Festivals), Shavuot has somewhat of lonely sibling status.

Whereas Pesach and Sukkot come with a specific set of laws and traditions, Shavuot is largely lacking in such a character (with the exception, of course, of the well-known custom to eat dairy foods during the holiday). On the surface, Shavuot is primarily defined by the requirement to refrain from many activities, much as we do on Shabbat. There are a limited number of positive commandments linked to the holiday.

But to approach Shavuot from this superficial perspective would risk missing the meaning behind the holiday. In fact, inherent in Shavuot are messages that make it a festival positioned at the very centre of our Jewish identity.

Above all, Shavuot teaches that the Torah given on Mount Sinai thousands of years ago is as relevant today as ever. Beyond that, the ultimate understanding that we must glean from Shavuot is how the Torah and our Jewish identity relate to each and every Jew in his or her individual way.

The Torah was designed for every Jew, Rabbi David Stav argues FLASH 90 PHOTO

> *In the Jewish world of today, there is a growing alienation toward the ideal of the Torah's universality.*

There is an often-cited commentary espousing that the soul of every Jew throughout the ages was present when the Torah was given at Sinai. Regardless of how literally one chooses to interpret this lesson, the more important takeaway is that the Torah was not intended for one Jew or another. Rather it was designed for every Jew, to be embraced and internalized by us all.

In the Jewish world of today, there is a growing alienation toward the ideal of the Torah's universality. People fail to recognize that the Torah is a living document that relates to each and every one of us. And as a result, large groups of our population are made to feel unwelcome and inferior. They are being driven further and further away from Jewish heritage.

In Israel in 2015, this divisiveness represents one of the most dangerous threats to our nation's future. There are certainly those who would think that such a statement is a gross exaggeration in a world where Iranian nuclear missiles are developed to ensure our destruction. Without mitigating those dangers, I would argue that the "spiritual threat" is potentially far more dangerous, because it is allowed to intensify without enough people taking proper notice.

Specifically in today's Israel, all too many aspects of religious governance have been transferred into the hands of the small but powerful minority of the chief rabbinate. Issues like marriage and divorce, conversion and kashrut supervision are in its central control – a situation that may be even further exacerbated following this most recent Knesset election and the forming of a governing coalition. Sadly, the perspective of a select cadre of rabbis and haredi politicians all too often ignores the long-term interests of the Jewish People.

This is the exact opposite of the lesson of Shavuot: the Torah cannot be a limiting document. Rather, it must be for all Jews. If we fail to heed this lesson, we will alienate more and more Jews from observance and respect for their Jewish identities. This, in turn, will lead to a situation where, increasingly, many will choose to marry outside of their religion entirely or outside of Halachah. These developments could end up denying us a sizable Jewish future in the State of Israel. The result will be that the Jewish state as we know it will no longer exist.

Regardless of where in the world a Jew lives, he or she always looks toward Israel as the source of hope for the Jewish future. Regrettably, this cornerstone of our religion is at risk if Israel is not given the chance to change its direction on how the Jewish future of our homeland will develop. This is the ultimate lesson of Shavuot.

Now is the time to recognize that the Torah and its observance must be made accessible to all so that everyone can see its beauty and keep its laws. For this is what will allow our nation to continue to thrive and serve as an eternal light onto the nations. ■

Rabbi David Stav is the founder and chair of the Tzohar Rabbinical Organization.

For more on Shavuot see page 23.

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– Barbara and Elliott Rothman

Barbara and Elliott Rothman signing their Book of Life story in October 2013

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 21, 2015

Native-Jewish partnership focuses on health

Avrum Rosensweig

I write this article while visiting native reserves in the Kenora, Ont., region. We are staying in a Super 8 Motel, and a sign outside says: "Burton Cummings performing. Tickets inside. Cool!"

I am here with Hanita Tiefenbach and Leah Silverman, Ve'ahavta staff. Our goals are to strengthen our relationship with the Kenora Chiefs Advisory, a group composed of several chiefs; familiarize ourselves with the reserves we will be working with; and integrate two health promotions fellows through our Briut program.

Briut, which means "health" or "wellness," is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It is a three-year program run in partnership with the Kenora Chiefs Advisory. The program is Ve'ahavta's first Jewish-Aboriginal program.

Among the communities affiliated with the Kenora Chiefs Advisory are Shoal Lake 40 First Nations, Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation, Grassy Narrows First Nations, Naotkamegwanning First Nation, Wabaseemoong Independent First Nation, Obashkaandagaang First Nation, Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation and Northwest Angle 33.

Kenora is beautiful. It is set on Lake of the Woods and has a reputation for some of the best boating and fishing in the world. I arrived here in the rain, on Bearskin Airlines' turbo prop plane with 18 seats. On the way to Kenora, we first landed in Dryden and Fort Francis, small Northern Ontario "shtetls."

It was a tad harrowing, as the winds were strong and I suffer from agoraphobia. But I made it and my knuckles are intact.

The hospitality we have experienced through our partners has been Abrahamic in nature. Last Tuesday, we celebrated the spring solstice at Dalles Indian Reserve, which has 200 residents. The sound of the drums went right through me, and the gifts we received from Chief Lorraine Cobiness, an Ojibway native, were lovely. We raised the gifts to the Creator in sync with the rhythm of the beats as we danced in a circle.

> *We are doing incredible things in times of crisis*
>
> **Chief Howard Kabestra**

Paula Broeders, a Ve'ahavta fellow, will operate out of the Dalles Reserve.

We also visited Whitefish Reserve, or Naotkamegwanning First Nation. Our host was Chief Howard Kabestra. It is there that our second fellow, Dr. Jennifer Wesley, an Aboriginal medical doctor, will work. She will be the first native doctor working on the reserve.

We were introduced to their health centre by Kabestra, who stated proudly that the community also has a women's shelter. The chief pointed out that the health centre has received an Accreditation Canada stamp of approval – "a big deal" for them.

Whitefish has the Black River Youth Camp, where the children learn about their culture, including drumming, dancing and fishing.

"We are doing incredible things in times of crisis," Kabestra said. "All of this fresh out of residential school."

His statement is a compelling one because it reflects clarity about his and his people's history and a level of hope and pride one would not necessarily expect from a native community.

Through my trip, however, I have discovered a number of dynamic leaders, including chiefs Cobiness and Kabestra, individuals who work hard on behalf of their people.

I have also discovered some very special personalities and am excited about our Jewish-Aboriginal initiatives. I look forward to learning from our native counterparts and sharing with them the beauty of the Jewish People. ■

Honouring a gitte neshamah

Bernie Farber

In my last column I spoke of what brought me to the work I am doing today. I promised to follow this up with more on the Jewish-First Nations bond.

Full disclosure, I work for a *gitte neshamah* (a good soul), Michael Dan. He is a neurosurgeon, philanthropist, and First Nations advocate. In 2002, he created the Paloma Foundation that I now help run, which has donated more than $8 million to charities in the Toronto area (with a special emphasis on health, education and homelessness).

Through his support of the University of Haifa and the Michael and Amira Dan Professorship in Global Health at the University of Toronto, he has helped to build Jewish-Palestinian dialogue and tolerance in Canada and around the world.

Along with all these accomplishments, today his work is focused on indigenous health. In 2014, Michael donated $10 million to U of T to create the first privately endowed institute for indigenous health research in the world at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. I wish he didn't have to do so, but with the recent slashing of Aboriginal health research budgets, we desperately needed a privately endowed research facility that will never be beholden to the whims of any federal government.

On March 23, the Institute for Indigenous Health had an Aboriginal "naming ceremony." Present were First Nations, Metis and Inuit chiefs, thought leaders, academics, physicians, nurses and many others to whom indigenous health has a special meaning. Greetings came from former prime minister Paul Martin, whose own work funding Aboriginal education has become legendary. We heard from Ontario's Aboriginal Affairs Minister David Zimmer and probably the single most recognized and respected First Nations leader in the country, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine.

It was a memorable evening, led by Anishnabe elder Fred Kelly and *midewin* (medicine man) Kalvin Ottertail and his wife Margaret. We also heard from representatives of the Metis and Inuit communities. Drumming, a smudging ceremony and First Nations circle dances all came together in a powerful evening to create the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health.

Waakebiness is Anisshinaabemowin for "radiant thunderbird" and was the name bestowed upon Dan by Ottertail, who is a member of the Lac Lacroix First Nations.

The Bryce Institute pays tribute to Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce, who served as chief medical officer of health for the Department of Indian Affairs in the early part of the 20th century. It was Bryce who uncovered and publicly reported the horrendous facts pertaining to the deaths of thousands of young First Nations children in residential schools from tuberculosis.

Sadly, Bryce failed to convince the government of the day to take simple measures from better ventilation of schools to more sufficient nutrition to bring down the numbers of deaths. When the government refused to act, Bryce went public with his findings and published *The Story of a National Crime: Being a Record of the Health Conditions of the Indians of Canada from 1904 to 1921*.

Said Dan of this honour: "I'm tremendously proud that this Institute will pay tribute to my indigenous friends while recognizing Dr. Peter Bryce's courageous attempt at saving indigenous children from the ravages of tuberculosis."

And I was proud to be part of such a significant ceremony, standing shoulder to shoulder with many members of the Jewish community, including my friend Len Rudner, representing the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

It was not a surprise to me that Jews and First Nations stood together that evening. Indeed, Kelly, Fontaine and I met more than 10 years ago, when as CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress and along with then-president of CJC Ed Morgan, I led a contingent of First Nations leaders to Israel. That trip solidified a friendship that years later helped inaugurate an initiative funded by a Jewish philanthropist that will immeasurably help First Nations people to better health. ■

What to expect, and not expect, from rabbis

Rabbi Dow Marmur

A common cause of unhappiness in interpersonal relations is unrealistic expectations. This is also true in relationships between communities and their rabbis. A recent advertisement for an Orthodox rabbinic position – obviously only men need apply – in a European capital provides a telling illustration.

According to the lengthy job description, the successful candidate will not only lead services, preside at life-cycle events, teach, counsel and engage in community-building. In addition to his priestly role, he must also be a "visionary leader able to actively engage more people in the Orthodox way of living and facilitate bringing people back to Judaism."

His many pastoral duties range from "visiting the sick and elderly" to "attending (and initiating) social activities."

Beyond rabbinic ordination, the incumbent is to have engaged in advanced Torah studies and have a solid secular education.

The job description also states that he should have "an Orthodox and traditional family upbringing." It's apparently not enough for him to have embraced Orthodoxy later in life. The good rabbi should be frum from birth.

The skills required include the ability to teach, speak in public, be media savvy and have "general knowledge that can be connected to Jewish subjects." Psychology and history are mentioned specifically.

The successful applicant must be mature and have a "high level of integrity." He should be "comfortable with himself" and know how to "resolve conflicts in a positive and constructive fashion." He must have an "open disposition," be "flexible, diplomatic, patient" and skilled in creating "win-win situations." Most rabbis I know, myself included, are neurotic. They needn't apply.

Though the rabbi is to represent the community to the outside world, he's not allowed to say what he thinks: "The rabbi's freedom of speech is circumscribed." Because the community isn't only Orthodox, when the new incumbent "takes a position in controversial issues, the other denominations' opinions must be presented."

One enigmatic statement in the job description is that "the rabbi is obligated to inform the board about possible religious convictions that deviate from the Orthodox norms." It's not clear whether periodically the rabbi must go to confession before lay leaders or to report on the deviant thoughts and practices of others.

The city is said to have more than 10,000 Jews, but even on High Holidays less than 2,000 attend services. The job description implies it. Because "the number of members is decreasing," the candidate is challenged to "attract more members to the community." It's up to him to increase attendance by being relevant and able to "address the needs of young people and others who currently do not always attend synagogue regularly." Obviously if Jews don't come to shul, it's the rabbi's fault.

And if all that wasn't enough, there's this: "The rabbi is expected to have an open home and invite people for Shabbat and other holidays." It's not specified who will do the cooking.

The full text of the ad and others like it should be studied in every rabbinic school and in every synagogue as an indicator of why the relationship between rabbis, cantors and teachers on the one hand and lay leaders on the other is often so problematic. Though the wording of this particular text may be idiosyncratic, the expectations it lists are, alas, not uncommon.

It's significant that nothing is said about what the rabbi can expect from the congregation, not only in terms of remuneration but, more important, in terms of working conditions and lay support for his efforts.

The synagogue remains the central institution of Diaspora Jewry. Unless we have realistic expectations of those who lead us and whom we view as role models, the outcome is likely to be miserable.

Unless shul members are prepared to share the responsibility for Jewish life rather than entrust it to professionals with imaginary superhuman qualities, continued erosion from within may turn out to constitute a much greater danger than the anti-Semitism from without. ■

The case for expanding Canada's sanctions against Iran

Sheryl Saperia

In a desperate attempt to reach a nuclear agreement with Iran, the Obama administration has forfeited many of its core demands. The framework announced last month in Lausanne, Switzerland, abandons UN Security Council resolutions calling for Iran to halt its enrichment activities and is ambiguous on both compliance verification and penalties for violation.

If a deal is concluded in line with the Lausanne parameters, there is broad agreement that Iran will be within arm's reach of a nuclear weapon shortly after its 10-year probation period has expired. Barring any other interdiction of Iran's weapons program, the only question remaining for the West will be the nature and assertiveness of the regime in possession of nuclear weapons capability.

Iran's recent bellicosity toward the United States – at such a critical point in the negotiations – suggests that its pursuit of regional hegemony and its support for global terror and subversion will only accelerate over the next decade. Tehran's belligerence at this sensitive time should not be viewed as mere political posturing. It's a shot across the bow signalling the regime's unwavering commitment to its Islamist ideology and its apparently correct surmise that it can behave with impunity under the protective umbrella of the emerging nuclear deal.

Put another way, Iran's nuclear ambitions cannot be viewed in isolation. France's atomic weapons do not keep security experts and neighbouring states awake at night with worry. But a regime that is committed to promoting its revolutionary and violent global agenda around the world, to sponsoring terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, to crushing "mercilessly and monumentally" pro-democracy uprisings, to torturing new inmates as a rite of passage into its prison system, to enjoying the world's highest per capita rate of executions, and to calling for the destruction of a UN member state should not be in possession of nuclear weapons.

An effective western response to Iranian aggression must, therefore, confront the regime as the multi-faceted threat it is. Indeed, human rights advocates have long urged that P5+1 negotiators with Iran adopt the approach of the United States in reaching an arms control agreement with the Soviet Union in 1975, which linked security, economic and human rights issues.

To expand that concept, nuclear sanctions relief for Iran should be tied to a requirement that the regime also cease its terrorist activity, regional aggression and subversion, explicit commitment to Israel's destruction, and vast system of domestic repression.

As a champion of Iranian human rights at the United Nations and beyond, an outspoken critic of Iran's terrorist sponsorship, and – unlike the P5+1 members – a state not deeply invested in reaching a nuclear deal no matter how poor, Canada is well positioned to take a leading role in penalizing Iran for its misconduct.

Through legislation, Ottawa could mandate that its current sanctions – imposed primarily in response to Tehran's illicit nuclear program – may not be eased unless Iran also changes its behaviour in these other critical areas of concern within a set time framework.

By targeting the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in particular, through listing the entity as a designated person under the *Special Economic Measures (Iran) Regulations* and a terrorist group under the Criminal Code, Canada would go a long way to undercutting a main actor in Iranian terrorist activity, domestic repression and nuclear misbehaviour.

The legislation could also provide for ongoing reporting of Iranian wrongdoing, loosely modelling the Helsinki Monitoring Groups, which exposed human rights abuses and violations of the Helsinki Final Act.

The nuclear sanctions architecture against Iran is set to crumble, and an emboldened Tehran is emerging in its wake. Canada should step up and take the lead in containing the regime's reinvigorated appetite for aggression, and in embracing the liberal democratic forces within that country. There seems to be no shortage of those leading from far behind on this issue. Canada is well placed to fill the vacancy in front. ■

Sheryl Saperia is director of policy for Canada at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

News

Day schools coy on new sex education curriculum

RON CSILLAG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Toronto Jewish day schools are mostly tight-lipped when it comes to discussing Ontario's proposed sex education curriculum or their own teachings on the subject.

Many elementary schools contacted by *The CJN* did not return calls or emails seeking comment on the new Ontario health curriculum or what, to date, has been taught on the subject of human reproduction.

Starting next fall, Ontario's revamped sex education curriculum will see children as young as six learn about sexual consent, while eight-year-olds will be taught about same-sex relationships.

The course of instruction has met with a flurry of controversy and opposition, mainly from parents who say they don't want their children exposed to such candid sexual issues at a young age.

For example, students in Grade 1 will learn to identify body parts, including genitalia, "using correct terminology."

Other changes will see students in Grade 2 learn about stages of development and bodily changes, while same-sex relationships will be explored in Grade 3.

Students in Grade 6 will learn about masturbation and "gender expression," while kids in Grades 7 and 8 will discuss contraception, anal and oral sex, preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.

Claire Sumerlus, head of school at Robbins Hebrew Academy, told *The CJN*: "At this point, we are reviewing [the new curriculum]. We're just working through what we're going to do." She declined further comment.

Netivot HaTorah Day School does not teach the entire Ontario health curriculum, said Rabbi Elliott Diamond, head of Jewish studies at Netivot. "While our school strives to implement the ministry's guidelines in the areas of core curriculum, we have chosen not to implement the health curriculum in its entirety. We feel that elements of the program – specifically the sex education sections – reflect a position that is not supported by our parent body and our religious perspective," he said in a written statement.

"We feel that education toward a healthy, meaningful and religiously sanctioned attitude toward sexuality is indeed appropriate, but that these lessons are best learned when students are older. Our middle school program does address some issues of the physical and emotional developments that teenagers experience and tries to provide students with the knowledge and strategies that will serve them as they grow and develop," Rabbi Diamond said.

Eric Petersiel, head of school at Leo Baeck Day School, said the school follows Ministry of Education guidelines, including those that deal with sex education.

"We rely on province of Ontario experts to identify appropriate areas" to teach the children, he said, adding that Leo Baeck follows the current curriculum and will follow the new one as well.

The school, which is affiliated with the Reform movement, "teaches children to be proud Jews deeply engaged in the modern world. We would never choose to shy away from those elements of modern education as they are presented in the public schools," Petersiel said.

Eric Petersiel

Leo Baeck contracts with Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) to bring in social workers who address issues such as drugs and sex education at the appropriate time. Police officers address students on questions of Internet sex safety, he said.

Currently, sex ed starts in Grade 5 and is part of the physical education curriculum. One hour a week for an eight-week period is devoted to it.

"If you wait until the seventh grade to discuss the dangers of posting a sexual picture of yourself, you're way too late," he added.

Irrespective of where they stand on the issue, the controversial new sex education program appears to have little relevance for most of the community's day schools, since they, like all private schools in the province, are not obliged to follow the provincial curriculum in elementary grades.

All private schools, secular or religious, must follow the approved Ontario curriculum only if they grant high school diplomas, and there are actually separate curricula planned for the two age ranges. Elementary grades may follow the curriculum voluntarily.

Jonathan Levy, principal at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel campus, said his school will follow the curriculum.

"Tanenbaum CHAT teaches according to ministry guidelines. [The curriculum] will be implemented as of September. Our teachers are currently working on it."

He added: "We are an accredited high school that follows ministry curricula. We represent the broadest range of the Jewish community, a diverse range of opinion is accepted in our school as long as [it's] presented in a respectful and caring environment. As a high school we have a responsibility in this day and age to high schoolers and the issues that high school students face today."

He said TanenbaumCHAT parents have so far not expressed any concerns about the new curriculum.

"I think we need to wait and see how it rolls out and make sure as with all our courses and issues, that we address things in a caring and nurturing way."

Educators at Yeshivat Or Chaim, an Orthodox high school for boys, and Ulpanat Orot, its counterpart for girls, are still discussing the issue, said Mordechai Sabeti, director of education at Bnei Akiva Schools of Toronto.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 45

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 21, 2015

U.S. kosher supermarket chain takes over Hartmans

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The retail kosher food industry in Toronto is about to experience a shakeup.

Savours Kosher Market ULC, a U.S.-based corporation that operates kosher supermarkets under a variety of names along the Eastern Seaboard, is entering the Toronto market. Savours has acquired the assets of Hartmans Fine Kosher Foods after the longstanding Toronto shopping destination went into receivership.

Savours will continue to do business in the same locations on Bathurst Street under the name Savours Kosher Market, but with an enhanced shopping experience for the kosher consumer, said Savours founder and chair Henry Kauftheil.

In addition, Savours is leasing a vacant storefront next door to the north Bathurst location and will renovate the building to create a store modelled on its successful U.S. outlets, Kauftheil said.

That store is expected to open before Passover next year, and there are plans for yet another Savours store in the Toronto area in the near future, he said.

In the meantime, consumers can expect "a high-end experience, with fair pricing, a high level of kashrut and customer service that can't be beat," Kauftheil. "We have created an experience so that people actually love shopping [in our stores]."

The Kurtz family, which operated Hartmans for the past six years, will be involved in the new enterprise and run the Hartmans Signature meats and deli section of the store, Kauftheil said.

Kauftheil is involved in more than 10 glatt kosher supermarkets in the United States, either through Savours or with partners in other ventures. He is founder and chair of Gourmet Glatt, with two locations in New York and with stores expected to open soon in New York and New Jersey. He is founder and chair of Evergreen Kosher Market, operating in the same two states. And he holds a controlling interest in SuperFresh, an Israeli kosher "supermini-market chain" consisting of six stores, but with more expected.

"The success of our model is based on quality, choice, value and outstanding service. These are the hallmarks of a quality kosher experience which our customers enjoy," he said in a news release.

In a phone interview, Kauftheil said his "buying power" and "ability to make deals" allows his stores to offer competitive prices. His research showed Toronto, with 200,000 Jews, would present a potential venue for expansion. He learned of the Kurtz's financial difficulties and had been involved with them over the last seven or eight months.

Henry Kauftheil

He acquired the assets from the receiver, describing the situation "like a guillotine over their heads."

Savours acquired Hartmans' equipment and other assets, including the business name and goodwill, said receiver Brahm Rosen, of Rosen Goldberg Inc. "It happened relatively quickly, within one week of the appointment of a receiver," Rosen said.

The moves came after Hartmans was unable to meet the demands of its creditors. Secured creditors asked for the receiver to step in and manage the business until a new buyer could be found.

"The indebtedness was quite significant – several million dollars," said Rosen. "They have been bleeding money for some time."

Rosen operated the business for about a week to ensure it remained a going concern and "to keep the goodwill going."

In a statement, Jeffrey Kurtz said "the Kurtz family is very pleased about the transformation from Hartmans to Savours and our ongoing role in the new company. We are grateful that when Hartmans experienced financial difficulties, Mr. Kauftheil stepped in with financial assistance. The legal process of receivership allowed Savours to acquire Hartmans, which still remains responsible for its own liabilities that we are dealing with in a spirit of fairness to all concerned."

Kauftheil said he expects to create new relationships with existing vendors and is "looking very favourably at the current staff." There will be room for more personnel as the business "builds out," he said. ■

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CLE for Lawyers & Accountants

100 Questions about a Will Challenge

Tuesday, June 2, 2015

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This program is eligible for substantive CPD hours required of Lawyers by the LSUC

Will Challenges & Closing Arguments

Some suggest that Johnny Cochran's closing comment to the jury "If the gloves don't fit, you must acquit" distracted the jury from the strong evidence and resulted in O.J. Simpson's acquittal. Closings can sometimes be the difference between winning and losing a case.

Charles Wagner

In part, the upcoming seminar will be using the moot court to educate attendees on questions relating to the closing argument in the context of a Will Challenge. By hearing their closing arguments, attendees will learn how skillful trial lawyers artfully present their closing arguments by telling their respective clients' narrative together with an analysis of the law.

Clare Burns

The undisputed facts in this narrative are that the testator's son was living with her. The son took her mother to a lawyer in order to do a new will that disinherited the testator's daughter. The son used his power of attorney to transfer his mother's house to him. It is also undisputed that the elderly woman was illiterate and spoke only Russian and Yiddish. The lawyer met with her twice and each time spent about 15 minutes taking instructions and seeing to the execution of the will. There are some material points of law and fact in dispute. Is it legal for the daughter to challenge the will while her mother is still alive? Did the mother have capacity? Did the son unduly influence his mother? Finally, there is the issue of solicitor's negligence. Were this a real case, given the conflicting evidence and contentious points of law the importance of the closing argument is heightened.

Gregory Sidlofsky

The skillful advocate uses the closing to weave the facts and law into a powerful and persuasive story. It is B'nai Brith's honour to have 2 of the premier estate litigators in the city doing the closing arguments in this moot case. Gregory M. Sidlofsky of Wagner Sidlofsky LLP is acting for the daughter and Clare Burns of WeirFoulds LLP is acting for the son.

The event will take place on June 2nd, 2015 at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue at 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5N 1V8. Registration is at 7:30am and the moot court will begin at 8:00am. The event is open to lawyers and accountants. Those lawyers and/or accountants interested in attending may contact Elyse Gruenspan at B'nai Brith Canada at (416) 633-6224 or email at egruenspan@bnaibrith.ca . Charles B. Wagner, of Wagner Sidlofsky LLP, is a certified specialist in Estates & Trusts Law. He chairs the Estate and Trusts Group, Lawyers Division of Bnai Brith that created and runs this annual continuing legal education program for professionals dealing with estate and trust issues.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 21, 2015

New group aims to solve day school tuition problem

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Huddled around a small, round table at a Thornhill coffee shop, four members of the newly formed Grassroots for Affordable Jewish Education spoke about the urgent need to help parents who can't afford Jewish education for their children.

"We want to give hope to parents and families that there are people out there who are thinking about... how they are able to send their kids to private school, and pay for a mortgage and not lose their children to another way of life. We want this discussion to get back on the agenda," said Mordechai Ben-Dat, a former editor of *The CJN* and current columnist who is one of six founding members of the "think-tank" established to address the issue.

"The increase in the cost of education has been reaching two and three times the rate of inflation over the past 25 years," said Rabbi Jay Kelman, an educator, accountant and *CJN* columnist who has written about the cost of tuition and possible solutions.

Tuition for Jewish day school in Toronto ranges from $11,000 a year in elementary school to as high as $25,000 in high school.

Jeffrey Stutz, a public policy consultant, said that in Toronto, about 30 per cent of Jewish school-age children are enrolled in day schools, but numbers are declining.

"They say our [community] tuition subsidies [from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto] are the most generous [in North America] at $10 million a year. But it's been $10 million a year for more than five years, while the costs are moving further and further out of range, so we're losing ground," Stutz said.

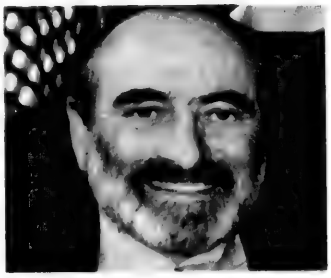
"We're also seeing that Jewish families are smaller because they're looking into the future and saying, 'How can I afford to educate three or four children?'"

Rabbi Kelman added that despite the community's affluence, affordability is still a major problem.

"We are the wealthiest generation in Jewish history, and yet we're the generation that can least afford Jewish education. There is something wrong with that."

Ben-Dat said this venture is not about pointing fingers, rather about "radically changing" the way the community approaches day school funding.

"In the last two decades, there has been a sense of shrugging the shoulders... They say, we have the existing method, we're doing the best we can, but we can't make it affordable, so people just won't go to school," Ben-Dat said.



Mordechai Ben-Dat

"We're saying we're not satisfied with that. That is not an option, and if we don't have traditional answers, we'll find non-traditional answers."

Zac Kaye, former executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto, said there's a sense of desperation among young middle-class families he's spoken to. "We have to think out of the box."

In the past, Rabbi Kelman has proposed that proceeds from life-insurance plans purchased by parents could go to an education fund that subsidizes tuition, but Kaye said the group will look at a range of options, including alternatives to the current day school system.

"It's not just about looking at financial implications, which is critical, but maybe can we create a no-frills school... we're looking at what's affordable," Kaye said.

"The funding is there in an untapped source, and we want to inspire all sorts of new people to find ways to tap into it, as investors, not donors," Ben-Dat said.

Daniel Held, executive director of the federation's Julia and Henry Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Education in Toronto, said he's met with the group a number of times and is committed to working with them. "The issue of day school affordability and sustainability are community issues. It is a conversation happening at every Shabbat table, in every parking lot, in every kiddush club, and it should be, because it is critical to the future of our community."

Stutz said the group will host a public forum in the fall to let interested members of the community get involved.

"This is a solvable problem," Rabbi Kelman said. "In the Jewish community, we've solved problems that were far worse."

"No option should be ruled out at this point," Stutz added.

"Except failure," Ben-Dat interjected. "We owe it to our children."

To get involved, email birthrighteducation@gmail.com. ■

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Seniors care for Canada geese on their roof

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Two new residents have moved into Two Neptune Drive – Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community, but they don't pay maintenance costs.

Two Canada geese, a male and female, flew up to the ninth floor patio and created a birthing nest in the flowerbed (no flowers yet), and the female laid five eggs. The eggs were laid in a shallow depression lined with plant material and down.

"This story is both heartwarming and humorous," says resident Salya Rabow, who contacted *The CJN* about the visitors. "Naturally, residents have come to look and watch her. She in turn watches us and does not let anyone near."

One of the residents, Sandi Landsman, brings water and bread to the nest. The female goose has been named Morning Glory.

Resident Louise Bortenstein found the male and female on the roof garden several weeks ago. Canada geese are monogamous, and most couples stay together most of their lives.

The male goose comes every evening and leaves every morning, says Bortenstein.

Canada geese are a protected species in Canada. They are also considered a pest species, but interfering with their activities is restricted by law.

Canada geese are aggressive, and shunned for their noise and droppings as well as their hygiene. They have a tendency to attack humans when they feel that they, their eggs or their goslings are being threatened.

Mary Roseberg, 99, comes up to the patio twice a day "to sit under the sky."

She says, "Everybody is happy to see the birds and the eggs. It is a great attraction for the residents and for our socializing."

Fellow residents Monty Mazin and Nita Goldberg agree. They told *The CJN* that the residents all join in the excitement of having the new visitors.

They noted that local wildlife authorities have been notified and will make sure that the goslings are safe when they hatch. ■

Resident Sandi Landsman feeds the birthing female Canada goose on the patio terrace at 2 Neptune Dr. while Monty Mazin watches.
CYNTHIA GASNER PHOTO

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Q & A Session following Kiddush

SUNDAY, MAY 31 AT 10:00 AM
After 70 Years: Auschwitz and Anti-Semitism

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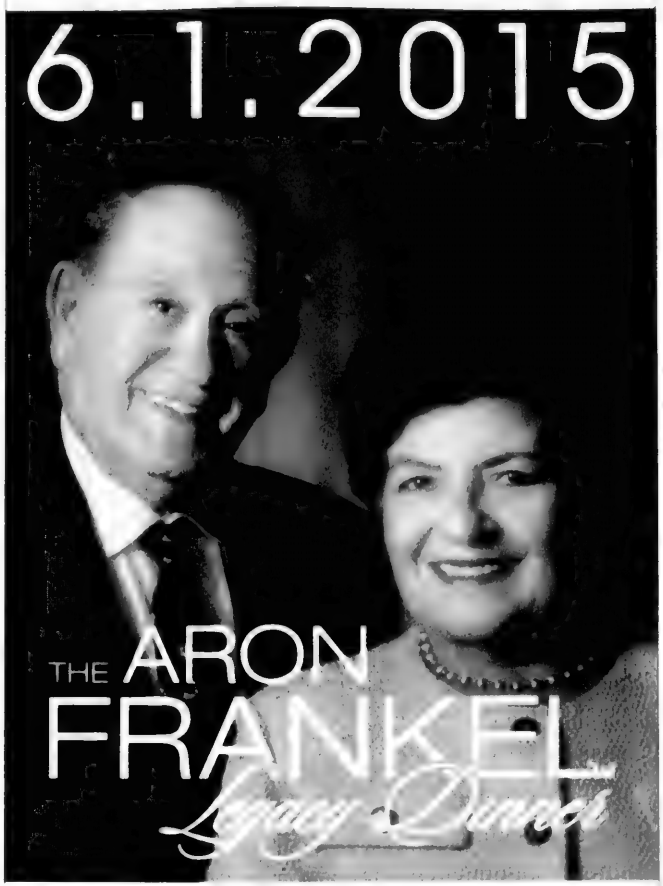

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Government calls CBC report 'inaccurate and ridiculous'

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The government of Canada is calling a CBC report that it is threatening to bring hate crime charges against advocates of a boycott of Israel "inaccurate and ridiculous."

The CBC, however, is standing behind its report, saying "our reporter and our editors thought it was a strong, original story."

On May 11, CBC ran an article on its website by veteran TV journalist Neil Macdonald, the network's senior Washington correspondent and its former chief Middle East correspondent based in Israel, under the headline, "Ottawa threatening hate charges against those who boycott Israel."

The article states, "The Harper government is signalling its intention to use hate crime laws against Canadian advocacy groups that encourage boycotts of Israel." It cites a number of NGOs that are concerned they might come under a hate crimes investigation, among them labour unions, student groups, the United Church of Canada and the Canadian Quakers.

"The allegation that we are using those laws in that way is completely false," said Jeremy Laurin, press secretary for Public Security Minister Steven Blaney. "The government will use its right of free speech to denounce these comments."

Meanwhile, Honest Reporting Canada is asking the CBC to review the article and take "corrective action."

Honest Reporting asks the CBC to cite a specific statement by a government minister calling for use of the hate crimes laws against boycotters.

"The article itself does not contain anything to substantiate this charge except conjecture and Mr. Macdonald's deductive reasoning, along with his forming conclusions based on some statements made by senior [Public Safety] officials," Honest Reporting stated.

The statements Honest Reporting was referring to were emails sent by Josee Sirois, a spokesperson for Public Safety Canada, who forwarded the Criminal Code's anti-hate law sections to Macdonald. The reporter had asked Sirois to clarify what Blaney meant when he said in a speech at the United Nations in January that Canada has a "zero-tolerance approach to anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination, including in rhetoric towards Israel, and attempts to delegitimize Israel such as the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement."

In her response, reported on *The Intercept* website by U.S. journalist Glenn Greenwald, Sirois stated, "With regards to Canadian criminal law, I can tell you that Canada has one off the most comprehensive sets of laws against hate crime anywhere in the world."

Neil Macdonald

She goes on to cite the Criminal Code provisions against advocating genocide, promoting hate against identifiable groups, seizure of hate propaganda, provisions for enhanced sentencing for hate-motivated crimes and even refers to a section on "mischief in relation to a building that is primarily used for religious worship."

Sirois adds a reference to the federal government's Security Infrastructure Program, which helps communities protect themselves against hate-motivated crimes.

In an email response to *CJN* queries, Chuck Thompson, head of CBC English Service's public affairs, stated, "When Honest Reporting Canada complains about an aspect of our coverage, we respond to them directly. That organization knows how much priority CBC News places on being accountable for what we do. CBC News has a set of journalistic standards and practices which are transparent and available to the public. For times where our responses do not satisfy a complainant, we also are one of the few media organizations that has a fully independent ombudsman who can review whether CBC journalism lives up to those standards."

And in a subsequent email, Jack Nagler, director of journalistic public accountability and engagement for CBC News, responded to suggestions the item was one-sided by saying, "If this were a story on whether BDS was good or bad – or a story about Israeli policies – of course it would have required other perspectives.

"But it wasn't about either of those things. It was about trying to understand what actions the federal government intends to take, given its declaration of 'zero tolerance.'"

Honest Reporting noted that following its complaint, the headline on Macdonald's article was changed to read, "Ottawa cites hate crime laws when asked about its 'zero tolerance' for Israel boycotters." ■

Zareinu downsizes its annual Moveathon

SHLOMO KAPUSTIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

A prominent local Jewish organization that helps kids with disabilities is downsizing its signature annual fundraiser in response to declining attendance.

"I calculated the cost and unfortunately, it takes a lot of time," said Hershy Weinberg, the founder of Zareinu's Moveathon. "It's a 12-month-a-year plan. Also, the numbers just were not adding up. I don't have the city of Toronto supporting it – not the Orthodox, not the non-Orthodox. It's just not being supported."

Last year's proceedings followed the two-day template of recent years: a one-day festival, devoted to athletics for various skill levels, with entertainment, food, rides and games, and a second day two weeks later for more challenging bike rides.

The 18th edition dispenses with the festival and instead features four bike rides of varying distances, from 25 to 135 kilometres. Scheduled for June 7 in Richmond Hill, this year's event is called the Zareinu Bike Ride for Kids, by Moveathon. While the festival has been discontinued, participants and anyone who "comes to cheer them on" will enjoy inflatable children's rides.

As in previous years, participants are being sponsored by donors, who pledge funds to Zareinu. Weinberg hopes to raise about $500,000 from 300 riders.

As recently as five years ago, the Moveathon boasted 8,000 attendees and more than $1 million raised. But numbers have flattened since then: last year's event saw 4,000 participants and raised $600,000.

In part, the event has fallen victim to Zareinu's larger fundraising success, Weinberg said. The Moveathon and Zareinu's golf tournament once dominated the group's promotional schedule, but the group's fall fashion show has developed its own niche after 11 years. And this year's poker tournament, held in March, further crowds the calendar.

"Everybody thinks if I give to one, my responsibility has been satisfied," he said. "However, what they don't realize is that the fashion show is geared to a certain segment of the population, and not children. And the golf is focused on golfers – it's not for the children. In their mind, they gave to Zareinu. And you gave to Zareinu, yes, but what opportunity did you give to your children and grandchildren to spend the day with them?"

The Zareinu Educational Centre of Metropolitan Toronto provides programming for children with physical and developmental challenges. At its school in the Sephardic Kehila Centre, in Thornhill, it complements classes with physical and other therapies.

Hershy Weinberg at last year's event.

Additionally, Zareinu brings off-site programs to other institutions. At an annual cost to Zareinu of $250,000, its satellite classes in day schools integrate its students in less formal activities. A newer fee-for-service model offers Zareinu therapists to deliver treatment paid for by the schools.

Several Zareinu students have overcome physical disabilities to lead next month's ride, as part of the We Can Bike program.

Organizers say the demise of the Moveathon's festival will affect the Jewish community's social fabric.

"What it really became," said Weinberg, "was more of a community gathering than just a fundraiser for Zareinu, which was really the aim of bringing *achdus* [unity] for the city, bringing black and white [religiously right- and left-wing Jews] together with *kippah srugah* [knitted kippot, common among the modern Orthodox], Orthodox and non-Orthodox. That was really the aim of it all."

Despite the community-wide support, the event skews Orthodox, although Zareinu wants to counter a false impression in the community about the organization.

"We are perceived as an Orthodox institution, and our values are based on Orthodox traditions," said Liora Sturm, Zareinu's director of events and campaigns. "Yet most of our kids are not Orthodox. The students in school come from Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and non-denominational backgrounds."

The stripped-down Moveathon returns it to its roots as a modest, one-day event, but organizers don't know if the festival component will be revived next year.

"It depends how many people miss it," said Weinberg. "If I have people that say they want to come out and support it, well, I do whatever the community wants me to do." ■

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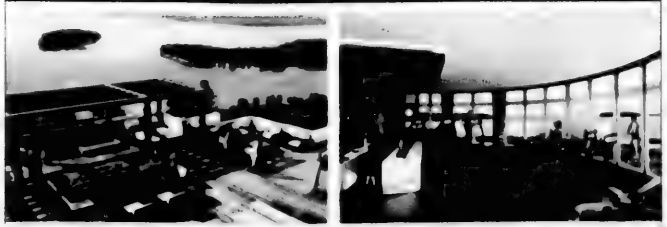

Retiring educator Stern 'took school to new heights'

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

Reuven Stern

After 18 years at the helm of Thornhill's Netivot Hatorah Day School, Reuven Stern has announced that he's retiring.

Netivot will honour Stern for his years of service as the head of school with a cocktail reception on May 27 at The Avenue in Vaughan.

"He has put his heart and soul into the school, and he transformed it from the day he walked in," said Shawna Magence, past president of the school and a co-chair of the upcoming event.

"He took the school to new heights, increased enrolment and furthered the mission of the school."

He began his career in Edmonton in 1975 as a youth director, teacher and cantor at Beth Israel Synagogue.

After serving as a principal at Jewish day schools in Portland, Maine, and Indianapolis, Ind., Stern took on the role of head of school for Netivot in 1997.

Some of Stern's achievements include the expansion of the school's early childhood program to include nursery, pre-nursery and Hebrew immersion programs, as well as initiating and developing the special needs program called the Podolski-NESS department.

"We've really developed our support department, the Podolski-NESS department as it's called, and it has grown and developed wonderfully over the years. I think we've served as a model here in the city for meeting the needs of all children... as well as creating our Hebrew immersion program, in keeping with the research... that says the younger the child is exposed to a foreign language, the better," Stern said.

Stern said that when he moved to Toronto with his wife to head Netivot, his vision was to lead the school in keeping with a Zionist Orthodox ideology.

"What we wanted to do was make sure that the school would be a school of academic excellence and one that would continue teaching our children in the ways of their own parents, which is the way of modern Orthodoxy and Zionism," Stern said.

"I'm happy to have been here, as over 1,000 of our students have graduated during this time, and from what information we have, over 20 per cent have made aliyah to Israel," he said, adding that the success of his students can also be attributed to the abundance of Jewish community institutions and programs in the GTA.

Although Stern said he's looking forward to his retirement – he and his wife will be leaving Toronto and splitting their time between the United States and Israel to be with their children and grandchildren – he'll always look back fondly on his time with Netivot.

> *He has put his heart and soul into [Netivot], and he transformed it*

"What I'll miss most is being with the children... and, of course, the ability to work with some tremendously dedicated professionals, in both in the administration and our teaching staff. These are people who work very diligently to train the next generation of Jews and to [make sure] that Toronto has and continues to have a strong, vibrant Jewish community."

Stern said he's excited about the upcoming tribute.

"I'm so happy to take part in it and to see many of the friends and people we've interacted with – parents and teachers – over the past years come together one last time. It will be gratifying for the school and for me to be doing that."

Magence said the main purpose of the event is to give "*hakarat hatov*," thanks and special recognition, to Stern, but another member of the Netivot family who is retiring this year, gan (preschool) director Eileen Goldstein will also be recognized for her years of service.

"There is going to be a presentation of alumni over the last 18 years and the things that Dr. Stern has done and accomplished over his 18 years... On top of the honour, we want to leave something lasting in the school, to remember Dr. Stern... What we decided to do is raise money to create the Dr. Reuven Stern Atrium," Magence said.

"There is no man who worked harder, who was more dedicated and who modelled the life of Netivot's mission more." ■

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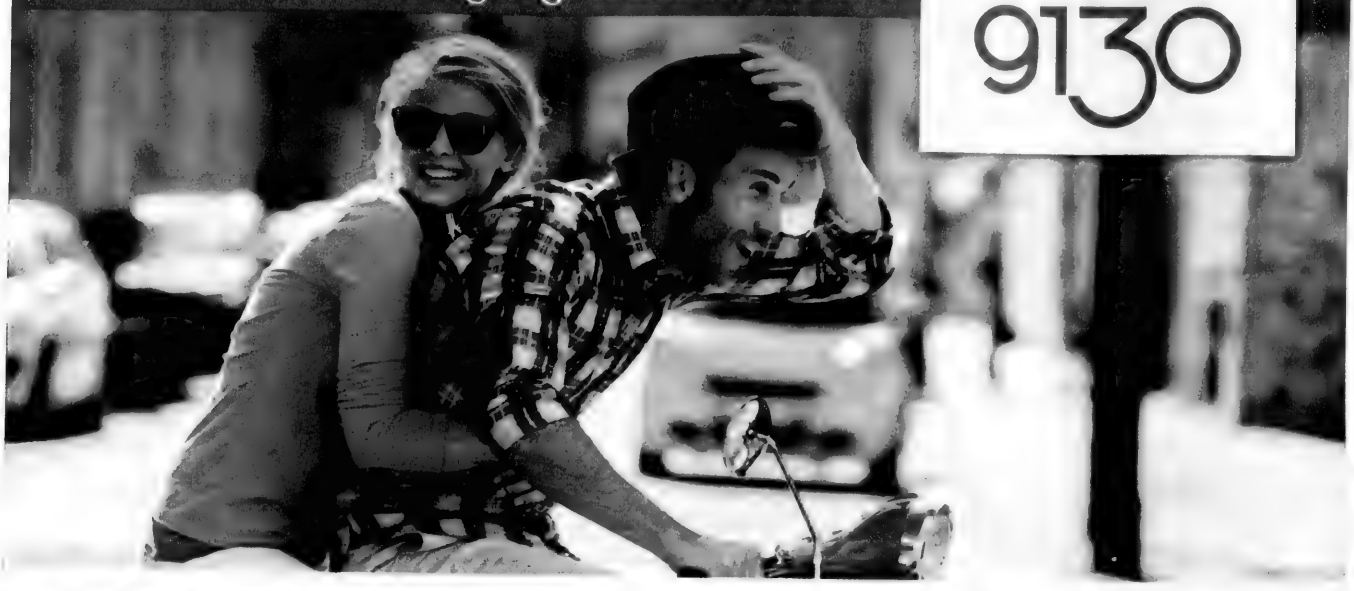

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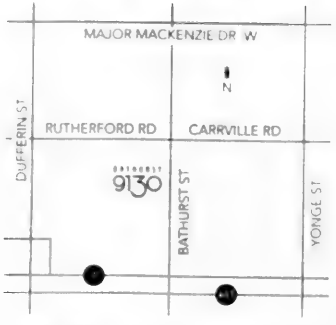

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 21, 2015

CFLer fined for Shoah denial and other offensive tweets

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca

Montreal Alouettes player Khalif Mitchell has been fined by both the Canadian Football League and the team for posting material that denies the Holocaust, as well as other offensive content, on his Twitter account.

The team also issued an apology.

In response to a complaint from B'nai Brith Canada, the Alouettes announced May 14 that the club has fined Mitchell the maximum amount allowable under CFL rules for violating the team's social media policy. The amount of the fine wasn't disclosed.

The club "unequivocally denounce[d] the regrettable" postings made by Mitchell, which included a retweet on May 6 of a YouTube video, a "documentary" called *The Greatest Lie Ever Told — The Holocaust*.

The retweet was still visible on his feed on May 14, but had been removed by May 15.

Also among his recent entries are a cartoon drawing an equivalency between ISIS and Mossad, and another saying ISIS stands for "Israel's Secret Intelligence Service."

"His postings are disappointing and in no way reflect the opinions and values of the Montreal Alouettes football club," stated president and chief executive officer Mark Weightman. "His postings were completely unacceptable and the Alouettes apologize to anyone who was offended by them."

New CFL Commissioner Jeffrey Orridge also condemned the postings.

"While we acknowledge that players have a right to hold and express their own opinions, in no circumstance do we condone activity or comments that are derogatory or inappropriate, putting the league's reputation in question, and we feel Mr. Mitchell's recent behaviour on social media has violated these principles," Orridge said.

Mitchell, a defensive tackle who signed a three-year contract with the club in February, posts as @TruthWillFree96. He has more than 2,000 followers.

In comments to the *National Post*, Mitchell said, "I believe the Holocaust happened. I believe that people died in the Holocaust. I believe that the Holocaust is an example of pure hatred, in its purest sense, on this earth that we even know of, and that we should look into it and examine it for its authenticity, to understand how much hate could have been amassed on one people."

He said curiosity led him to the 77-minute online video, which claims the number of Jews murdered in the camps is too high to be credible, among other doubts about the magnitude of the Holocaust.

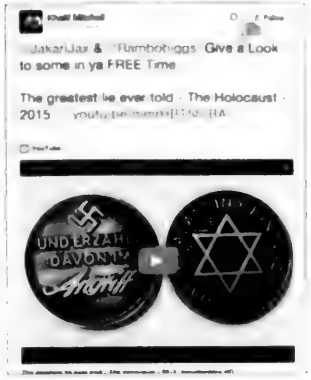


Image from Khalif Mitchell's Twitter account.

On May 14, B'nai Brith denounced Mitchell's postings in a press release after it had not received any response to letters a few days earlier to Alouettes general manager Jim Popp and Orridge.

B'nai Brith spokesperson Sam Eskenasi said Mitchell's Twitter feed has many "bizarre and weird" postings. There have also been "outlandish conspiracy theories [and] comparisons of police officers to the Ku Klux Klan," he said.

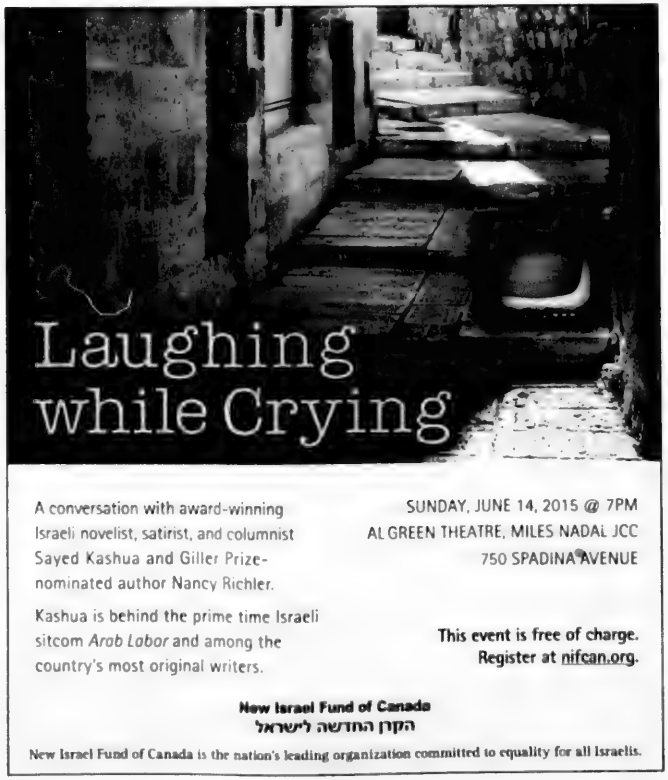
"As an all-star and role model for Canadian youth, Mr. Mitchell should not be sending out divisive and hateful tweets under the banner of the Montreal Alouettes organization," said B'nai Brith CEO Michael Mostyn.

In 2012, when he was playing for the B.C. Lions, the CFL fined Mitchell an undisclosed amount for using a derogatory term for Chinese people in a tweet. The 30-year-old Virginia Beach, Va., native has also played for the Toronto Argonauts.

Mitchell told the *Montreal Gazette* in February when he signed with the Alouettes, in reference to the 2012 tweet and other misbehaviour: "I'm not who I was, I'm who I am. I'm a man now. When I was done doing those things [I was] a child. I was coming up at 23, 24, 25, having no male influence."

B'nai Brith faults the Alouettes for not being more vigilant about Mitchell's social media activity, given his past.

"While understanding that we cannot judge the stream of consciousness of individuals who share offbeat Internet postings," Mostyn said, "these repugnant tweets are shameful not just to Mr. Mitchell, but the entire Alouettes organization." ■



A conversation with award-winning Israeli novelist, satirist, and columnist Sayed Kashua and Giller Prize-nominated author Nancy Richler.

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A Shavuot renaissance

RABBI DONNIEL HARTMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Israelis celebrate Shavuot more than any other Jewish community in the world. On Erev Shavuot, religious, secular and traditional Jews from all over the country will join in the tens of thousands to study in various and incredibly diverse programs of Tikkun Leil Shavuot. What was once the inheritance of primarily the Orthodox has now become the inheritance of many.

The renaissance of Shavuot has not been accompanied by increased ritual observance. As distinct from Pesach and Sukkot, Shavuot concentrates on the act of studying Torah. It symbolizes the idea that we Jews are a people of the Book, and that to be a Jew means to be involved in study and thought. Talmud Torah, for some, is important for it can lead to practice.

This is not its meaning in modern Israel, nor do I believe, even amongst the rabbis. When the rabbis declare: "The study of Torah surpasses them all," (Mishnah Peah 1:1), they are not referring to the study required to perfect the practice of Jewish ritual, for that which is needed in order to attain this goal is marginal.

Torah study is significant not merely because it enables practice, but rather because it redefines the focus of Judaism's religious agenda away from observance alone and toward a world of thought and ideas, as well. To celebrate Shavuot is to declare that in our religious tradition, what we think, how we think, and what ideas we produce are critical to the quality and nature of our Jewish identities and lives.

As we celebrate Shavuot this year, we find ourselves in a particularly precarious position, for we are increasingly becoming a people in which the ethos of Torah study – that is, to believe that ideas are important – is being seriously threatened. We have become a people motivated and guided by crises, from Ahmadinejad and Iranian missiles, to Jewish continuity, to Madoff. These crises are treated like fires that must be extinguished. These efforts, however, are quenching much of our creativity.

We have flattened our intellectual horizons and transformed serious issues in need of serious new thinking into shallow debates, the bantering slogans, and short-term solutions. "United Jerusalem," a "two-state solution," "Peace Now," Israel as a "Jewish Democratic State," "Jewish continuity," have all become slogans bantered about instead of issues that require our deepest and most creative thoughts.

How we build a Jewish and democratic state with a large Palestinian Arab minority is not an issue to be manipulated for public political points, but one which intellectually and morally we must struggle with. The future of the West Bank and the settlements has been transformed into a question of what U.S. President Barack Obama wants and will let us get away with and not what we want to be in the future. Israel and Jewish morality of war has become an issue debated along political lines, as if it is only a political and not a moral issue.

In the name of Jewish continuity, we are engaging in endless studies to learn exactly the Jewish sensibilities, or lack thereof, of our youth. Yet we are rarely using this knowledge to develop a vision of where they ought to be and how we can inspire them to get there, but rather to chase after them in panic under the vague notion that if we reach them wherever they are, they may somehow want to "continue" to be Jews. We have transformed our public discourse into one of slogans instead of substance.

Shavuot and the commandment of talmud Torah teach that there is no continuity without content, and that the survival of the Jewish People, while dependent upon the marshalling of military and political force where necessary, cannot be sustained through these efforts alone.

In a world where all Jews are Jews by choice, we will be sustained only to the extent that we field a product worthy of perpetuation, and a religion filled with ideas and values that inspire commitment and give meaning to belonging.

As we celebrate Shavuot, we need more than a Tikkun Leil Shavuot. We need a tikkun for our people. We need to recommit to being a people of great ideas. It was these ideas that constituted the revolution that was and is Judaism and that inspired us over the centuries. We need to keep continuing to inspire ourselves if we are to do justice to our heritage and create the foundations for our future. ■

Rabbi Donniel Hartman is president of the Shalom Hartman Institute.

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Seniors care for Canada geese on their roof

CYNTHIA GASNER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Two new residents have moved into Two Neptune Drive – Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community, but they don't pay maintenance costs.

Two Canada geese, a male and female, flew up to the ninth floor patio and created a birthing nest in the flowerbed (no flowers yet), and the female laid five eggs. The eggs were laid in a shallow depression lined with plant material and down.

"This story is both heartwarming and humorous," says resident Salya Rabow, who contacted *The CJN* about the visitors. "Naturally, residents have come to look and watch her. She in turn watches us and does not let anyone near."

One of the residents, Sandi Landsman, brings water and bread to the nest. The female goose has been named Morning Glory.

Resident Louise Bortenstein found the male and female on the roof garden several weeks ago. Canada geese are monogamous, and most couples stay together most of their lives.

The male goose comes every evening and leaves every morning, says Bortenstein.

Canada geese are a protected species in Canada. They are also considered a pest species, but interfering with their activities is restricted by law.

Canada geese are aggressive, and shunned for their noise and droppings as well as their hygiene. They have a tendency to attack humans when they feel that they, their eggs or their goslings are being threatened.

Mary Rosenberg, 99, comes up to the patio twice a day "to sit under the sky."

She says, "Everybody is happy to see the birds and the eggs. It is a great attraction for the residents and for our socializing."

Fellow residents Monty Mazin and Nita Goldberg agree. They told *The CJN* that the residents all join in the excitement of having the new visitors.

They noted that local wildlife authorities have been notified and will make sure that the goslings are safe when they hatch. ■

Resident Sandi Landsman feeds the birthing female Canada goose on the patio terrace at 2 Neptune Dr. while Monty Mazin watches.
CYNTHIA GASNER PHOTO

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Terror survivor to lecture on human rights

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Kay Wilson, a survivor of a terror attack in Israel, will be the guest speaker at the second annual StandWithUs Canada Campus Champions Dinner to be held on June 1 at a private home.

"Kay travels around the world for us as a motivational speaker on issues of human rights, and on justice for victims of terrorism. She will be speaking about tolerance and seeking peace for those who were murdered because they were Jewish, Israeli, or just cared about Israel," said Meryle Kates, executive director of StandWithUs Canada.

StandWithUs, a 13-year-old non-profit organization headquartered in Los Angeles with chapters around the world, is dedicated to informing the public about Israel through fact-based materials, speakers, advocacy and leadership education.

Wilson, who is coming to Canada for the first time, is a 50-year-old British-born Israeli tour guide, jazz musician, and cartoonist. She spoke to *The CJN* from her home in Israel's Negev Desert.

On Dec. 18, 2010, she said, she was on a hike on the Israel National Trail with American friend Kristine Luken when she saw two Palestinians crouched in the bushes.

Michael Dickson, director of the StandWithUs Israel Education Center, with Kay Wilson

"I was concerned. I had hoped they didn't see us, but they did. They asked for water in Hebrew. I responded in Hebrew, and they went away. I told Kristine, who is a Christian, not to panic and that we should get back to the car. I then took out a very small penknife from my backpack.

"We were walking through the forest trail, and behind me I heard Kristine scream. That's when one of them jumped on me. I stabbed him with my knife and managed to knick him in the leg. It was the DNA of their blood on my penknife that enabled the police to catch the terrorist. It also linked them to the unsolved murder of an Israeli woman, Netta Blatt-Sorek. According to their own confession, their motive was to 'kill Jews,'" she said.

"I didn't understand. They didn't rape us and they weren't particularly interested in stealing anything. I was trying to pretend I was a tourist, but he discovered my Israeli ID and he saw my Star of David. I started conversing with him in Hebrew but in vain. After half an hour of eternity, they separated us by a couple of metres. I was pushed onto my knees, my head was pushed forward. I understood I was going to be beheaded and they started stabbing and grinding the machete into my bones. The only hope I had was to play dead, which was incredibly difficult," Wilson said.

She said she watched in horror as Luken was butchered to death.

"They left, but within a few seconds they came back and one of them rolled me onto my back. I watched him plunge the machete into my chest. I still didn't move. I had my eyes open. The machete missed my heart by four millimetres."

When the men left, Wilson staggered, bound and gagged, through the forest for more than a kilometre until she found help.

"Through the valley of death, I started to compose a piano arrangement to *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. I used it to distract myself from thinking of my friend. Thinking I am going to be dead in a couple of minutes while also thinking about D Flat Major – absolutely insane."

"I sustained 13 stab wounds in my lungs and diaphragm, and six open-compound fractures of my ribs. Many ribs had also splintered into my lungs, and I had a dislocated shoulder, a crushed sternum and a broken shoulder blade. I don't know how I survived. No one is more surprised than I am that I am alive.

"I tell the story because in Jewish thought we are told to bear witness, and I need to bear witness to what humanity is capable of, and to the life and death of my friend. Choosing life, love, and laughter over death, hatred, and sadness, are the tools that help me deal with my experience," Wilson said.

Wilson will also be speaking at StandWithUs Canada's community-wide event at Beth Tikvah Synagogue on June 2. ■

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Alan Borovoy remembered for his passionate defence of free speech

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Alan Borovoy, longtime head of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) and one of Canada's fiercest but most gentlemanly defenders of the principle of free speech died on May 11 of heart failure. He was 83.

Borovoy was remembered as an accomplished author, a lover of the Yiddish language, and often a lone voice in speaking up for principles he held dear.

He served as general counsel of the CCLA from May 1968 until June 2009. He was inducted into the Order of Canada in 1982.

Borovoy was a member of the community relations committee of Canadian Jewish Congress from 1951 until Congress' demise in 2011, and before that, served as a youth delegate to the Jewish labour committee, which was one of Congress' constituent groups, said Bernie Farber a friend of Borovoy's since 1984.

Farber, who often sparred with Borovoy on issues of free speech, recalled Borovoy as "a man of great passion, a possessor of a rapier wit" and "a gentleman of the old world."

He was an advocate of civil rights from an early age.

"He grew up in the streets of Toronto as a minority, a Jewish kid in 1930s and '40s Toronto where anti-Semitism was rife and seen quite often.

"He saw what it was like to be a minority and saw that without civil rights protection, minorities were vulnerable," Farber said.

Those early experiences profoundly affected his public life. "He understood the need for civil rights protection" and was one of the architects of Ontario's Human Rights Code, which legislated equal delivery of services and accommodations without discrimination, Farber said.

A passionate advocate for free speech, Borovoy often found himself disagreeing with others on Congress' community relations committee, sometimes as a minority of one.

In the mid-1980s, disgraced Alberta school teacher Jim Keegstra and Toronto neo-Nazi Ernst Zundel were being prosecuted under Canada's anti-hate law and "false news" law, respectively.

Borovoy opposed the prosecutions, arguing that the laws violated principles of free speech. His line, repeated often in debates and in public forums was that "we should let them wallow in the obscurity that they so richly deserve," Farber recounted.

Alan Borovoy CCLA PHOTO

Farber, who had lunch with Borovoy monthly until his death, said many in the Jewish community confused Borovoy's opposition to prosecution with support for Keegstra and Zundel themselves.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Borovoy reviled them and what they stood for. But his position put him at odds with many Holocaust survivors, and "he felt he upset survivors. That upset him terribly. I don't think he ever got over it," Farber said.

In more recent years, he applauded the revocation of Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which had legislated against online hate.

"He felt it was an unneeded and unnecessary piece of legislation," Farber said. "He never lost his passion for the absolutism of free speech."

Borovoy wrote several books, including *When Freedoms Collide: The Case for Our Civil Liberties*. His most recent work was *At the Barricades*, which was released in 2014.

In *At the Barricades*, he described himself as "a social democrat, a civil libertarian, a secular Jew, and a philosophical pragmatist… a small-l liberal… [and] an unequivocal anti-Communist and perhaps even a Cold War hawk."

In a 2014 interview in the *Ottawa Citizen*, Borovoy was critical of the Stephen Harper government's tough on crime approach.

But he applauded its support for Israel and the prime minister's visit there.

"In Harper's recent visit to Israel, he was paying special respect to a political democracy in that part of the world, in the Middle East. I do appreciate his attachment of a special value to Israel, because Israel is a democracy, a beleaguered democracy," Borovoy is quoted as saying

Over the years, he worked with the national committee for human rights of the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Labour Committee for Human Rights, and the Toronto and District Labour Committee for Human Rights

In 1963, he ran for the NDP in the provincial riding of Downsview, finishing second.

Known for his sense of humour, "Alan was also a great Yiddishist," Farber said. "He loved to speak Yiddish. Until recently, he would meet four or five guys for lunch and to speak Yiddish."

In a news release, Sukanya Pillay, CCLA executive director and general counsel, said, "We are deeply saddened by the profound loss of our dear friend and former leader.

"For over 40 years, he made countless contributions to civil liberties in Canada. We will never forget him. We will strive to honour his life's work by continuing to fight for fundamental freedoms and human rights. We will greatly miss him – his brilliance, his generosity, his irreverent humour and the passion and dedication to equality that was his life's work. Canada and the CCLA owe Alan Borovoy an immense debt."

"It is with deep sadness that we learned of the death of Alan Borovoy," said David Cape, chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). "His understanding of human rights issues and the need to be vigilant in the protection of our fundamental freedoms was unparalleled. Whether you agreed with him or disagreed with him, it was impossible to not respect him.

"Everyone who had the privilege of working with Alan had the opportunity to appreciate his passion, dignity, sense of humour and humility. Today we mourn the loss of a great Canadian, a good man and a mensch. May his memory be for a blessing." ■

GUEST VOICE

A 'radical' in our midst

Franklin Bialystok

The passing of Alan Borovoy on May 11 marks the end of an era in Canadian Jewish life, when "radicals" stood for human rights with relentless energy while maintaining a balance between shielding minorities from discrimination and hatred in speech and in the press, and protecting freedom of expression.

Borovoy grew up in the Depression and World War II, when systemic anti-Semitism, racism and the legal curtailment of elementary freedoms in Canada were the norm. In an era of "none is too many," the internment of Japanese Canadians, the Chinese Immigration Act, and the discrimination against African-Canadians in employment, housing, and access to public services, Borovoy's upbringing in a liberal Jewish home spurred his conviction to strive for social justice.

He was a 19-year-old student in 1951 at the University of Toronto when he joined the joint public relations committee of Canadian Jewish Congress as a student delegate from Hillel. The committee had been established in 1938 with representatives from Congress and B'nai Brith Canada to counter anti-Semitism and support other minorities against discrimination.

In 1962, it changed the "public" in its name to "community," and after B'nai Brith's establishment of the League for Human Rights in the 1970s, it became the community relations committee (CRC). Borovoy was a stalwart member, ever involved in Congress advocacy, until the demise of the CJC in 2011. His tenure of 60 years as a volunteer in a Jewish advocacy organization is undoubtedly unique.

In the 1950s, Congress, together with the Jewish Labour Committee and the Association for Civil Liberties, advocated for legislation to enact racial equity, leading to the passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act in 1951 and the Fair Accommodations Act of 1954.

In the 1960s, Canadian Jews were defamed by neo-Nazi groups. In response, Congress pressed for legislation against hate speech. Within the CRC, a coterie of civil libertarians, urged restraint. They argued that this might lead to the incarceration of individuals professing opinions that may be deemed outside the public interest. Borovoy was joined by Syd Midanik, a previous chair of the committee, and David Satok, a future chair, in challenging the consensus. Notwithstanding their opposition, lobbying from the CJC led to the establishment of the Cohen Commission on Hate Speech, which included future prime minister Pierre Trudeau and resulted in the inclusion of hate speech provisions in the Criminal Code in 1970.

> *He revelled in debate, often taking a position that seemed contrary to his basic beliefs*

Borovoy further inflamed mainstream Jews in the 1980s with his opposition to the charges against Ernst Zundel, the profligate disseminator of Holocaust denial literature, for spreading "false news," and against Jim Keegstra, a vitriolic anti-Semitic Alberta teacher, for contravening the Criminal Code's hate provisions.

As much as Borovoy detested these men, he argued that it was impossible to determine whether they knowingly comprehended that their views were false, and that Keegstra should be summarily fired, rather than tried as a criminal.

As the "radicals" passed away, Borovoy became an often lonely voice of dissent on the committee. He was a gadfly, arguing against public support of Jewish schools, supporting the removal of prayer from public education and excoriating extremist Jewish attacks in Israel. His views were expressed with humour, often in Yiddish and free of accusatory language. He revelled in the debate, often taking a position that seemed to be contrary to his basic beliefs, but when articulated, revealed a cogent perspective. Without dominating the discussion, Borovoy was adept at articulating a position concisely and without rancour.

In an interview with Barbara Frum on CBC's *Weekday* in 1970, he stated that he "wanted to move establishments that were otherwise resistant [to change]," by creating a "social consensus [that was] more responsive to the little people."

In his 2013 autobiography, *At the Barricades*, Borovoy wrote that he "eschewed both transcendent absolutism and subjective relativism" and that his approach was "pragmatic… [abhorred] doctrinaire thinking… [and held] that a plurality of values and truths had to be perpetually balanced."

If being radical meant protecting human rights in a democratic society, Alan Borovoy was an exemplar of Jewish tradition. ■

Franklin Bialystok was a member of the community relations committee of Canadian Jewish Congress from 1996 to 2011 and its chair from 2001 to 2007.

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- Attend monthly Staff and Board meetings.
- Prepare reports as required.
- Co-ordinate, assist and attend a variety of meetings and events, including conferences, projects and programs run by the JFE, eg. The Edmonton Jewish Film Festival;
- Participate in fund development and other training opportunities; other duties as required.

Contact Info:

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The Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

Canadiens still have a prayer thanks to local Chabad rabbi

Rabbi Yisroel Bernath converses over Skype with Rabbi Mendy Dubrowski in Tampa, Fla.

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca MONTREAL

Rabbi Yisroel Bernath, director of Chabad NDG in Montreal, "reluctantly" kept his word and donned a Tampa Bay Lightning jersey to deliver his Shabbat sermon this past weekend after losing a "spiritual wager" with a colleague in Florida.

The friendly bet began when the Montreal Canadiens, of which Rabbi Bernath is a devout fan, were down two games to none in the Stanley Cup semifinals.

Prayer seemed to be the only answer – that and social media. He posted his wishes of "good spiritual vibes" to the Habs on his Facebook page.

Friend Rabbi Mendy Dubrowski of Chabad of South Tampa responded on his wall that such good vibrations should not be wasted.

They set up a Skype meeting to discuss the issue further. With a phone video camera rolling, the rabbis commiserated just before the third match. Rabbi Dubrowski is a faithful Lightning fan and is friendly with the team's owner, Jeffrey Vinik, who is Jewish.

Both wearing their team's jersey, they tossed around ideas. They agreed that when the odds were against them, Jews have always turned to prayer.

But which prayer? Rabbi Bernath suggested the *Shema* because it is the fundamental prayer expressing belief in God.

They then decided to encourage as many of the teams' respective Jewish followers to perform a mitzvah and upload a video of themselves reciting the prayer and post it on Facebook or Twitter at #HabsShema or #BoltsShema, and tag their friends. And it was "game on!"

Perhaps to his regret today, Rabbi Bernath went a step further and suggested a personal wager between the two of them about wearing the opposing team's jersey.

"Sometimes I get these crazy ideas," admitted Rabbi Bernath, who also created the "Quebec kippah" at the height of the values charter debate.

Rabbi Dubrowski readily agreed, confidently offering to send his own jersey up to Montreal to collect his bet.

The 2-1/2-minute video went viral on YouTube and Facebook and, if it is any consolation, the Montreal rabbi won in the *Shema* contest.

More than 300 Canadiens fans prayed for a miracle, while only 50-60 Lightning supporters did likewise, said Rabbi Bernath. The Chicago native admits he was not into hockey before he came to Montreal 10 years ago.

But in a city where hockey is often referred to as a religion, he soon caught the spirit, no pun intended.

He also was friendly with former Canadiens defenceman Hal Gill, when he lived in NDG near the Chabad centre.

Those collective pleas to God might have helped the Habs pull from behind and win at least two games, ending the series 4-2.

In a more serious vein, Rabbi Bernath said the project reached many people who otherwise are not strongly connected to Judaism. The video received over 2,800 views.

"I got so many amazing messages," said Rabbi Bernath. He reads one he found especially touching from a young father. He writes on Facebook that he did not even know what the *Shema* was until he saw the rabbis' video.

"My wife and I have now decided that we will make the prayer part of our children's bedtime routine."

Rabbi Bernath said that is not unusual. "A lot of young Jews don't know this seminal prayer. I think as a rabbi I have to make Judaism current, and show that it has meaning in every part of our lives."

Hockey fandom is filled with all kinds of superstition and casual talk about praying for a team's success, Rabbi Bernath said. His goal is to make Jewish fans aware that their tradition provides them with a way of connecting to their spiritual side. ■

INTERNATIONAL

Don't dilute anti-Semitism, Canadian minister says

JENNIFER TZIVIA MACLEOD
SPECIAL TO THE CJN, JERUSALEM

Canada's minister of state for multiculturalism believes grouping anti-Semitism with other forms of racism and hate crime waters it down.

"Anti-Semitism itself is the oldest form of hatred. It has resulted in the Holocaust... the killings of millions of people," Tim Uppal said.

"I consider myself a very visible minority," said Uppal, who is Sikh and wears a turban. "To me, racism is real, it's something we do have to address, but I think on anti-Semitism, the level of misinformation, the level of hatred – it goes much deeper than just the average racism."

Uppal was in Israel for the fifth Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism, May 12 to 14.

"There's always discussion of 'let's broaden it,' but I think that dilutes it," Uppal told *The CJN*.

At the forum's opening event, "the representative from the United Nations, whenever he said 'anti-Semitism,' he said we [also] have to deal with... Islamophobia, and racism of all kinds. He kept doing it. That's... part of the problem with the UN. They're diluting themselves so much they're not going to end up solving anything.

"Anti-Semitism is unique," Uppal said. "On the Internet, in a day... there are 100,000 expressions of hatred. Of those, 80 per cent are anti-Semitic. This is a unique problem that requires unique solutions."

It is a growing problem everywhere, including back at home. "We are seeing a rise in incidents of anti-Semitism around the world, but disturbingly enough, we're seeing this in Canada as well."

Tim Uppal at the fifth Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism in Israel.

Not all anti-Semitic incidents are reported, he believes. "When someone gets hurt, you'd hope they'd go to the police, but I'm sure there are other times – whether it's vandalism that they've been able to clean up themselves, or verbal exchanges – that don't get reported."

Uppal, who has championed Jewish causes since he was elected in 2008, said that when he was growing up in Alberta, "Jews weren't even on the radar... It's very possible I had Jewish friends, but as a kid, I never knew it."

In 2010, given the opportunity to introduce a private member's bill, Uppal noted that Canada was the only Allied nation without a national Holocaust memorial. The National Holocaust Memorial Act passed unanimously, and the memorial will begin construction in Ottawa this year.

"I've been the victim of racism, but [with other types of racism], you do not see the same level of building up of a scenario which is absolutely, completely false. They showed an article today [at the forum] where Jews will kill puppies for the blood... to put into matzah.

"It's unbelievable. This building up of misinformation to create anti-Semitism is quite deliberate and thought-out... You don't see that in any other types of racism."

Uppal said this is also true of the BDS [boycott, divestment and sanctions] movement against Israel. "I had the opportunity to sit down with the CEO of Sodastream... Here's a company, the largest non-government employer of Palestinians, but because of the BDS movement, they have essentially had to lay them off and pull out."

On a previous trip to Israel, in June 2014, Uppal ascended the Temple Mount just months after Prime Minister Stephen Harper declined to do so, citing security reasons. "I really felt the significance of what a holy place this is," he said at the time, calling Muslim restrictions on Jewish prayer there "unjustifiable."

Hosted by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the three-day forum also hosted filmmaker Edward James Olmos at an event titled "We are One: Humanity Must Stand United Against Antisemitism." Sen. Linda Frum also attended the forum.

Forum events focused on online anti-Semitism, with representatives from Google, Facebook and other private companies meeting with government leaders and academics to discuss policy. Dealing with anti-Semitism as a separate category is a key step that many are reluctant to take.

But "governments that get it can be more successful," Uppal said. ■

Israel at centre of international diplomatic storm

LINDA GRADSTEIN
JERUSALEM

The Palestinian decision to internationalize their conflict with Israel seems to be paying off as Israel is coming under diplomatic pressure on several fronts at the same time.

The Vatican decision to recognize "Palestine" as a state, an expected French-sponsored resolution to the United Nations Security Council, and the possible expulsion of Israel from FIFA, the international soccer federation, are creating the sense that Israel is losing the diplomatic battle.

"There is a sense of erosion," a senior Israeli official told *The Media Line* on condition of anonymity. "We see more and more countries and organizations buying into the unilateral logic of the Palestinians."

But he warned, ultimately it will not be possible to create a Palestinian state without Israeli approval.

"No matter how much the Palestinians obtain in declarations and international organizations it can't replace negotiations," he said. "Palestinians have given up on negotiations and we believe it's a huge mistake."

The latest decision by the Vatican to sign a treaty with the "state of Palestine", concerning the Holy See's activities in the Palestinian Authority, came before a weekend meeting between the Pope and the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. It is an important symbolic move by the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics. At the UN, the Vatican and Palestine are both considered non-member observer states.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

OPINION

Longing for 'America!'

Sagi Melamed

I was first introduced to the "America!" brand as a kindergartener on Kibbutz Ramat Yochanan, thanks to Elazar "Luzer" Halivni, whose ceramics studio was located at the junction of the main road to the kibbutz and the path to the swimming pool.

One-eyed and misanthropic, Luzer avoided company, but he loved children's laughter. When we ran to the pool, he would come out with a garden hose and spray us with cold water as we laughed and shouted, "America! America!" Refreshing water streaming over me on a steamy day was the first "America!" I knew.

For us, America represented all that was good and successful. American products were high quality. In American movies, the hero always won. America was always on the side of justice. I personally put the theory of "American quality" into practice: I married an American woman and received an American education.

But in recent years, America no longer looks like the "America!" of my childhood.

"It used to be us," lamented journalist Thomas Friedman, writing about the loss of American leadership in innovation to new global players. I am less concerned with America's decline in leadership in innovation than by its decline in leadership in global welfare and justice. America has climbed down from the watchtower of the world, but a class needs its teacher, an army unit its commander, a business its CEO. States need governments and the world needs a leader. International relations, like nature, abhors a vacuum – when the good retreats, the bad advances. A world without a strong America that recognizes its global responsibilities and shoulders them is a world that is less safe.

Israel also needs a strong, supportive America, whereas America does not need Israel. But need is one thing, obligation another. Even Israelis who excel at self-criticism concede that Israel is America's little sister, in terms of shared values and worldview, whereas the other countries in our neighbourhood are not even distant cousins. They may be treaty partners, but they are certainly not family. We only have to look back a very few years to the "Arab Spring" to see that the promise of democracy, human rights, women's rights and enlightenment, dissipated like clouds in the hot Middle Eastern sky, causing inestimable damage.

From Thomas Friedman's interview of President Barack Obama on April 5, in which Obama presented his Iran doctrine, we can draw three conclusions:

First, that Obama may truly believe that Iran will keep its side of the agreement to limit its nuclear power, but anyone who has ever traded with Iranians will argue the opposite.

Second, that although some see Obama as anti-Israel, I believe Obama sees himself as our friend. But a friendship is not family. If the relationship were less "friends" and more "family," the lack of chemistry between the two countries could be overcome. Friends change, family is forever.

And last, that ironically, the asset of liberal, modern, intellectual values that Obama brought to the White House has become, in foreign relations, a liability. This is particularly true in its attitude to Israel.

I recently discussed the following question with my friend L., a leader of the Canadian Jewish community: What would it take for American public concern to return to the issues of existence, national identity, cohesion and willingness to sacrifice? Would it take (God forbid a million times) another, even more cruel, 9/11-style attack to turn American attention from the cost of gas, the job market and the Dow Jones, back to the values that made it the "America!" we all admired and wanted to emulate: the America of the Declaration of Independence, the Wild West, the moon landing, the defeat of the Nazis; America the proud, feeling itself obliged and willing to work hard and even risk the lives of its citizens and soldiers, in its role as the leader of the free world?

Does America, somewhat like its little sister in the Middle East (which is united mainly when under attack), need a scourge to make it "America!"? ■

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Vatican recognition of PA is important, analysts say

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

In a statement, PLO Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi welcomed the decision.

"The significance of this decision goes beyond the political and legal into the symbolic and moral domains and sends a message to all people of conscience that the Palestinian people deserve the right to self-determination, formal recognition, freedom, and statehood," she said in a statement.

Some Israeli analysts said the move by the Vatican, while purely symbolic, was nevertheless important.

"It's a big deal because the Pope is the spiritual leader of hundreds of millions of Christians," Eytan Gilboa of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University said. "Christians are being murdered all over the Middle East but what is important for him is the particular recognition of Palestine."

But others said that Israel should be more concerned about its relationship with the U.S., than with the Vatican.

"This has basically been Vatican policy all along," Amiel Ungar, an Israeli commentator said. "The big enchilada is how much the Obama administration is behind the European moves."

Pope Francis with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, right, and then-Israeli president Shimon Peres in the Vatican gardens in June, 2014. The Vatican recently recognized "Palestine" as a state. HAIM ZACH/GPO/FLASH90

France is expected to soon present a new resolution to the UN Security Council to recognize Palestine. In the past, the U.S. vetoed all such resolutions, but after the election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said it will "reassess" that decision.

The guidelines of Netanyahu's new government does not include any mention of a Palestinian state, a change from the previous government. A group of former European leaders and diplomats has called for more pressure on Israel, and charges that EU political and financial aid has achieved nothing but the "preservation of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and imprisonment of Gaza."

At the same time, the Palestinians have been campaigning in FIFA, the international soccer federation, to suspend Israel's membership or to level sanctions on Israel for limiting the free movement of Palestinian soccer players and refusing them permission to travel abroad. The 200 national leagues in FIFA are expected to vote on the resolution in the coming weeks.

All of this is expected to lead to growing international pressure on Israel, but it could also end up backfiring and encouraging Palestinians to stay away from the negotiating table.

"Israel has only three cards it can use with the Palestinians – giving up territory, international recognition, and the release of Palestinian prisoners," Eytan Gilboa said. "But if they get the recognition without any negotiations, what motivation do they have to negotiate with Israel?" ■

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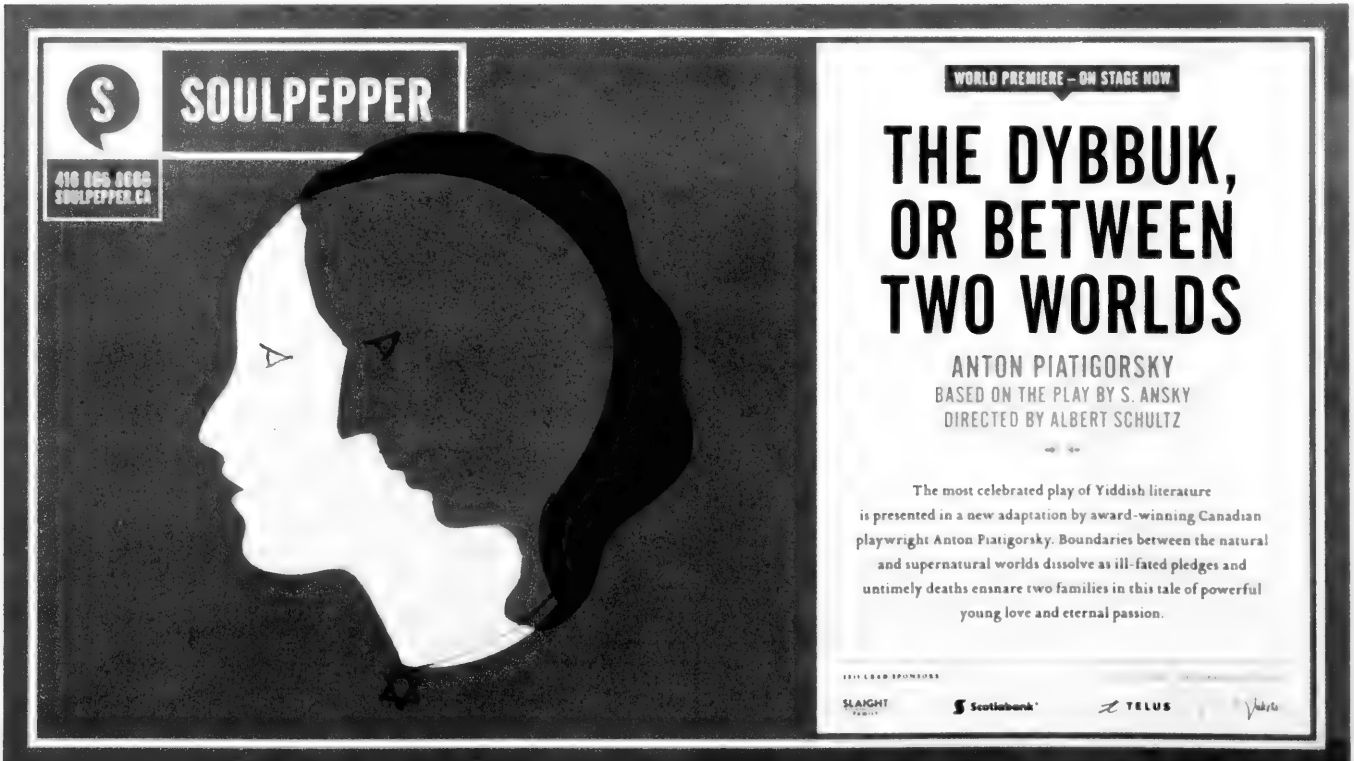
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Who's who in Israel's 34th government

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud) is beginning his third consecutive term (fourth overall) as the country's leader. Netanyahu also currently holds the foreign affairs and communications portfolios.

Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon (Likud) will continue to lead Israel's defense establishment as he has done since 2013.

Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon (Kulanu) took a break from politics in 2012 before forming his own party in the election, running on a socio-economic platform.

Education Minister Naftali Bennett (Jewish Home) served as Netanyahu's chief of staff in 2006 before quitting the job and winning the leadership of Jewish Home in 2012.

Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked (Jewish Home) is a first-time minister who has been a member of Knesset since 2013. A secular woman from Tel Aviv, she stands out from the party's largely religious base.

Transportation and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz (Likud) has been in the Knesset since 1998. He has served as transportation minister since 2009.

Interior Minister Silvan Shalom (Likud) has been a member of Knesset for 23 years and served as finance minister and foreign minister in the governments of Ariel Sharon.

Deputy Health Minister Yaakov Litzman (United Torah Judaism) will be the de facto health minister, a position he held between 2009 and 2013.

Construction and Housing Minister Yoav Galant (Kulanu) was head of the IDF Southern Command between 2005-2010.

Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev (Likud) is a first-time minister who has seen a meteoric rise through the ranks of Likud.

Economy Minister and Minister for the Development of the Negev and the Galilee, Aryeh Deri (Shas) served as interior minister from 1988-1993. In 1999 he was convicted of accepting bribes, fraud and breach of trust and served two years in prison.

Energy and Infrastructures Minister Yuval Steinitz (Likud) has been in the Knesset since 1999. He has served as finance minister and intelligence minister.

Absorption Minister and Strategic Affairs Minister Ze'ev Elkin (Likud) immigrated from Ukraine in 1990 and was first elected to the Knesset in 2006.

Science and Technology Minister Danny Danon (Likud) entered the Knesset in 2009.

Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel (Jewish Home) served as construction and housing minister in the previous government.

Environmental Protection Minister Avi Gabai (Kulanu) is not a member of the Knesset. He helped Kahlon form Kulanu.

Minister of Gender Equality, Minorities and Senior Citizens Gila Gamliel (Likud) has served in the Knesset since 2003.

Religious Affairs Minister David Azoulay (Shas) has been a member of Knesset since 1996.

Minister without portfolio Benny Begin (Likud) has served in the past as science minister as well as a member of Netanyahu's security cabinet. He is the son of prime minister Menachem Begin.

Education Minister Naftali Bennett

Welfare Minister Haim Katz (Likud) is also the head of the Israel Aerospace Industries Workers Union. He has served in the Knesset on and off since 1999.

Public Security Minister and Tourism Minister Yariv Levin (Likud) has been in the Knesset since 2009.

Minister without portfolio Ofir Akunis (Likud), a longtime ally of the prime minister and former Netanyahu spokesman.

Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely (Likud) will be the foreign minister until Netanyahu hands the post to a new coalition partner. Netanyahu is the serving foreign minister, but Hotovely will manage the day-to-day work and make major decisions affecting Israel's diplomatic corps. ■

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Jewish Life

Israeli krav maga is more than a self-defence system

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

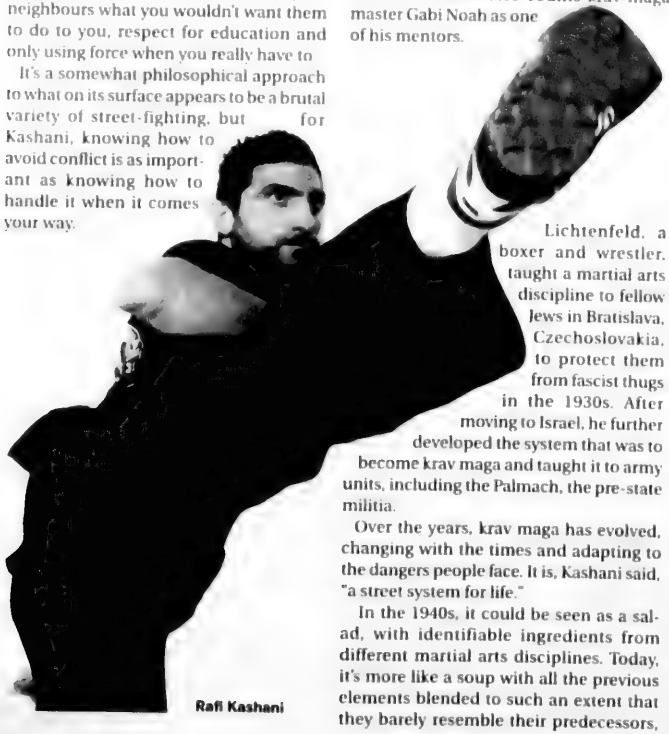
Krav maga translates from the Hebrew as "contact fighting," more or less, but at its heart, the Israeli combat system tries to avoid conflict.

In fact, explains Rafi Kashani, if you examine it closely, krav maga embodies some fundamental Jewish values, including preserving life, not doing to your neighbours what you wouldn't want them to do to you, respect for education and only using force when you really have to.

It's a somewhat philosophical approach to what on its surface appears to be a brutal variety of street-fighting, but for Kashani, knowing how to avoid conflict is as important as knowing how to handle it when it comes your way.

"We do everything not to get hurt, and we use the knowledge only to use force when it's necessary," he said.

Kashani is founder of IKM Krav Maga Canada – Academy of Self Defence, as well as its main instructor. Now 33, he's been perfecting his skills at the sport since he was a 10-year-old living in central Tel Aviv. He learned from one of the sport's first instructors, Eli Ben Ami, who in turn was taught by krav maga's founder, Imi Lichtenfeld. Kashani also counts krav maga master Gabi Noah as one of his mentors.



Rafi Kashani

Lichtenfeld, a boxer and wrestler, taught a martial arts discipline to fellow Jews in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, to protect them from fascist thugs in the 1930s. After moving to Israel, he further developed the system that was to become krav maga and taught it to army units, including the Palmach, the pre-state militia.

Over the years, krav maga has evolved, changing with the times and adapting to the dangers people face. It is, Kashani said, "a street system for life."

In the 1940s, it could be seen as a salad, with identifiable ingredients from different martial arts disciplines. Today, it's more like a soup with all the previous elements blended to such an extent that they barely resemble their predecessors, he said.

Krav maga offers a "toolkit" of techniques that give people the wherewithal to defend themselves. Though it has evolved into "a soup," what's left is a powerful combat system that is designed to protect everyone from a senior accosted on the street to a professional providing security services to VIPs, Kashani said.

He has two Toronto-area studios where he presents the full krav maga "toolkit" to students. One is in Mississauga, the other in Vaughan. The Vaughan facility features a 2,000-square-foot space with floor mats, heavy bags for striking, padded shields for protection and even a small rock wall for climbing. That works muscles other than those used in fighting, Kashani explained.

People train in their everyday clothes, like T-shirts and sweat pants, because when trouble comes calling, that's what you'll be wearing. His students range in age from four to 74 and they come from all backgrounds. He has even trained police officers and recruits about to enter the police force.

Krav maga is particularly relevant for law enforcement officers, he said. "It teaches a more efficient way to arrest, to search or defend in a situation."

In approaching a dangerous situation, students are trained to observe, evaluate and find the best way of defusing the situation, Kashani said.

For Kashani, krav maga provided an escape route from a life of petty crime that started when he was only 10. Already running with a bad crowd, Kashani was caught by police trying to pry open a car window. His mom rescued him by hooking him up with Ben Ami, who took him under his wing and trained him in krav maga. Kashani spent long hours in his studio, working on his technique, getting fit and doing his best to please his coach. It kept him off the streets and out of trouble.

At 14, Kashani completed an instructor's course and by 18, he was an expert. He served in the military for five years – he won't say which unit he served in, only that he used krav maga – and in 2005, he left the army.

Later that year he moved to Canada. His first job was selling Dead Sea products in malls around town. He got married, had a son, was divorced.

Eager to find a more active line of work, he switched jobs. He worked in the construction industry until he suffered a severe hand injury. After reconstructive surgery, he was told he wouldn't be able to make a fist again. But not content to take no for an answer, "I decided to rehabilitate myself," he said.

Part of the rehab included trips back to Israel to train. He employed some of the self-defence drills taught by Ben Ami to recover motion in his hand. It was very painful, but it worked. His hand is now almost completely healed, Kashani said.

As he got better, he began to offer private lessons. Word spread, and the number of people eager for instruction grew. One thing led to the other, and he now has the two studios on the go.

Although krav maga is known as an Israeli martial art system, Palestinian students train at his Mississauga studio.

"They see Israel now in a new light," Kashani said.

They even wear Kashani's Israel krav maga T-shirts proudly, showing that krav maga "is a bridge for peace," he said.

Actress says playing Anne Frank is 'a rite of passage'

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Sara Farb did not have to look far for inspiration when she heard she would be playing Anne Frank at this year's Stratford Festival.

Farb's grandmother, Helen Yermus, and Farb's great-grandmother endured the Stutthof concentration camp and survived. Like Anne Frank, Yermus kept a diary as a young girl.

"It's been ingrained in my upbringing," Farb tells *The CJN* in Stratford, during the week of the show's dress rehearsal. "I thankfully know quite a bit about [my grandmother's] experience and I'm glad about that.

"I would understand if she didn't want to talk about it, but it's so important that she does."

Farb and her grandmother will speak in a program before the performance on June 10 about Yermus' experiences in the Shoah. Yermus was born in Lithuania and resided in the Kovno Ghetto before her transfer to Stutthof.

"It's so important to expose everybody to as many survivors as possible," Farb says. "I'm so, so proud that she's agreed to share [her story] with everybody and I'm so amazed by her."

Farb considers playing Anne Frank "a rite of passage" as a Jewish actor.

Now, she will play the character in two different shows: in *The Diary of Anne Frank* at Stratford's Avon Theatre, which opens May 28, and in *The Secret Annex* at The Segal Centre in Montreal next winter. *The Secret Annex* envisions an alternate universe where Anne survived and is trying to get her diary published.

Jillian Keiley, who helmed *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* at last year's festival, directs the Stratford production.

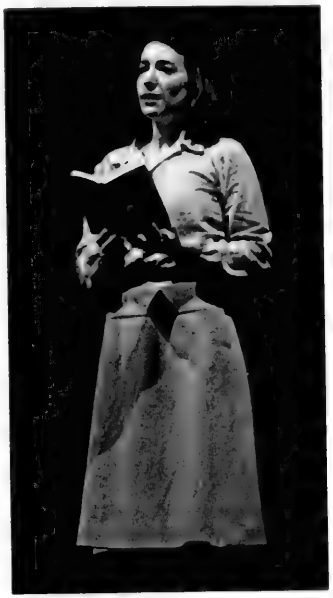
To prepare for the role, Farb read Anne's diary various times, as well as other biographies. Still, she says the production is not as much a re-enactment of the story of Anne's two-year stay hidden in the Achterhuis, a secret annex above her father's office, but a telling that deals with how the story has endured through the generations.

"The way we open the show is widely unconventional," Farb says. "It lifts the curse of treating it like reverential, historical presentation. It becomes much, much easier to insert ourselves into the experiences of these people."

Farb is now one of Stratford's most in-demand actors, after well-received festival turns as Cordelia in *King Lear* and Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*. This season, beyond her role as Anne Frank, she also stars in *She Stoops to Conquer* (opening June 4) and *The Last Wife* (opening August 14).

When Farb began rehearsals for *The Diary of Anne Frank* back in February, she was at the tail end of *R-E-B-E-C-C-A*, a one-woman show she wrote and performed at Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto. The show was about Farb's sister, who has a developmental delay, and the stigmas of living with a disability.

"I had to condition my brain to exist in such different ways of thinking," Farb says, adding that it was a relief to be around other actors again. "It really made me appreciate the necessity of having a company."



Sara Farb in Stratford's production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. DAVID HOU PHOTO

Meanwhile, the play's staging coincides with an exhibition on the Holocaust and Anne's story. Featuring artifacts from the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the exhibit will open at the Stratford Perth Museum on June 6.

Even with three productions on her plate this summer and fall, Farb says she still has her mind on writing plays – another element that connects her with the young Anne.

"To have a finger in different pots is comforting," she says. "It still makes me feel at ease to know that I'm capable of something if this all falls through."

Otto, Anne's father and the family's only survivor, helped bring Anne's diary to publication. Originally printed in 1947, *The Diary of a Young Girl* has sold more than 30 million copies to date and been translated to more than 60 languages.

Farb, 28, is likely one of the oldest actors to play Anne, who died in the Bergen-Belzen concentration camp at just 15. However, the young woman possessed a maturity and eloquence that bridges the age gap, Farb says.

"I don't think I ever really clued in to how prophetic she was, or how wise," she says. "In her writing she'll alternate between such beautiful metaphorical imagery, and then trash Mrs. van Daan for something so trivial and show what a girl she is.

"Now as an adult, I can appreciate why that's so remarkable in a young person. She's just such a special person." ■

The Diary of Anne Frank, directed by Jillian Keiley, runs at Stratford Festival May 28 to Oct. 10. www.stratfordfestival.ca

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Healthier ways to enjoy the holiday

AHUVA MAGDER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

It is traditional to eat dairy foods on Shavuot, when the Jewish People received the Ten Commandments, to commemorate a time when the Jewish People did not yet have the halachic dietary laws of milk and meat.

The tradition of eating dairy in lieu of meat can give us the illusion that we are "eating lighter," giving us the leeway to weigh down our meals with heavy creams and cheeses. And as you can imagine, the heavier the dairy, the heavier we find ourselves after the holiday!

Shavuot doesn't have to be a nutrition disaster.

Though the cheesecakes and blintzes that are normally the stars of the show are high in saturated fat, dairy foods like low fat Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and milk are good sources of calcium and vitamin D for strong bones, and protein, which helps with muscle repair and keeps you feeling full so that you don't reach for that second (or fourth) slice. So, instead of celebrating how many varieties of cheesecake slices we can eat, why not take this opportunity to celebrate healthy, calcium-rich foods and bring them into the spotlight.

That's not to say that no treats are allowed. But when trying to maintain a healthy weight over the two days of Shavuot plus Shabbat, remember to celebrate a holiDAY. That means choosing just one day or one meal when you will eat your favourite Shavuot foods.

For many people, saying "absolutely no" to all our favourites over the holiday leads to a frantic faceplant into a full cheesecake, and then some. And, too often, having "just a taste" of the desserts at every meal really translates into a combination of eating a full serving of dessert, yet feeling deprived at the same time.

To avoid both of these pitfalls, choose one meal to be your "holiday" meal. If you love your cheesecake, have a slice. If cheese-laden lasagna is your favourite, indulge in that! And as for all other meals, keep them as close as possible to what you would eat on any given Sunday.

Another common holiday mistake is skipping breakfast.

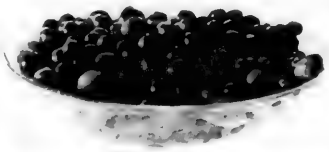
If you're looking for a couple of hundred "extra" calories to spend on lunch, dinner and dessert, skipping breakfast might seem like the perfect opportunity, and it will certainly feel that way until lunchtime, when you're hungry enough to gnaw someone's arm off – and then all good choices go out the window!

Sit down to a dairy filled, protein rich breakfast like overnight oats (see recipe) to keep you feeling full. This can make it easier to turn down the more calorie-rich options later on in the day.

Moderation is key.

The good news is that even if you do over-indulge on this holiday, you can always get out and enjoy the long days and beautiful weather. While the weather is warm, resist the urge to nap and get outside! Walking is a great way to burn off some extra calories, so don't be afraid to make plans to walk over to visit friends who live further away. Having to get home is a great motivation for walking!

As always, holidays and sharing meals are about enjoying being with friends and family, many of whom are also trying to watch their weight. Deciding from the beginning that this will be a time of healthy eating, you can agree to turn down sweets at every meal. Trust me, your friends and family will thank you too!



Overnight Oats

Serves one, but you're going to want to multiply!

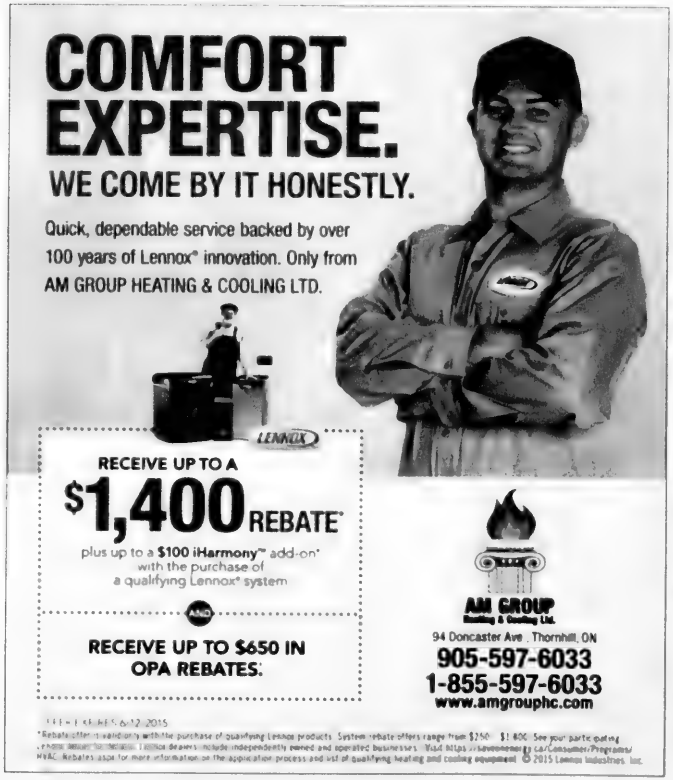
- ❑ ½ cup oatmeal uncooked
- ❑ ½ cup low fat Greek yogurt
- ❑ ½ cup defrosted berries
- ❑ ½ cup milk

Combine ingredients in a cup or bowl. Leave in the fridge overnight and top as desired!

Variations:
Top with ground walnuts and a sliced banana.

Use sliced apple, sprinkle cinnamon and a drizzle of honey.

Prepare with coconut Greek yogurt. Top with shredded coconut and sliced pineapple for "pina colada" in a bowl!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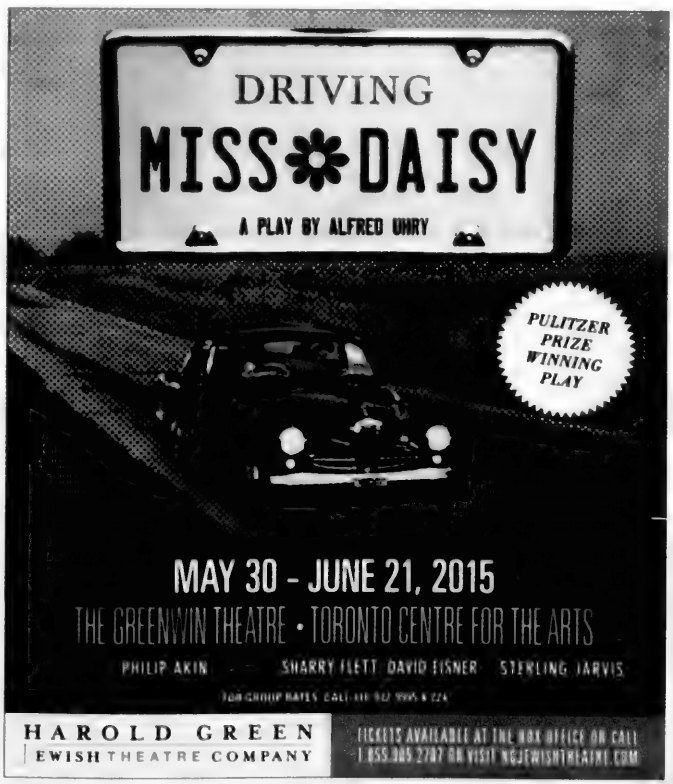
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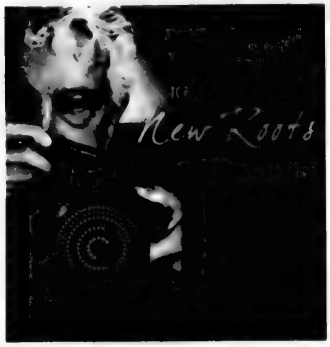
Eye on Arts

by Bill Gladstone

AL GILBERT PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHS ON VIEW AT BETH TZEDEC MUSEUM



Toronto's Jewish Mosaic: New Roots is an exhibition of portraits by acclaimed Toronto-based photographer **Al Gilbert** that opens here this week.

Al Gilbert's father, **Nathan Gilbert**, opened the Elite Photography Studio on Queen Street West in 1922. Al began working there in the 1940s and took over the business when his father retired. Known for his photographs of many Toronto families and institutions, Gilbert's current show features portraits of Jewish Torontonians originally from more than 50 countries.

Opens at Beth Tzedec Reuben & Helene Dennis Museum, 1700 Bathurst St., Thursday, May 21, 7:30 p.m. 416-781-3511.

• • •

Jewish Film Society: Toronto Jewish Film Society and The Yiddish Vinkl Toronto present *Kol Nidre* with *70 Hester Street*. **Joseph Seiden's** long-lost *Kol Nidre*, part musical and part melodrama, offers an unparalleled glimpse into Yiddish New York in the 1930s; it is "delightful, comically dark, and unforgettable."

70 Hester Street is a tribute to the director's childhood home in a former synagogue on the Lower East Side. With guest speaker **Shirley Kumove**. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, $15, $10. Sunday, June 7, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Box office opens one hour before screening times.

• • •

Attention Playwrights: The Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre and the Segal Centre for Performing Arts in Montreal invite playwrights to submit works for the 2015 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition.

The winning play receives an eight-hour workshop involving a professional director, up to seven actors, and a public staged reading presentation. Submission deadline is July 2. Applicants must be Canadian (but not necessarily Jewish). esthera@mnjcc.org, 416-924-6211, ext. 606, www.mnjcc.org/2015CJPC

• • •

Lectures on Agnon: Rabbi Jeffrey Saks, editor of the S. Y. Agnon Library at the Toby Press, gives two free public lectures in Toronto to mark the 45th anniversary of the passing of Israel's Shmuel Yoseph Agnon, the only Nobel Prize winner for Hebrew literature.

Kehillat Shaarei Torah Congregation, 2640 Bayview Ave., Tuesday, June 8, 8 p.m.; and Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, 613 Clark Ave. W., Wednesday, June 9, 8 p.m.

• • •

Yiddish Workshop: Yiddish instructor **Dr. Miriam Trinh** leads an all-day intensive interactive Yiddish workshop on Yiddish women writers, sponsored by the UJA Federation's committee for Yiddish and the Toronto Workmen's Circle. Trinh teaches summer programs in Yiddish for YIVO and Tel Aviv University. $20, includes kosher lunch; please register by May 21. Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Tuesday, May 26, 10:30 to 4:30 p.m. Contact Ed Segalowitz, 416-631-5702, esegalowitz@ujafed.org

• • •

Names in the News: Shaina Silver-Baird, **Miriam Key** and **Joshua Skye Engel** are members of **Crooked House Road**, a band with a folk, pop and blues sound. Skye Engel is a cantorial intern at Beth Habonim Congregation. The band celebrates the release of its new album with guest **Ken Whiteley** at the Cadillac Lounge, May 23, 8 to 10 p.m. $10, $12 at the door. www.crookedhouseroad.com

• • •

Arts in Brief

• Koffler Centre of the Arts presents *Ballad of the Burning Star* by London-based Theatre Ad Infinitum. Imported from the U.K., this provocative drag cabaret show explores the psychological impact of the Israel-Palestine conflict. $20, $35, $50. Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St. W. May 19 to 24. kofflerarts.org, 416-538-0988

• **Katherine Barber** presents "Jewish Contributions to the World of Ballet." Series $40, drop-in $16. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays, June 1, 8 and 15, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• **Resa's Pieces Concert Band**, conducted by founder **Resa Kochberg**, performs a wide repertoire from classical, popular show tunes, Broadway and more. $25. George Weston Recital Hall, Toronto Centre for the Arts, Tuesday, June 16, 8 p.m. 647-295-2345, info@resaspieces.org

• • •

At the Galleries

I Work Here, an exhibition of photographs by **Benjamin Rondel**, depicts obscure places of work in Belgium, Canada, Cuba and the U.K. Miles Nadal JCC Gallery, May 21 to 28. ■

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The oldest existing synagogue in Portugal is reborn

DON AND LINDA FREEDMAN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Have you ever visited an ancient synagogue and cried with joy at its beauty?

We had the opposite experience in Azores in the fall of 2006. What we saw brought tears and anger. The place was on the verge of collapse. Termites had been feasting, water had been pouring through holes in the walls and ceilings, and stairways, floors and window casings were rotting.

The sanctuary with its beautiful Ark, bimah and dark, wooden benches is located behind what was the rabbi's family's living quarters. Light from the windows of the balcony and the high ceiling should have offered the feeling of tranquillity one expects at a house of worship. But in this case, the light revealed the utter neglect and total disregard for the ceremonial and religious objects. We lifted the seats of the benches where we found tallitot, tfillin and prayer books covered with rodent droppings, mould and dirt. We found untold documents in similar condition in cabinets and drawers. It was a disgrace, literally a crying shame.

This was the Sahar Hassamain (Gates of Heaven) Synagogue in Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel, Azores, Portugal.

We were shown around by José De Almeida Mello, historian and champion of preserving Azorean culture and heritage. He had recently been assigned the monumental task and responsibility of co-ordinating the effort to restore the synagogue and preserve the heritage and culture of the early Azorean Jewish presence and its impact on the history of the islands.

It is believed, though undocumented, that the Jewish people came to the Azores, a cluster of nine volcanic islands in the North Atlantic Ocean, during the 15th and 16th centuries. The first documented settlement of Jews began in 1818 with the largest community in Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel. There were 150 Jewish people residing in Sao Miguel, Terceira and Faial in the 19th century.

Today there is one Jew, Jorge Delmar Soares, who resides in Ponta Delgada. When we arrive each winter, the Jewish population increases to three.

The synagogues of Terciera and Faial are long gone. Ponta Delgada had five synagogues and nearby Vila Franca do Campo had one. The Sahar Hassamain Synagogue, built in 1836, is the only one remaining and has the distinction of being the oldest existing synagogue in Portugal.

Mello worked tirelessly with diligence and devotion to bring all public and private stakeholders together. In November 2009 he wrote and published his book, *Sahar Hassamain Synagogue in Ponta Delgada*, which became the catalyst for progress.

Reborn Ponta Delgada Synagogue

In March, we met Mello at Rua Do Brum 14-16, this time with tears of joy. The façade of the synagogue maintains its anonymity. Painted white, as is customary, with a gold accent at street level, the interior beautifully preserves the past with an eye towards the future. The new museum and archive spaces are bright and airy. The restoration of all elements of the sanctuary are exquisite. Thanks to donations, the new museum and archives have a representative collection of documents, letters, books and religious artifacts and the sanctuary now has five Torahs and new prayer books and Bibles. The inauguration and grand opening of the newly refurbished synagogue took place on April 23.

Mello's office is now fittingly located in the synagogue overlooking the sanctuary as he now administers the activities of the shul. The opening hours are 1 to 4:15 p.m. Monday to Friday.

We also visited the Jewish cemetery in 2006, which was in terrible condition with crumbling monuments, overgrown cactus, litter and weeds. Fortunately it was repaired and cleaned some years ago. It's located on Rua Santa Clara surrounded by a concrete wall and an outer wall of an abandoned fish factory. Approximately 160 people are buried there.

We suggest you make your visit part of a larger Jewish heritage tour of Portugal: in Porto, the Kadoorie Synagogue; in Lisbon, the Kehilat Beit Israel and Shaare Tikvah Synagogues; in Belmonte, the Bet Eliahu Synagogue and the Synagogue of Tomar. If our experience is any indication, you will be warmly welcomed by all. ■

Don and Linda Freedman have written about the synagogues of Portugal and much more on their website www.thetravelzine.com

The syngagoue was 'a disgrace, literally a crying shame.' DON AND LINDA FREEDMAN PHOTOS

Sata International operates direct flights from Toronto (and Boston) to Ponta Delgada and the Portuguese mainland. The airline also has flights between the Azorean islands, Madeira and key European destinations.
The median temperatures range from 16C in the winter to 24C in the summer. Situated in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, less than 4,000 km from New York and 1,400 km from Lisbon, it is a 5-1/2 flight from Toronto to Ponta Delgada. São Miguel, the largest island of the archipelago.

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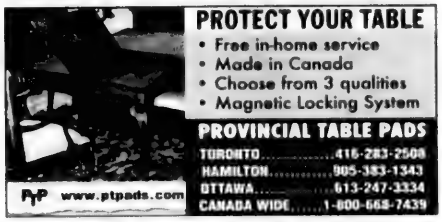

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New memoir shows nuances of chassidic and secular life

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

All Who Go Do Not Return
by Shulem Deen
Graywolf Press

There can be a certain voyeuristic pleasure in reading accounts of those who've left extremist religious sects.

This is evidenced by the popularity of memoirs like Deborah Feldman's *Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots* (2012) and Leah Vincent's *Cut Me Loose: Sin and Salvation After My Ultra-Orthodox Girlhood* (2014).

These books offer the alluring prospect of gaining an unfettered, if subjective, glimpse into a world ordinarily sealed off by stringent codes of propriety and ideology and, somewhat perversely, the chance to be absorbed without consequence into a society governed by zeal.

This said, Shulem Deen's new memoir *All Who Go Do Not Return*, which chronicles the writer's life in and eventual expulsion from an insular chassidic Skverer community, leaves the reader with few illusions about the challenges, but also the joys, of ultra-Orthodox and secular societies.

From a liberal Jewish perspective, the environment depicted shows Jewish law taken to radical, sometimes cruel, extremes.

And yet, Deen, now 40 and a secular resident of hipster Brooklyn, writes of losing his faith, and ultimately his family, without demonizing those that came to shun him or romanticizing modern life.

Of the clandestine drives he used to take from the Skverer village of New Square, outside New York City, into Greenwich Village, he mused, "Here too, I was sure, there were unhappy lives, stalled careers, loves lost...Here too there was the need to conform, with social codes just as arbitrary and stifling. Yet I would return, again and again, drawn to the mystique of freedom."

A genuine believer for years, Deen started out as a disaffected adolescent, the product of a chassidic family that he vaguely portrays as not quite stable – where the book disappoints is in Deen's choppy references to his childhood and nuclear family.

Raised in Brooklyn's Borough Park neighbourhood, Deen tried to conceal from his cheder teachers what he perceived as the humiliating fact of his father not allying with any particular chassidic group – neither Breslover, Satmar nor Skverer.

At 13, Deen chose to attend a Skverer yeshiva in Williamsburg, Brooklyn (from which he was eventually expelled for truancy) because "they weren't very selective and administered no entrance exam."

He was later sent to a yeshiva in Montreal where the Satmar rabbis nearly kicked him out for insolence, but gave him a second chance after he begged for forgiveness.

Deen then committed himself to a life of piety and scholarship and was permitted to re-enter the Skverer yeshiva, where he studied before attending the group's flagship institution in New Square.

Known for its rigidity, the Skverer sect originated in Ukraine and reassembled post Holocaust in the village of New Square, where Skverers comprise most of the less than 10,000 chassidic inhabitants.

Skverers live highly regulated lives dictated by their rebbe, speak only Yiddish and scorn modern technology.

Even as a wayward teen, Deen was transformed by a spiritually uplifting New Square *tish* – a Shabbat gathering involving singing, dancing and eating food passed from the hand of the rebbe. He writes:

"Here was the ecstasy and the joy. Here was all that I had been told we Chassidim once had and lost. 'The teaching of the Baal Shem Tov have been forgotten,' the old rebbe of Satmar had famously said, but here among the Skverers, they appeared not to be forgotten at all."

For nearly two decades Deen was, outwardly at least, a conscientious member of the Skverer community, but over time he was assailed by doubts – about the primacy of the rebbe, the legitimacy of the Torah as the word of God, the restrictions placed on accessing contemporary sources of information and the lack of secular education available to Skverers, which made it nearly impossible to earn a decent wage.

He described the awkwardness of being pressured, at 18, to marry a woman he'd only met for seven minutes.

Upon confessing his reservations to his "groom instructor," he was told, "A wife is not a friend. A wife is not something to think about excessively…A wife is there to assist with one's service to God, nothing more."

Shulem Deen then, as a Skverer Chassid (left) and now (right), as a secular Brooklynite.

Deen doesn't pin the dissolution of his faith on a single event, but describes a years-long process of surreptitious exposure to outside influences – radio, television, the Internet, books – and of coming to view the Bible as a text that "had the markings of human rather than divine authorship… Beautiful, intricate, layered in poetry and metaphor and heart-stopping drama, but human nonetheless."

He writes eloquently of desperately wishing his beliefs would return despite realizing that, "like a broken porcelain dish, the piece might be glued back together and the dish might hold for a while but soon enough it would break again, along that very same crack."

After finally getting a divorce and leaving New Square, Deen's newfound sense of freedom is tempered by the sorrow of losing his children, who appear to be influenced by community members to sever contact with him.

Even in his most painful recollections, Deen deftly captures the nuances of both his old and new lives, treating his nostalgia for the faith that once anchored him with no less reverence than the pleasures he finds in modern society: secular education, friendships, dating and writing professionally.

At a Shabbat dinner with fellow ex-Orthodox friends, Deen describes a moment of elevation similar to the one he experienced at his first Skverer *tish*, evoking the bittersweet experience of his transition:

"Soon we were singing, banging fists on our host's table in time to Chassidic songs from our youth…about the God we did not believe in and the Torah we did not follow. The songs were still beautiful, and we rose and rested our hands on another's shoulders…We'd made our choices and were proud of them and, despite the challenges, lived with few regrets."■

Oboist wins Ben Steinberg's Musical Legacy Award

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Ron Cohen Mann, the winner of this year's Ben Steinberg Musical Legacy Award, plays oboe, a double-reed instrument that's notoriously difficult to play but allows players a fair bit of control over the sound that's produced.

Oboists make their own reeds by hand – there's even a how-to book sold online – in order to create the instrument's sound, Cohen Mann said. "That puts you in a position of empowering you to create the sound, in whatever direction and esthetic that appeals to you."

He added that although the oboe is difficult to play he loves the challenge of performing on the instrument.

Israeli-born, Cohen Mann, 24, lived in the Netherlands with his family until he was 12, when they immigrated to Canada. While attending Seycove Secondary School in North Vancouver, he played piano in two jazz bands and accompanied a jazz choir on piano. He also played flute for a couple of years and then switched to oboe at 14.

"When I started oboe, I took it pretty seriously," he said, adding that his first teacher was Roger Cole, the principal oboist for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra.

At the time, Cohen Mann didn't know where the oboe would lead him, but he said he did have dreams of becoming a professional oboist. He joined Vancouver's Youth Orchestra, which he said was his "first opportunity to play with talented colleagues who ended up studying at conservatories and universities."

Cohen Mann studied for his bachelor's degree in music at the University of British Columbia, where he was awarded the UBC Medal in Music. He went on to earn a master's degree at the Mannes School of Music at The New School in New York, and is currently studying for an artist diploma at the Yale School of Music, in New Haven, Conn.

Cohen Mann has performed with the Manhattan Symphonie, L'Orchestre de la Francophonie, the National Academy Orchestra of Canada and Vancouver Metropolitan Orchestra, among others, and with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Koerner Hall in Toronto, and Maison Symphonique in Montreal. He's also active in solo and chamber music at frequent recitals.

"I'm very much a performer," Cohen Mann said, adding that as a child he used to put on puppet shows for friends and family. "I found a performer's voice in the oboe," he continued.

He was a prizewinner at the 2014 Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal Standard Life Competition 2014, and the winner of the Yamaha Young Performing Artists Competition 2013. "I came in with the mentality of just wanting to create beautiful music," he said. "Putting the music first and foremost is the best you can do."

Ron Cohen Mann

> *I found a performer's voice in the oboe*

The consummate performer also teaches with Yale School of Music's Music in Schools Initiative, and last year he was an oboe instructor at Yale. "I come from a long line of teachers," he said, adding that his mother, Michal, teaches psychology at the graduate level, and his grandmother, Judith, taught at the Shema Center for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired in Israel.

Toronto audiences can hear Cohen Mann play at a free May 27 recital at Temple Sinai. The temple established the musical legacy award 32 years ago. Named after Temple Sinai's former director of music, Ben Steinberg in 1996, the award aims to encourage the careers of young Jewish artists in the Canadian community as well as the performance of music by Jewish composers.

At the recital, Cohen Mann will perform oboe sonatas by Vivaldi and Henri Dutilleux, two fantasy pieces by Karl Nielson and a concerto in one movement by Eugene Goossens. Most concertos are written for a solo instrument and an orchestra, but the Goossens piece "was originally conceived for oboe and piano," Cohen Mann said. The recital also includes Jewish melodies by the Russian composer Joseph Achron. "He's done a transcription for violin and piano, which I'll be adjusting for oboe," Cohen Mann said

Accompanying Cohen Mann on piano will be Chatham, Ont., native Benjamin Smith. "He's wonderfully expressive. When I heard I was doing a recital in Toronto, he was the first person I thought of," Cohen Mann said. Cohen Mann and Smith perform at Temple Sinai on May 27 at 8 p.m. ■

For more information visit www.templesinai.net.

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What's New

MAY 21 - MAY 28

by Lila Sarick

More than 1,000 students, faculty, family and friends of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto Wallenberg campus, walked the track at Esther Shiner Stadium for 12 hours May 7-8 to raise money for the Canadian Cancer Society. The school raised a record-setting $159,800.

Thursday, May 21

GENOMICS FRONTIER
Genetic counsellor **Jill Davies** discusses "The genomics frontier," 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $15/$20. 416-635-5340, ext. 308, or louise@adathisrael.com

BAKE SALE
Enjoy a kosher, pre-Shavuot bake sale, benefiting Small Wonders, at 164 Shelborne Ave., Toronto, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. and 126 Renaissance Crt., Thornhill, 7:30-9:30 p.m. For more information, email bakesale@smallwonders.ca.

Saturday, May 23

SHAVUOT
Temple Sinai holds a young families' Havdalah celebration with dinner, 4-6 p.m. Family, $18/$22. Call 416-487-4161.

Temples Har Zion, Kol Ami and Neshamah Congregation hold a Tikkun Leil Shavuot at Temple Har Zion, 10:30 p.m.

Congregation Darchei Noam holds a sing-a-long for Shavuot and Yom Yerushalayim after Shabbat services, 1:30 p.m

Sunday, May 24

SHAVUOT
Meet biblical characters and enjoy a dairy lunch at 11 a.m., Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill.

Chabad of Thornhill Woods, 8808 Bathurst St., holds an ice cream party, 11 a.m. and 6:45 p.m.

Monday, May 25

SUSHI AND STUDY
Join Temple Kol Ami at Sano Sushi, 8143 Yonge St., to study Maimonides' laws of ethics. RSVP rabbistreiffer@kolami.ca

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of June 4 is May 22. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

Tuesday, May 26

LUNCH & LEARN
Howard Lichtman discusses "Marketing in the Jewish world," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15 p.m. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

TORAH THROUGH FEMALE EYES
Loretta Tanenbaum teaches "Torah through female eyes," 10-11:15 a.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. Today, "The hardening of Pharaoh's heart."

YIDDISH WOMEN WRITERS
Miriam Trinh presents a workshop on Yiddish women writers, 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. $20. RSVP by May 21 to 416-631-5702.

BOOK EVENT
Nora Gold discusses her novel *Fields of Exile*, 7:30 p.m., with National Council of Jewish Women, 4700 Bathurst St. $5/$10. 416-633-5100.

Wednesday, May 27

CHAMPAGNE WITH CHARLES
Butler **Charles MacPherson** shares his expertise, in support of the David Cornfield Melanoma Fund and Beth Tikvah Women. Boutiques open at 7 p.m.,presentation at 8 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. $30. 416-221-3433, ext. 353.

AUTHORS SERIES
Novelist **Sean Michaels** discusses his award-winning book *Us Conductors*, 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation. $15/$20. 416-635-5340, ext. 312.

BEN STEINBERG LEGACY CONCERT
Ron Cohen Mann performs in the Ben Steinberg Musical Legacy Award Concert, 8 p.m., Temple Sinai. Free.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
"Anger management: A Jewish perspective," is the topic discussed at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8 p.m. Sponsored by Jews for Judaism, 416-789-0020.

SHIR DELIGHT CONCERT
Toronto Jewish Chorus presents "Shir Delight 2015" with **Amy Sky, Mark Masri, Arbah b'Shir,** Hart House Theatre, 7:30 p.m. $35/$25. For tickets, www.TorontoJewishChorus.org

Thursday, May 28

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE
Stephen Berk discusses "The Second World War in historical perspective," May 28, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. May 29-31 he speaks at Beth Tzedec Congregation, Shabbat dinner, on "Putin the practice of power" (call to reserve by May 26); May 30, "A tale of two elections (Israel and U.S.A.)"; May 31, at 10 a.m., "After 70 years: Auschwitz and anti-Semitism."

Coming Events

PEACE OF MIND GALA
Peace of Mind, a program developed by the Israel Centre for the Treatment of Psycho-Trauma, holds a gala June 2 at The Warehouse. $118. For tickets, email pomcanada.com/tickets

VOLUNTEER IN ISRAEL
Learn about the program offered by Canadian American Active Retirees in Israel at an information meeting at Temple Emanu-El, June 2, 2 p.m. RSVP 416-665-2482.

TALENT IN CONCERT
Ken Chasen, whose songs and prayer melodies are sung in North America, England and Israel, performs June 6, 7:30 p.m. at Temple Har Zion. Tickets, 905-889-2252.

JEWISH BURIAL RECORDS
Nolan Altman discusses "JewishGen's Online Worldwide Burial Registry and the genealogical value of Jewish burial records," May 31, 10:30 a.m. at Temple Sinai. Sponsored by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto. www.jgstoronto.ca.

S.Y. AGNON LECTURES
Rabbi Jeffrey Saks discusses the work of the only Hebrew Literature Nobel Prize winner, S.Y. Agnon, June 8 at Kehillat Shaarei Torah, and June 9 at Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto Congregation, 8 p.m.

ISRAEL GUIDE DOG BENEFIT
Randy Bachman performs at a benefit for the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind, June 9, 7:30 p.m., Koerner Hall. For tickets, 855-985-2787 or www.rcmusic.ca

HIGH PARK WALK
Canadian Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel holds a free guided nature walk in High Park, June 14, 10:30 a.m. RSVP by June 1, spnicanada@gmail.com

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

IMMIGRATION AND SPONSORSHIP

Lea Soibelman, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, discusses "Canadian immigration and sponsorship," June 3, 6:30 p.m. (in Russian) and June 10, 6:30 p.m. (in English). Day Centre for Seniors, 1600 Steeles Ave. W. Limited caregiver respite and transportation available. 416-635-2900, ext. 498 or 499.

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs. Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted.

- High conflict divorce: a workshop for parents to develop strategies to deal with a high conflict situation. Not for individuals in an abusive situation. May 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Lebovic JCC, 9600 Bathurst St.
- Effective Parenting: a 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-10. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m.
- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD: a 4-session group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m.

JEWISH FOSTER PARENTS

Jewish children need Jewish foster parents. To learn more, call 416-638-7800.

BEREAVED JEWISH FAMILIES

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call Beth Feffer, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or email bfeffer@jfandcs.com

For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9. May 20, audiologist **Tracy Saunders** discusses hearing loss, noon. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC.** Social games club, May 21, 11 a.m. Bring your lunch and stay for a lecture on "Sherlock Holmes, Arthur Conan Doyle and the Jewish Connection," 1:30 p.m. $4. May 28, **Janice Masur** discusses "Growing up Jewish in Uganda," 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. High tea with big band music, May 27, 2 p.m.; Walking group with brunch, June 8, 10 a.m.; Casino Woodbine, June 17; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; Balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-112. May 26, **Rachel Levy** discusses "Synagogues Around the World – Europe-Part 2," 10 a.m.; May 27, North York Concert Orchestra performs, 7:30 p.m.; May 28, "Your brain – What goes on as we age," 1:30 p.m.; Mondays, current events with **Harvey Skolnick,** 10 a.m.; Mondays, June 1-29, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Being a mensch in Hollywood: the highs and lows of four distinctive Jewish-American actors," 1-3 p.m.
- **Support group for seniors** discussing health and wellness, financial planning and other issues. Meets Fridays 1:30-3 p.m. until June 12, Bathurst-Finch Hub, 540 Finch Ave. W. Sponsored by Circle of Care.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860.
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892.
- **Adath Israel Congregation.** Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or **Judi** 416-785-0941.
- **Shaar Shalom.** Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m. 905-889-4975.
- **Beth Emeth.** Experienced mah-jong and Rummikub players meet Mondays and Wednesdays. Free lessons at 12:30 p.m. Must reserve. 416-633-3838.
- **Temple Har Zion.** Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue.** Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514.
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin,** Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Beth Sholom's** seniors group meets for lunch and exercise every Wednesday. 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- **Kathryn Chelin** teaches "Drawing for the terrified beginner," July 13, 17, 9 a.m.-noon.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Pioneering women artists of the modern era," June 9, 16, 1 p.m.
- Casual Yiddish conversation, Mondays, 1:30-3 p.m.
- **Jordan Klapman** discusses "Hollywood's Oscar-winning Jewish songs," June 4, 11 at 1 p.m.
- **Carol Lypszc** discusses her book of short stories, *The Saviour Shoes*, May 28, 7 p.m.
- **Rosalin Krieger** discusses sitcoms of the 1990s, July 28- Aug. 18, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- A photo exhibit titled *I Work Here* by **Benjamin Rondel** is on display at the gallery May 21-June 28.
- Downtown Tikkun Leil Shavuot, May 23. Family dinner, 5:30 p.m. ($5); Kids and teen programs 8 p.m.-11:45 p.m.; Main event 8:30 p.m.-6 a.m.
- Israeli Kabbalat Shabbat, May 29, 5:30 p.m. Call ext. 321.
- The MNJCC and Montreal's Segal Centre for Performing Arts are sponsoring the 2015 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition. Applicants must be Canadian, but not necessarily Jewish. The winning play will performed in a public staged reading. Submission deadline July 2. www.mnjcc.org/2015CJPC
- *The Legend of Marshmallow Island*, presented by Mystic Drumz, May 31, 11:15 a.m. Tickets www.algreentheatre.ca
- **Katherine Barber** discusses "Jewish contributions to the world of ballet," June 1, 8, 15, 1:30 p.m.
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, June 7, 1 p.m.; Inclusive ballroom and Latin dance workshop, June 7, 2:15 p.m.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Kol Nidre* and *70 Hester Street*, June 7, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Shirley Kumove.** Box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147.
- Register for Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singers edition, seeking male voices, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17-21. Ext. 250.
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St. 905-303-1821. Register for programs, ext. 3025.

- Beer and cheese pairing workshop, July 16, 7 p.m.
- The JCCs go to the Shaw Festival to see *Sweet Charity*, June 25.
- **Nora Gold** discusses "Anti-Israelism on campus," July 20, 7 p.m.
- **Suzanne Metz** offers a "Non-traditional life drawing workshop," July 14-16.
- Bridge level 1 and 2 starts the week of June 22.
- Intermediate and beginner mah-jong start the week of June 22. ■

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

SENIOR SIDE OF LIFE

From neonates to geriatrics

Dr. Michael Gordon

Many *CJN* readers of my column recall references to my writing in Aroma cafes in Israel. The chain's expansion to Toronto has been good news to many familiar with Israel who compare the attributes of the coffee when comparing coffee shop qualities.

Recently, while visiting the country for a conference, I found myself sitting in the Rambam Hospital complex Aroma café in Haifa. I was with professors Shraga Blazer, the renowned head of neonatology at Rambam, and Tzvi Dwolatzky, recently appointed director of its newly inaugurated geriatric services.

It was a very warm encounter, the result of a series of "happenstance" occurrences. I, a geriatrician came to visit Shraga because as editor-in-chief of the *Rambam Medical Journal*, he had been in recent communication with me about an article soon to be published in the journal, in which I address how medical technologies have intruded themselves into the end-of-life rituals and the rites of dying process. I decided that a visit to Haifa, an hour train ride from Tel Aviv would be illuminating. What I did not realize was that Dwolatzky, now a colleague of Shraga, would join us at the Aroma café.

The connection I have with Dwolatzky stems from the years he spent at Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Hospital, where I did two years of medical residency, followed by his time at Ben-Gurion University's Soroka Medical Center in Be'er Sheva. It was there that he created one of the early computerized assessment programs for cognitive function, the goal being to try and differentiate those with mild or not-clinically apparent cognitive impairment from those with "normal" brain functioning.

This program was the first of its kind in Israel. Now, computer-based cognitive function assessment has developed elsewhere, including at Baycrest Health Sciences under the Cognicity program.

It remains to be demonstrated whether, if found to accurately discriminate between those with "normal" function and those with some deficiency, these tools can lead to interventions that change the trajectory of cognitive decline.

But as an outcome of such research, it is currently recommended that physical and mental exercise programs are activities that individuals can do to possibly decrease their own risk of developing cognitive impairment, while other pharmaceutical or supplemental interventions are being sought.

From the other side of the age spectrum, I was shown the remarkable neo-natal unit at the recently opened Ruth Rappaport Children's Hospital at Rambam. Shraga showed me the units in which bassinets held infants of such low weight and premature birth dates that years ago, they would not have been considered viable. Israel is a leader in neonatology research and clinical practice.

I told Shraga the story of my own premature birth when they had recently introduced 100 per cent oxygen into the therapeutic milieu. For some uncanny reason, my maternal bubbie, with whom my parents lived at the time and with whom my younger sister and I thereafter resided until her death when I was 12, did not like the attending physician. She convinced my parents to have me moved to a less "advanced" hospital's neonatal unit that did not adopt the 100 per cent oxygen therapy clinical intervention – thereby likely saving me from lifelong blindness, which was eventually found to occur in neonates exposed to 100 per cent oxygen because of a condition called retrolental fibroplasia.

Although not the only factor, the enhanced oxygen therapy has been shown to be one of the causes of this condition. All my life, as I heard the story recounted, I attributed to my bubbie's intuition the fact that I have normal sight.

So again, in a coffee shop, one that is very popular in Israel and now in Toronto, I had an inspiring meeting with two physicians who, along with me, span the whole of the life cycle – from neonates to the very elderly. ■

Family Moments

Mazel tov to Pearl Porter on celebrating 100 years. From your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mazel tov to Fern Mondrow-Pinsk on being selected Teacher of the Year in York Region for 2015. Your family is very proud of you!

Mazel tov to Bea & Lou Myers in celebration of their 85th and 95th birthdays. Much love from all the children and grandchildren

Alexandra Schwarz & Nathan Zilbert are engaged! Parents – Jayson, (Debra) and Jacky Schwarz. Kathy & Arthur Zilbert. Grandparents – Marion Schwarz, Norman & Sandra Turk, Mary McDonald.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

Parshah

Bamidbar | Numbers 1:1 – 4:20

Yacov Fruchter says Jews need to possess a united heart in order to truly receive the Torah
Rabbi Shalom Spira explains how the laws of eruv could apply to Montreal's Sherbrooke Street
Rachael Turkienicz on the transformative wilderness experience that defines the book of Bamidbar

Yacov Fruchter

Something incredible, almost unthinkable happened to the Jewish People as they prepared to receive the Torah: they were united. When they arrived at Har Sinai, it is written, "*Vayichan sham Yisrael neged ha'har*"

"The children of Israel encamped there, adjacent to the mountain." Rashi famously quotes a midrash that explains a strange element of the phrase that's lost in translation. Why is the word "encamped" written in the singular "*vayichan*"?

The answer? At that moment, they were like one person with one heart. Wow! How powerful! In order to receive the Torah, we needed to possess a united heart.

Sadly, Rashi does not stop there. He adds that this heightened unity was only present in this one instance, for all other encampments were mired with division and strife.

How can we return to that moment of glory? Why is it that as wandering Jews, we find a way to continuously wander away from one another? *Machloket leshem Shamayim* – an argument for the sake of heaven – has always been a healthy part of being Jewish, and yet we have lost the ability to keep the heart whole.

The tragic events in Israel last summer were a clear example of a divided encampment, and the hate spewed liberally about it was incredibly painfully to watch and read.

Our second daughter was born on the 10th of Av, the day after Tisha b'Av, marking the destruction of the Temple caused by baseless hatred. As an expression of our hope for the Jewish People, we named her Lev Amie – "the heart of our nation" – so that she would be a constant reminder of what we can accomplish when our heart is in the same place.

Chag Samayach. ■

Yacov Fruchter is spiritual leader of Toronto's Annex Shul.

Rabbi Shalom Spira

"And all the enumerated were 603,550" (Numbers 1:46). This census bears a practical ramification for eruv architecture, because Tosafot to Shabbat 6b interpret the Gemarah to mean that only a thoroughfare that accommodates this number of pedestrians daily should be classified as a public domain.

A thoroughfare with fewer visitors can be symbolically enclosed by an eruv, a marginal network of doorframe structures (typically synthesized from poles and wires) before the Sabbath, in order to permit carrying on the Sabbath.

Already during the 18th century, when only a handful of cities (Beijing, Ayutthaya, Delhi, Istanbul and Tokyo) were inhabited by 60 myriad (600,000) citizens Ba'al Shem Tov – cited by Rabbi Rafael Blum in *Tal ha-Shamayim* (Brooklyn, 5718) – observed that the validity of an eruv is one of the three kashrut topics that should be furiously debated. Pointing to the Haftorah for the second day of Shavuot, which reads, "With fury [*za'am*], you march through the world" (Habbakuk 3:12), he expanded *za'am* as an acronym to represent *zevichah* (slaughtered meat), *eruvin* and *mikva'ot*.

Even more so today, our vibrant metropolises have sparked illuminating conflicts regarding how to measure the presence of 60 myriad citizens, that will disqualify an eruv. A survey of the various opinions is presented by Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Wechter-Rabinovitch in *Eizehu Reshut ha-Rabim* (Brooklyn, 5768). Some gauge total regional population with theoretical access to the city; others evaluate how many people actually visit one of the city avenues; yet others reckon one boulevard at a time with its specific pedestrian load. Some include vehicle passengers while others do not.

To that effect, a census of 591,271 human beings (even including vehicle passengers) frequenting Montreal's Sherbrooke Street daily was recently taken. Assuming that the statistical methodology is accurate, many *poskim*, legal decisors, will accept Sherbrooke Street's Westmount eruv. ■

Rabbi Shalom Spira is a research assistant at the McGill AIDS Centre in Montreal.

Rachael Turkienicz

As we begin to read the book of Numbers, the very first thing to notice is the difference between the English and Hebrew titles of the book. In English, we call it "Numbers" and in Hebrew it is "Bamidbar," "In the Wilderness." So, of course, we must ask: what's the significance of a title?

The old adage, "You can't judge a book by its cover," is only true of the content and style but not of the focus. We can determine the focus of the text by its title. In fact, the title will determine our focus and direct our reading. It is of crucial importance, since it will influence the meaning we seek within the book.

The English title for this book, Numbers, is based on the fact that a census of Israel is taken and will determine the numbers within the nation. It is about facts and figures and structures and process.

The Hebrew title, In the Wilderness, is about transformation. The wilderness, or desert, is defined by its lack of reference points. One sand dune looks like another and might well be gone in an hour because of the wind. When people enter the wilderness, they suspend all previous identifiers and attain new reference points. They transform and grow. It is not about numbers, figures and structures, but rather about vision, imagination and adventures.

The holiday of Shavuot embodies this same exciting anticipation as we all stand at Sinai anxiously awaiting what will come. The sages tell us that all Jews that were, and all Jews that are to be, stood together at Sinai. We understand that statement as the science of DNA, while they understood it as the power of the Jewish soul.

As we stood at Sinai ready to begin our wilderness journey, we all understood and carried with us the power of transformation. ■

Rachael Turkienicz, Ph.D. is the director of rachaelscentre.org.

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Mom fundraises for CF to help son

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Raising funds for cystic fibrosis (CF) has become Natalie Doyle's life mission.

Her son, Liam, is almost three years old and was born with CF. Her daughter Madelynn, 4, was not, but she could be a carrier.

Her third child, Tristan, had CF. Tristan was born last September, but passed away shortly thereafter.

"I lost Tristan at 5-1/2 months. He was diagnosed with congenital heart disease and CF. When the kids ask where baby Tristan is, I tell them he is up in the stars and he is watching over you," Doyle said sadly.

Both Natalie and her husband, Jamey, are genetic carriers for CF, but neither knew it before they had children. On May 31, Doyle will walk together with some 100 people at the second annual Carstar's Great Strides Walk for Cystic Fibrosis Canada in Richmond Hill.

"Last year we raised $15,000. I am hoping to beat that this year," Doyle said.

The event happens across the country the last Sunday in May. There will also be a walk at the Toronto Zoo.

"We have over 60 sites this year from British Columbia to Nova Scotia. We are hoping to raise $3.5 million nationally from all of the walks combined," said Jessica Raposo, fund development co-ordinator for Cystic Fibrosis Canada's Toronto area chapter.

Walkers raise funds for vital CF research, care and advocacy, initiatives funded by Cystic Fibrosis Canada to help find a cure or treatment for the disease.

Madelynn Doyle helps her little brother Liam with one of his daily treatments: inhaling a saline solution that helps loosen sticky mucus in his lungs.

CF is the most common fatal genetic disease affecting Canadian children and young adults. There is no cure. It is a multi-system disease affecting mainly the lungs and digestive system.

Symptoms can include difficulty breathing, respiratory tract problems, severe and chronic lung infections, impaired growth or weight gain, and extreme difficulty digesting and absorbing nutrients from food.

"Liam takes his enzymes. Without them he wouldn't be able to digest the nutrients that he needs. He takes them with every meal and every snack."

Doyle's mother, bubbie Julie Parnes, watches Liam and his sister during the workweek.

"Mom does one of Liam's therapies called CPT [chest physical therapy], where you tap on his front side and back for three minutes each, where his lungs are. This helps shift the sticky mucous. It gets done twice a day," she said.

"When I look at Liam, I don't just think of CF anymore. He is now becoming this independent boy – loving, caring, sensitive, sweet and very active. He knows why we do the therapy to keep him healthy and to keep his lungs healthy. He knows he must take his enzymes so his tummy doesn't hurt," Doyle said.

CF occurs when a child inherits two defective copies of the gene responsible for the condition, one from each parent. One in 25 Canadians is a CF carrier, but many people are unaware of it. When two carriers have a child, there's a 25 per cent chance their child will be born with CF.

According to the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Registry, in 2013, half of those who died of the condition were under 35. As well, 57 per cent of those newly diagnosed were under six months of age. It's estimated that someone born with CF in Canada today has a 50 per cent chance of living beyond age 50, up from age 25 in 1983.

"The scariest part of this disease is that he is OK today, but in an instant everything can change. That is what I struggle with daily. I am constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop," said Doyle.

Richmond Hill Mayor Dave Barrow will kick off the three-kilometre walk at 8:30 a.m. with a ribbon cutting ceremony at Mill Pond Park in Richmond Hill. ■

For more information, visit cysticfibrosis.ca.

Sex ed. curriculum last updated in 1998

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

"We have not as of yet fully analyzed the curriculum... and had enough meaningful discussions internally to comment, but we will certainly be focused on this in the months ahead."

The provincial sex education curriculum was last updated in 1998.

The Liberal government backed away from an attempted update of it in 2010 after protests by some religious leaders, including prominent evangelical Christian Rev. Charles McVety.

At the time, "we met with other groups who were opposed to it to plan strategy," said Rabbi Asher Vale, director of the Beis Din, Vaad Harabonim of Toronto.

> *We have not as of yet fully analyzed the curriculum*

"We need to bring it up again to the Vaad," he added.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, president of the Toronto Board of Rabbis, said the board "has not yet considered" whether to pronounce on the new curriculum.

Benjamin Cohen, principal at Bialik Hebrew Day School's Viewmount branch, had no comment when contacted by *The CJN*. Messages to Bialik's head of school were not returned.

Neither were calls and emails to Associated Hebrew Schools, the Toronto Heschel School, and Eitz Chaim Schools seeking comment on the sex ed curriculum or to discuss their teachings in the area. ■

With files from Paul Lungen.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 21, 2015

Rabbi Steven Greenberg: Don't demonize gay Jews

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

Temple Kol Ami, a Reform congregation in Thornhill, in April hosted Rabbi Steven Greenberg, often described as the first openly gay Orthodox Jewish rabbi, as its scholar in residence for a weekend of discussion sessions related to homosexuality and the Torah.

The Boston-based rabbi, author and speaker is executive director of Eshel, an organization that promotes acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Jews and their families in Orthodox communities.

He spoke to *The CJN* about addressing homosexuality across denominations, his sense of responsibility to gay Orthodox Jews, biblical interpretation and the future of Orthodox acceptance of LGBTQ Jews.

Rabbi Steven Greenberg

Was this your first time speaking at a Toronto synagogue?
My partner is an opera singer and he does chazzanut, and for the last two years, we've been going as a family to a really sweet little downtown minyan, Makom, and I've spoken a bunch of times there on High Holidays. But this is the first time speaking here at a standard synagogue.

How were the topics chosen for the discussions you led at Kol Ami?
It was a mix of my suggestions and Kol Ami Rabbi Micah Streiffer and his committee's ideas.

Is it typical for you to speak at, or be involved with, Reform synagogues, given that you're Orthodox?
I've been a Jewish educator for some 30 years, and many of those years were with the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. Its founder, Yitz Greenberg, who's an Orthodox rabbi, had already, in the 1980s, begun to speak about the need for pluralism. I joined the team in the mid-'80s and have been a kind of pluralist voice in the Orthodox community since.

I've been involved in Jewish conversations around the Jewish future with all kinds of Jews of all kinds of denominations and ideologies. The Reform movement has taken the lead on discussing issues of gender and sexuality on the American Jewish scene. I typically go to a Reform synagogue with different aims, though they can overlap, than when I walk into an Orthodox environment.

But it's not unusual for me to speak at Orthodox, Reform or Reconstructionist shuls, and I've also spoken at churches. I'm an equal opportunity speaker in that sense.

When did you receive ordination as an Orthodox rabbi?
In 1983.

And when did you come out publicly?
I came out in 1999.

So are you considered Orthodox by the Orthodox movement?
It depends who you ask. When I first came out, one of the rabbis at Yeshiva University said there's no such thing as a gay Orthodox rabbi – you're a Reform rabbi. Indeed, plenty of my colleagues would say that, by coming out, I'm no longer Orthodox. But over the years, my insistence that this makes no sense and that I am Orthodox has picked up steam. So a bunch of my colleagues also would not dispute that I'm Orthodox.

Do you feel a sense of responsibility as the "only" openly gay Orthodox rabbi to nurture other Orthodox LGBTQ Jews and help ease their coming out processes?
Yes, of course. My aim is to encourage people who wish to stay connected to traditional Judaism, [to say] that there will be room within the community for them. That they should press on and hold their leaders and communities accountable, bring their families with them as allies and push to make room in the community for a dignified and loving presence of LGBTQ Jews and their families. So I spend a good deal of my time counselling both the individuals who are struggling and their families.

Do you also feel a similar sense of responsibility to non-Orthodox LGBTQ Jews?
I have to admit that while there are people in the Reform movement who are feeling lost, most of the families that want my counsel are on the traditional side.

But the reason I'm eager to speak to Reform Jews is, on some level, to restore a sense that the tradition has the capacity to open doors, and that they don't need to believe that the Torah itself is hateful toward gay and lesbian people.

I think that no matter how liberal you are, you still kind of hope that the tradition, even in its ancient forms, isn't as mean-spirited as you might have been taught. There's a desire to encounter a sense of Jewish memory that is a little healed, a more nuanced, thoughtful story can be told that restores people's trust in Torah and the rabbis' attempts to creatively read the text they were bequeathed.

I'm making room for a religious discourse around gender and sexuality, but I'm also demonstrating that a human approach to these issues is surprisingly available, even within the oldest and deepest resources of our shared memory as Jews. The old can be renewed, and the new can be sanctified, as Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first chief rabbi of Israel, said.

So do you try to show people different interpretations for texts that seem black and white?
Sometimes I do, or I try to show that it was never read as black and white as they thought, or open them up to a more complex picture. I'm trying to restore people's faith that an ancient book can be read in successive generations and new insights can be found. That's what makes it eternal.

Do you read the prohibition against male homosexual sex in Leviticus as not being black and white?
I wouldn't put it like that. Any biblical text will have multiple readings, applications or ways of putting it alongside other texts that contend with it. In other words, there's hardly anything black and white anywhere.

Thou shall not kill sounds pretty black and white until you think, well, Jewish law clearly doesn't prohibit self-defence. So, on some level, every text comes up against competing realities, circumstances.

Then there's the linguistic side – you're reading it this way. It could have been read that way. So, when you say black and white, you're talking about a different religion, not Judaism.

Would other Orthodox rabbis agree with you on that?
Sure. It doesn't mean there aren't communal consensuses that have a lot of weight. But it also doesn't mean there's always a simple, unambivalent truth. Rabbis like to say that every word at Mount Sinai was heard in 70 different languages and 70 different ways, so the Torah is fractured into 70 different perspectives.

Any system of law or ethics has to interact with the multiple human perspectives engaging with it. That's not radical theology, that's talmudic theology.

Do you belong to an Orthodox synagogue?
Yes, I go to Kadimah-Toras Moshe in Boston. It's a complicated existence. My daughter was rejected from a local Orthodox day school that opened up an early learning program for pre-kindergarten kids. We were very excited when it opened, but were told to not even apply, that we wouldn't be accepted because of the nature of our family. Yet, we belong to a congregation that fully embraces me and my partner.

So, there are contradictions everywhere. For example, the Chabad school would be happy to have her. It's the modern Orthodox school that doesn't want her.

Do you think the Orthodox community is becoming more progressive regarding these issues?
I think there's no longer space for the demonization of gay and lesbian people in the Orthodox world. Even in the most traditional environments, I think there's recognition that people aren't choosing this, and there must be a basic empathy when approaching this. In the Orthodox world, there is still strong pressure to remain celibate if you're gay, but increasingly, younger rabbis and educators are recognizing there's something destructive in that request, and they're seeking ways to sustain their halachic perspective while being respectful of the mental health and emotional and religious well-being of gay and lesbian people and their families.

Do you see a time in the future when Orthodoxy will fully accept LGBTQ people?
I think given the diversity of what Orthodoxy is now, one couldn't say one blanket thing about all of it. The differences between the various enclaves in Orthodoxy are greater than those within the Reform or Conservative movements.

I'd say that some percentage of the Orthodox community will tacitly, without ideological fanfare, be welcoming of LGBTQ Jews – I'd say up to 30 per cent is not an unreasonable hope.

My aim at Eshel is to ensure there are at least 36 synagogues across North America where, if you or your child discovers yourself to be gay, lesbian or trans, you could choose from any of them and, if you want to, stay in a community with an expectation of observance and knowledge. Once we achieve that, I'll feel I've done my job. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Shavuot: Festival of Weeks

Backstory

SEYMOUR EPSTEIN

Why exactly is Shavuot called Shavuot, the festival of weeks? Think about the three pilgrimage festivals: Pesach is named for the "passing over" (pasach) of Israelite homes as God killed the first born Egyptians (Exodus 12:13). Sukkot is named for the booths (sukkot) we dwell in during that autumn holiday (Leviticus 23:42). What about Shavuot then? It's not named for the first fruits which it celebrates in the Torah (Leviticus 23:17), but rather for the counting of seven weeks from Pesach (Leviticus 23:15-16). Not quite the direct naming as Pesach and Sukkot enjoy. Why not?

The first clue is that the week of seven days is the only measurement of time in the Torah not based on nature. The day is based on the revolution of the earth on its axis. The month is based on the cycle of the moon's varied reflection of the sun's light. The year is the amount of time required for the earth to circle the sun. So while these three time periods are given their due in the Torah, the week appears arbitrary, a measurement imposed on us by the creation account in Genesis.

The week's end, the seventh day or Shabbat, is marked as significant by the famous passage of Genesis 2:1-3 in which God declares the seventh day as His holy Sabbath. It is significant that the days of the week, determined as they are by nature, are not given names, only numbers, while the last day of the week which delineates the week is given a name, Shabbat. In later Jewish tradition, even the weeks were given names in the form of the weekly Torah portion.

On the primal Pesach of Egypt, the Israelites were commanded to note the month as the first of months (Exodus 12:2) – an unlikely acknowledgement by slaves since one month for a slave is like any other. Here, however, not only will this month (chodesh) be new (chadash), but in fact, the slave will be transformed into a free individual who understands his ability to define time, his own included. But chapter 12 of Exodus not only gives precise instructions for that first Pesach of Egypt, but also for all subsequent Passovers of the generations to come (Exodus 12:14-20). The marking of this first month, which later became Nisan, is the first step of a new autonomous and liberated Israelite.

> *Shavuot is the holiday that teaches us true autonomy*

The trek through the desert begins the act of liberation. Later on, as our tradition has it, the first seven weeks of that trek are designated by God as a time of counting weeks. This too is a lesson in autonomy, since even a slave could note the new month by gazing at the moon, while only a free person can arbitrarily count off seven-day weeks which have no source in nature.

In other words, months are natural, weeks are history. Shavuot, then, is the holiday that teaches us true autonomy. Unlike Pesach, it was not celebrated the first time as the Hebrews were leaving Egypt, but was designed for future generations. It is deeply rooted in nature and celebrates the first fruits of the harvest – the very nature which yields no first fruits without the hard work of human farmers.

So the very name Shavuot hearkens back to the period when we formed our autonomy, our self-esteem. The time when we became masters of our own destiny.

Hence, the Torah metaphorically links Shavuot to the first fruits in the seven weeks when we gained the first fruits of our liberation. No accident then that the rabbis added the giving of the Torah at Sinai to Shavuot, thereby deepening the symbolism of an event also understood as a first fruits experience for the newly liberated Hebrews. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Koreen, Anne	Apr. 22, 2015	55 Skymark Dr
Goldman, Sharon	Apr. 22, 2015	7 North Park Rd
Fischer, Ernestin	Apr. 23, 2015	Private
Benudiz, Leon	Apr. 24, 2015	Private
Horowitz, Marilyn	Apr. 24, 2015	Private
Goodman, Louis	Apr. 25, 2015	85 Skymark Dr
Feldman, Max	Apr. 26, 20015	484 Steeles Ave W
Kartuz, Sofia	Apr. 26, 2015	Private
Silverberg, Dorothy	Apr. 27, 2015	3900 Yonge St
Lightstone, Deborah	Apr. 27, 2015	35 Saranac Blvd
Kruger, Stanley	Apr. 27, 2015	100 Observatory Ln
Benkiel, Regina	Apr. 28, 2015	Private
Scharf, Lucia	Apr. 28, 2015	2 Neptune Dr
Flatt, Lila	Apr. 29, 2015	1555 Finch Ave E
Chaim, Eta	Apr. 30, 2015	157 Regina Ave
Ross, Samuel Morris	Apr. 30, 2015	30 Fashion Roseway
Bettel, Murray	Apr. 30, 2015	229 Maxwell St
Kohn, Eugene	Apr. 30, 2015	102 Caribou Rd
Ravenscroft, Natalie Joan	May 1, 2015	409 Centre St
Meirovich, Min	May 2, 2015	90 Fisherville Rd
Hertz, Bernard	May 2, 2015	11 Madoc Dr
Langer, Seymour	May 2, 2015	357 Brooke Ave
Zimmerman, Judith	May 3, 2015	133 Torresdale Ave
Deitel, Sarolta	May 4, 2015	3000 Bathurst St

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

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Donald Bassin	May 2/15	240 Erie Street
Shelley Steiner	May 5/15	153 Fenn Avenue
Saul Hirsh	May 5/15	342 Ridley Blvd.
Dr. Stephen Rolbin	May 6/15	18 Lower Village Gate
Fred Skurka	May 7/15	3900 Yonge Street
Luba Bielas	May 8/15	343 Clark Ave. West
Sophie Hirsch	May 9/15	23 Hilltop Road
Evelyn Chelsy	May 10/15	1 Canyon Avenue

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Do we still need to divide ourselves by denomination?

Our rabbis ponder whether religious movements can get past their differences. **PAGE 4**

Judaism's views on organ transplants are changing

New book moves halachic debate to a higher level. **PAGE 34**

CANDLELIGHTING, HAVDALAH TIMES

Halifax	8:31 p.m.	9:46 p.m.
Montreal	8:14 p.m.	9:30 p.m.
Ottawa	8:23 p.m.	9:38 p.m.
Toronto	8:31 p.m.	9:44 p.m.
Winnipeg	9:07 p.m.	10:32 p.m.
Calgary	9:20 p.m.	10:49 p.m.
Vancouver	8:48 p.m.	10:12 p.m.

What we learn from our parents

Judaism has two traditions: the tradition of our fathers, and that of our mothers. Maharat Abby Brown Scheier explores the differences between them. **PAGE 8**

TORONTO THEATRE STARTS HERE
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Israel to link benefits to vaccinations, and suspense master helped document Shoah

No shots, no cash

Under terms of Israel's new governing coalition, the state will deny child allowance benefits to parents who don't vaccinate their kids, the *Times of Israel* reported. The type of vaccines weren't named in the provision, which is similar to rules in Australia and re-opens a six-year-old debate on linking the shots to welfare benefits. It also comes as vaccination opt-out rates are climbing among haredim and Bedouins, who are among Israel's poorest citizens and depend on the handouts. Rights groups say the move discriminates against vulnerable groups and will deepen poverty rates.

Alfred Hitchcock

Holocaust film gets NYC premiere

German Concentration Camps Factual Survey, a documentary shot and scripted in 1945 with the help of legendary film director Alfred Hitchcock, had its New York premiere May 19 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. The newly completed film uses footage taken at Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz and Dachau by combat and newsreel cameramen after liberation. Producer Sidney Bernstein enlisted Hitchcock, a close friend, as the film's treatment adviser. His influence can be seen in long, panning shots that show viewers the scenes in it are real. Britain's Imperial War Museum recently decided to finish the film, which was shelved by Britain after other films like it came out. It debuted last year at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Thank God the chips weren't pork rinds

A Montana man was charged with attempted homicide for shooting a bartender who served him a non-kosher drink. Monte Leon Hanson, 59, allegedly shot Joe Lewis, who is also his neighbour, and killed Lewis' dog the morning after Lewis made Hanson a red beer – beer and tomato juice – at his Hamilton bar with the Clamato tomato drink, which contains clam broth, rather than tomato juice. When Hanson learned the drink contained Clamato, he reportedly became angry, saying it was against his religion. He allegedly followed Lewis the next morning when he left their apartment building to take out his dog. ■

Gematria

65

The age of a woman in Bnei Brak, Chaya Sarah Schachar, who last week became the oldest woman ever to give birth in Israel. Her first child was a healthy boy.

102

The age of retired neonatologist Ingeborg Syllm-Rapoport, who received her PhD from the University of Hamburg last week. It was denied to her by the Nazis in 1938.

Quotable

66

[redacted]

— Michael Khoury, the Israeli Arab who is his country's trade consul to Canada. See p. 42.

Exclusive to CJNEWS.com

Mark Mietkiewicz on applying Jewish business ethics in the modern world.

Inside today's edition

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COVER IMAGE: *THE PROMENADE* BY MARC CHAGALL

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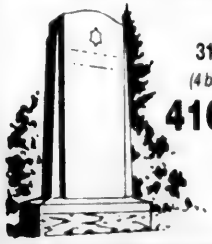

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Letters to the Editor

A dubious contest

It seems that in a recent poll conducted by the Israeli Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Surgery, Ayelet Shaked, Israel's new justice minister, was voted "best-looking female in the Knesset." ("New Israeli justice minister doesn't shy from controversy," May 14.)

I am wondering if the new justice minister's name was, say, Amir Shaked instead of Ayelet, would he be voted "best-looking male in the Knesset"?

Ellie Presner
Cote St. Luc, Que.

Who should pay?

In a letter to the editor ("Funding for schools," May 14), Murray Rubin wrote, "Canada is a secular country, and the idea of supporting the Jewish separate schools with public money is outdated."

The facts are that Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan pay 40 to 60 per cent of the costs of secular subjects in Jewish day schools. Ontario is the outlier in Canada, a province that talks the talk of multiculturalism, but doesn't deliver.

Of course, we should look to the Jewish community to make day school education affordable for middle-income families. Again, the fact is that UJA Federation of Greater Toronto contributes $10 million a year to tuition subsidies. But it simply isn't enough and hasn't increased for years. Tuition costs, meanwhile, are rising three times faster than family incomes.

In Montreal, with provincial government funding in the picture, tuition costs are a third lower than in Toronto. As a result, more than 50 per cent of Jewish children attend day schools, compared to 32 per cent in Toronto.

We should never stop telling the Ontario government that it is unjust to refuse to fund secular studies in the Jewish day schools. The status quo in Ontario is an affront to conscience. We must make Jewish education in our community affordable for every family that wishes to send its children to a Jewish day school.

Jeffrey Stutz
Toronto

Intermarriage and continuity

Paul Golin's grandmother was right when she said that by "marrying someone non-Jewish, you'll be finishing Hitler's job." ("Intermarriage is an opportunity, Oraynu speaker says," May 14).

Golin is obviously trying to rationalize his choice of marrying outside of the faith with his ideas around reframing intermarriage in a positive light. Sounds like he's proud that he gets to have his cake and eat it, too, with the best of both worlds.

Clearly, he values his own needs above Jewish continuity, or he would have asked his spouse to convert. Choosing to marry Jewish is critical to our survival as a people.

I lost both sets of grandparents in the Holocaust and missed an opportunity to hear their wisdom. The moral of the story, Mr. Golin? Your grandmother knows best. You should have listened.

Debbie Bauer
Toronto

Pope's motives are suspect

In April, Pope Francis invited a delegation of rabbis from around the world to discuss anti-Semitism. These rabbis supposedly represented the Jews of the world. He asked forgiveness from the rabbis for the actions and/or inactions over the centuries of the Catholic Church in this regard.

Why did the Pope apologize? Was it a ruse? A facade? To blindside the Jews to his true intentions? What are his intentions? To see peace between Palestinian and Jew? Was it to lull the Jews into a false sense of security? I believe it was the latter – for shortly after that meeting, the Pope embraced Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, calling him "the angel of peace" and then supporting a Palestinian state.

This is where he dealt the Jews the ultimate betrayal. What in the Palestinian-Arab pledge "to wipe the Jews off the face of the earth" does he not understand? Or could this possibly be part of the church's plan, to dominate the Holy Land, *Judenfrei*?

So even while the Catholic church praises murderers, the U.S. Presbyterian church plots, world condemnation of Israel (and the Jews) continues and the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement gains momentum, Israel exists and flourishes.

May God continue to bless the Jewish nation. Hopefully one day all this madness will come to an end.

Bess Lokach
Richmond Hill, Ont.

Letters to the editor are welcome if they are brief and in English or French. Mail letters to our address or to **cjninfo@gmail.com**. *We reserve the right to edit and condense letters, which must bear the sender's name, address and phone number.*

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Krista Samborsky is a dance/movement therapist at Baycrest, the Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Community Centre and the Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community. She received her Master's in Dance/Movement Therapy and Counselling from Columbia College Chicago and is also a trained movement profile analyst, specializing in decision-making styles. Her research involves exploring the effects of dance and movement in older adults on a physical, emotional and cognitive level. Krista currently runs Dance/Movement Therapy programs focusing on holistic wellbeing of older adults.

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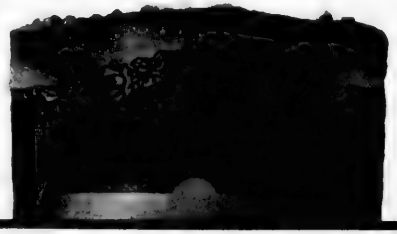

RABBI·2·RABBI

Are denominational labels necessary?

As many synagogues seek to define themselves by meta-values that transcend Judaism's major movements, perhaps congregations of different stripes can find common ground

RABBI ADAM CUTLER
BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION, TORONTO

RABBI ADAM SCHEIER
CONGREGATION SHAAR HASHOMAYIM, MONTREAL

Rabbi Cutler: One of the results, if not the purpose, of the Rabbi2Rabbi format is to demonstrate the remarkable similarities in thought and practice shared by rabbis of different denominations. Indeed, in our ongoing dialogue, we have mostly focused on shared concerns and overlapping experiences.

I am often asked about the difference between Conservative and Orthodox Judaism. In a city like Toronto, which has some of the most right-leaning Conservative congregations in North America situated in close proximity to modern Orthodox synagogues and partnership minyanim, the question is especially salient. I often explain that on a Jewish legal level, we are 98 per cent in sync, with some obvious differences pertaining to synagogue seating and less obvious liturgical dissimilarities.

Still, I think we better understand ourselves when we are able to define what sets us apart from others. When we are close on many matters, that process can be particularly fruitful. Moving beyond Halachah, how are we different? What are the issues about which we disagree? How do our worldviews diverge?

Rabbi Scheier: I imagine that, were we to focus on our differences, we would come down to two Ms: mechitzah and method of halachic decision-making. The mechitzah might symbolize all of the differences that visitors to our respective synagogues would easily observe, and we might differ in how we come to our halachic decisions, even if the decision are often the same – for example, we might use different sources or give different weight to the same Jewish legal sources.

If we are as similar as you claim, then of what value is denominational affiliation? It has now been many years since my congregation became independent in terms of affiliation – meaning, while the congregational standard is to be a synagogue that observes Halachah in every aspect of our communal conduct (and I am a proudly Orthodox rabbi), we remain unaffiliated with any particular movement.

Rabbi Cutler: The modern denominational system is a product of 19th-century Germany. The earliest Reform Jews found it necessary to create a distinct grouping, which enabled them to find common cause among their brethren and brought with it institutional support in the form of a synagogue association and rabbinical group.

These products, their descendants and sister groups – the Union for Reform Judaism and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Rabbinical Assembly, as well as the Orthodox Union and the Rabbinical Council of America – continue to provide essential support for Jewish life in ways that are denominationally appropriate. There are many tasks that national or international groups can do that independent synagogues and rabbis are simply unable to accomplish.

Yet, we know that younger Jews are less likely to define themselves by any given denomination. In a generation that is ambivalent toward membership-based organizations and identity labels, these Jews may define themselves as "Just Jewish" or "halachically observant Jewish" or "post-denominational Jewish." In practice, much of what they do would be mainstream in my shul or yours, but they would prefer to forge their own Jewish identity rather than link it to a broader denomination.

I am not especially worried about this trend. Jewish organizations in general and synagogues in particular are sufficiently creative and flexible to serve the needs of this generation. I am excited to see what types of Judaism will be expressed in 50 years.

Rabbi Scheier: I agree with you that the larger association and rabbinical groups serve an important function, though I wonder what our world would look like if they were organized by a principle other than religious denomination.

As many synagogues seek to define themselves by meta-values that transcend the denominations, perhaps common ground might be found between, say, an Orthodox synagogue that is committed to social justice and a Reconstructionist synagogue with the same dedication. Or, for example, synagogues with a strong emphasis on music might band together to share resources and ideas, regardless of the ritual proclivities of that particular synagogue.

Perhaps our conversation can best be summed up by the words of Rabbi Yitz Greenberg: "It doesn't matter which [denomination you belong to], as long as you're ashamed of it."

I would add: it doesn't matter, as long as you're committed to furthering the denomination's ability to bring Jewish meaning and pride to our community, in all of its facets. ■

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From the Archives | B'nai Brith Youth Organization

ONTARIO JEWISH ARCHIVES, BLANKENSTEIN FAMILY HERITAGE CENTRE PHOTO

Staff of B'nai Brith Youth Organization, Lake Ontario region, in 1969. BBYO was first established in Ontario as early as the 1920s, but the Lake Ontario region was not officially established until after World War II.

SeeJN | Israel's new government

YONATAN SINDEL/FLASH90 PHOTO

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, seated right, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, seated left, pose May 19 in Jerusalem for a group photo with the ministers of the new Israeli government.

From Yoni's Desk

Finding a balance between state and religion

Last week, Rabbi David Lau, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, weighed in on the relationship between the Jewish State's political and religious leadership. At a conference in Eilat, Rabbi Lau urged Israel's new justice minister, Ayelet Shaked, to confer with the Chief Rabbinate on all legislation.

"I call on the justice minister," he said, "to establish that for every bill that the government submits, just as it seeks the professional opinion of relevant ministries on the matter, so, too, it should ask the Chief Rabbinate to present the Jewish and traditional position on the bill."

The rabbinate's aim, Rabbi Lau added, is "not to decide, but to give information, so that we will be conscious of the Jewish values of Hebrew law – so that we will be conscious of a Jewish bill for the Jewish state – and then the government can decide on it in a democratic way."

Religious leaders wield significant power in Israel, especially when it comes to marriage and divorce, conversion, kashrut certification and burial. The religious parties, Jewish Home, Shas and United Torah Judaism, also hold a crucial position in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's razor-thin coalition. And yet, many Israelis would maintain that Rabbi Lau's proposal is a bad idea, and that there must be a clear separation between state and religion.

Even so, Rabbi Lau's idea is worthy of consideration, and it's hard to see what the harm would be in adding the rabbinate into the legislative loop, especially given the chief rabbi's clarification that leading rabbis are not seeking decision-making powers. Their input could be informative, so long as it doesn't devolve into coercion.

But if the rabbis want to be involved in the process of lawmaking, perhaps there is an opportunity for lawmakers to wade into the rabbinate's power, too. Professional opinion, after all, can go both ways, and there's little doubt many members of Knesset, not to mention a large swath of Israelis, would welcome the chance to have their say about the manner in which the rabbinate operates.

Opposition to the rabbinate's strictly Orthodox position has been mounting for years now. Israelis increasingly are demanding a more open and pluralistic religious leadership, one that embraces all Jewish denominations and adopts a modern approach to the key areas controlled by the rabbinate. And in recent weeks, those opposed to the rabbinate – and, more generally, the institutional control of Orthodoxy in Israel – appear to be making some headway.

Earlier this month, Israel's attorney general, Yehuda Weinstein, cancelled fines levied against two restaurants in Jerusalem that had labelled themselves kosher even though they did not carry kashrut certification issued by the rabbinate. For the time being, restaurants that use non-rabbinate certification will not be allowed to advertise themselves as "kosher," but Weinstein's ruling opens up the possibility for new discussions about what the word should mean in Israel and potentially weakens the rabbinate's power.

Religious and political leaders must work together in Israel – Rabbi Lau is correct about that. But it's a two-way street. If the rabbinate wants to have its opinions heard on a larger scale, it's only fair to demand that it respect the religious positions of non-Orthodox Israelis, too. ■ — YONI

FEATURE

Israel accelerates China engagement as Asia policy takes shape

Ng Weng Hoong

As Iran's nuclear talks with the UN and Israel's campaign to stop it dominated the headlines, news of the two countries joining others to help China found a new multilateral bank largely escaped scrutiny. After the March 31 deadline, 57 countries had joined the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to fund proposed multi-billion-dollar projects in Asia and the Middle East.

The bank's rise barely six months after its memorandum signing has presented Israel and Iran with an unexpected opportunity for collaboration. The AIIB forms part of China's grand strategy to reshape the global economy that includes the revival of the ancient 6,500-kilometre Silk Route alongside a new maritime trade channel stretching from the South China Sea to the Persian Gulf.

"Both countries have huge motivations to join the AIIB and support China's Silk Route strategy," said Shalom Salomon Wald, a senior fellow at the Jerusalem-based Jewish People Policy Institute. While security remains their primary concern, Israel and Iran are also eyeing the area's huge infrastructure demands and opportunities to work with other countries.

Iran is so desperate to escape Western trade sanctions that it immediately accepted China's offer to join the AIIB, said Wald in a telephone interview.

In contrast, Israel's engagement with China has been in the works for at least two decades. Wald credits Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for laying the groundwork for Israel's China pivot following his first visit to Beijing in 1998. Well before taking office in 1996, Israel's youngest prime minister at 46 years old had identified China's importance to his country's future, although the "Look East" shift was briefly interrupted when he lost re-election in 1999. By then, Israel was already convinced it needed to actively engage Asia's rising powers.

According to Wald, who wrote an influential book, *China and the Jewish People*, in 2004, Netanyahu felt that Israel was too focused fighting intractable prejudices in Europe and the Middle East made worse by the rise of radical Islam. China, India, Japan and some of their neighbours with almost no history of anti-Semitism were in full economic bloom, and buying products and services that Israel could supply. Israel faced a simple choice: continue obsessing over the old world, or branch out to a welcoming Asia with its large fast-growing markets.

Netanyahu made his move in May 2013 with a trip to Beijing to meet the new leadership under President Xi Jinping who was envisioning a globally-involved China with a large footprint in the Middle East. That meeting culminated nearly two years of groundwork to re-position Israel for an increasingly multi-polar global order.

"In 2010 and 2011, we undertook a detailed analysis of Israel's economy and concluded that we had to expand ties with Asia. China topped our agenda," said Netanel Oded, a senior National Economic Council (NEC) member in the Prime Minister's Office. Headed by influential economist Eugene Kandel, the council also counts India and Japan in Israel's long-term plan.

In his second coming to Beijing, Netanyahu played to China's self-esteem by calling Israel "a small country" and "a perfect junior partner" in their joint quest for economic development. He clinched the relationship with an offer to his host to co-operate in Israel's technology development.

Why would anyone risk sharing technology development with a country so notorious for intellectual property (IP) violations?

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrives for a meeting with Liu Yandong, the vice-premier of the People's Republic of China, in Jerusalem in May 2014. FLASH90 PHOTO

"We discussed this issue at length," said Oded in a phone interview as the NEC wrestled with the challenge of protecting Israeli technology in courting the Chinese market.

"China craves foreign technology, and Israel is seen as a world leader in technology," explained Dan Ben-Canaan, a China-based Israeli academic. Netanyahu's offer was timely as China was seeking international expertise to help clean up its environment and reduce its economic dependence on smokestack industries.

His trip helped launch the China-Israel Joint Task Force (JTF) to develop large projects that would "integrate Israeli advanced technologies into the Chinese market."

China responded by boosting its economic commitments with Israel. Oded said Chinese firms have invested more than US$2 billion in Israel so far this year compared with $300 million in 2014. Chinese firms are vying for Israel's infrastructure projects including a 300-kilometre freight rail linking the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. The two countries will soon begin free trade agreement talks as China prepares to overtake the U.S. as Israel's largest trading partner.

As part of its strategy to safeguard Israeli IP, the JTF has invited top Chinese firms to invest in Israel and jointly develop solutions with local firms.

"It's important to build trust so that we can focus on jointly developing the technology to meet China's demands. The Chinese need to know our work style and expectations, and we have to know theirs too," said Oded.

To date, more than 30 large Chinese firms including Alibaba, Xiaomi, Baidu, Lenovo and Fosun have established subsidiaries in Israel with the goal of developing technology and boosting exports to China. In a March 30 update, Kandel predicts that growing bilateral relations between the two countries will have "far-reaching effects on the Israeli economy."

Not everyone shares Kandel's optimism. Alon Levkowitz, an East Asia analyst at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, said "some Israeli companies are limiting co-operation with China," for fear that their IP will be compromised. He reminds Israel that the U.S. remains its main ally while China enjoys close ties with Iran and Syria.

But some Israelis are now accusing the U.S. of "abandoning" Israel with its proposed nuclear deal with Iran. Exacting some revenge, Netanyahu defied the Obama administration by committing Israel to the AIIB and supporting China's Silk Route strategy. China might yet help Israel and Iran find common ground. Or it might not, as the world awaits the next twist in this convoluted plot. ■

Ng Weng Hoong is a Vancouver journalist who specializes in writing about energy issues in Asia and the Middle East.

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 28, 2015

The true test of valour for Jewish parents

Judaism has two traditions – the tradition of the fathers and that of the mothers. What's the difference?

MAHARAT ABBY BROWN SCHEIER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The *eshet chavil* (woman of valour) described in the book of Proverbs is quite the woman

She doesn't sleep. She has an eye for business and buys a good field and works it. She makes clothes and linens for her home and even makes enough to sell. She feeds everyone in the house, waking up early to make sure they are properly satiated. She brings, she gives, she finds, she takes, she plants, she makes cloth and clothing – I'm exhausted just reading about her!

I read these verses and wonder: is it really possible to find an *eshet chayil*?

The verses of *Eshet Chayil* are traditionally sung to the woman of the house at the Shabbat table. However, in the very traditional home that I grew up in, this was one tradition we did not practise. My mother would have none of it.

Her opposition was not because she didn't take responsibility for the gourmet meal that was put before us. On the contrary, like the biblical *eshet chayil*, her hands were never idle. In fact, my strongest memory of my mother is how hard she worked in the kitchen – chopping, cooking, baking, braiding the challah. She was constantly creating.

My mother also made linens and curtains for all of our rooms (they kept changing as we grew up). She even made her own maternity clothes when she didn't like the ones in the stores. She planted and worked in the garden, and like the biblical ideal woman, she, too, had only words of kindness for everyone she encountered or spoke about.

You would think that the song was made for her, but she would have none of it

It could be that she was ahead of her time and understood that idealizing one's partner is detrimental to a relationship

Interestingly enough, the Bible doesn't present an equivalent list of characteristics of a capable husband. When we do have a description of an *ish chayil*, a man of valour, it describes a leader of the community. For example, when Jethro instructs Moses to choose community leaders, they are to be *anshei chayil*, "able men that fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain."

> *You would think that the song [Eshet Chavil] was made for her, but my mother would have none of it*

From a biblical perspective, a woman of valour is one who toils with her hands, is busy taking care of the needs of others – especially in the home. A man of valour, on the other hand, is one who is honest and upright – that allows him to be a judge and a leader of others. It is his intellectual abilities that are extolled.

In *A Tribute to the Rebbitzen of Talne*, Rabbi Yoseph Dov Soloveitchik wrote, "People are mistaken in thinking that there is only one tradition – the community of the fathers. It is not true. We have two traditions – that of the fathers and that of the mothers…

"One learns much from the father: how to read a text – the Bible or the Talmud – how to comprehend, how to analyze, how to conceptualize, how to classify, how to infer, how to apply, etc… One also learns from a father what to do and what not to do, what is morally right and what is morally wrong… [the] father's tradition is an intellectual-moral one."

The Rav then explained the tradition of his mother: "I used to watch her arranging the house in honour of a holiday. I used to see her recite prayers; I used to watch her recite the *sidrah* [weekly Torah portion] every Friday night and I still remember the nostalgic tune. I learned from her very much. Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only in formal compliance with the law, but also in a living experience. She taught me that there is a flavour, a scent and warmth to mitzvot.

"I learned from her the most important thing in life – to feel the presence of the Almighty and the gentle pressure of His hand resting upon my frail shoulders. Without her teachings, which quite often were transmitted to me in silence, I would have grown up a soulless being, dry and insensitive."

The Rav gave the example of Shabbat to understand the different roles of his parents: "The laws of Shabbat, for instance, were passed on to me by my father… The Shabbat as a living entity, as a queen, was revealed to me by my mother; The fathers knew much about the Shabbat; the mothers lived the Shabbat, experienced her presence, and perceived her beauty and splendour."

This is a beautiful tribute to the role of the woman in the spiritual household. Yet I feel uncomfortable reading it, since the implication is that what the father taught – the intellectual Torah – was lacking in soul and sensitivity.

Perhaps my own mother instinctively understood that the Torah and the traditions that she wanted to pass on to her children were not just the traditions of the home. Her hands were not only for the challah she baked, but they also expressed her passion for teaching, writing, learning, and her hands were also there to hold the phone – she was always listening and sharing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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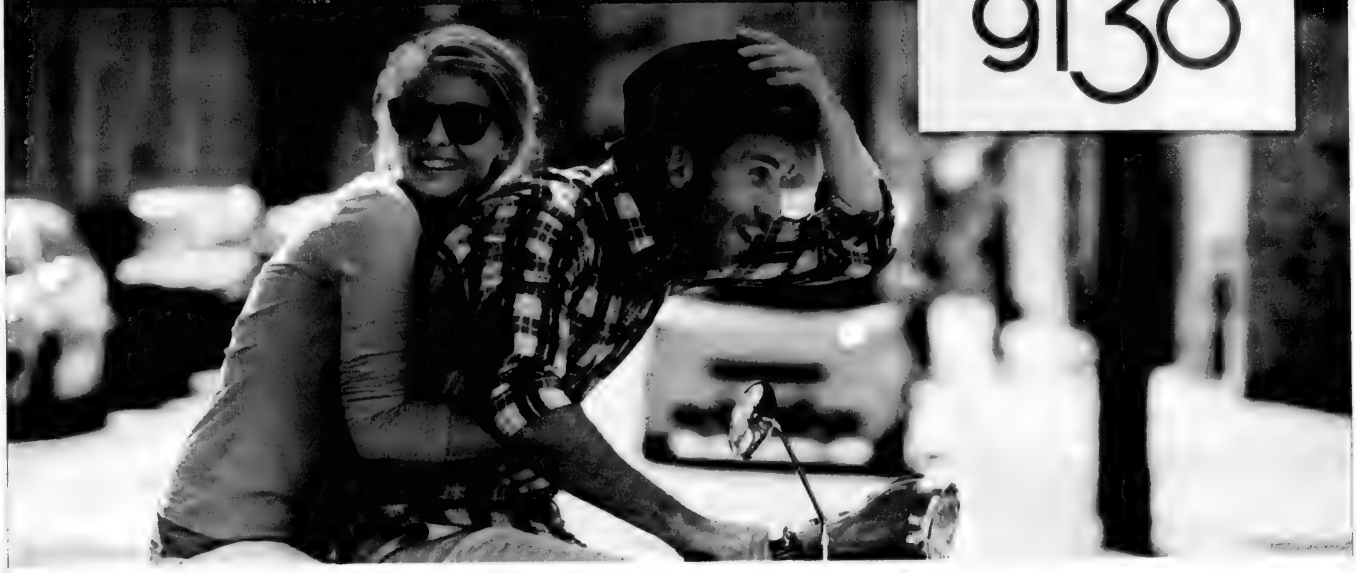

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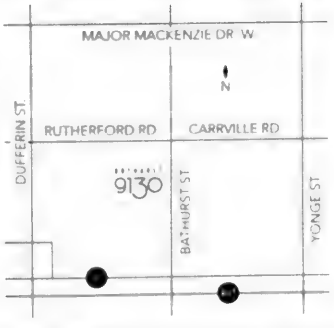

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 28, 2015

Israel's Jewish and democratic ideals are in harmony

Gil Troy

A new front in the relentless attacks on Israel is the attack on Israel's democracy. The argument is perverse. Democracy remains MIA – missing in action – throughout the Arab world. Palestinians in Gaza suffer under a Hamas dictatorship. Palestinians in the West Bank endure an authoritarian regime with a president serving the 10th year of his four-year term.

Israeli Arabs are among the few Arabs in the Middle East who enjoy basic civil liberties and a stable democratic government, exemplified by their 63.5 per cent turnout this past Israeli election. Palestinians in the territories are among the few Arabs (with their Israeli Arab cousins) who can petition a Supreme Court that occasionally limits the government.

Nevertheless, critics magnify Israel's occasional governmental missteps so much that many now believe Israeli democracy is imperiled, using that as an another excuse to question its right to exist.

Underlying this outrageous lie is a false assumption – echoed in Israeli domestic politics – that Israel's "Jewish" and "democratic" characters are in constant conflict. While there are occasional tensions, remember that the Bible gave birth to democracy, meaning that Jewish and democratic ideals usually harmonize with each other.

Democracy begins by realizing that every individual is equal, has dignity, and has inherent rights. From that flows the need to protect civil liberties, maintain consent of the governed, and nurture a flourishing civil society.

The Bible was a revolutionary revelation because it appreciates each individual human being. The ideas of liberty and equality follow from that insight as naturally as summer follows spring. So many biblical verses celebrate the individual, the essential commitment to fairness, the mission to "proclaim liberty throughout the land."

That's the easy sell. The great revisionist Zionist Ze'ev Jabotinsky loved to teach that "Every person's a king," crediting the Bible as the source of that notion, which clearly shaped his vision of how central democracy was in Jewish tradition and should be in a future Jewish state.

There was a broad Zionist consensus regarding the overlap and interplay between Jewish and democratic values. In his speech on "The Imperatives of the Jewish Revolution," delivered in Haifa in 1944, David Ben-Gurion, across the ideological spectrum from Jabotinsky, proclaimed: "This people gave the world great and eternal moral truths and commandments. This people rose to prophetic visions of the unity of the Creator with His creation, of the dignity and infinite worth of the individual (because every man is created in the divine image), of social justice, universal peace, and love – 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

The harder challenge is looking at someone like Moses, clearly designated by God as leader and seeing the democratic lessons embedded in his leadership narrative. When God first dispatches Moses to lead the people out of Egypt, the young ex-prince says, "but, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." This reflects the classic democratic leader's challenge of searching for legitimacy.

Similarly, in the buildup to the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, God tells Moses that by making the revelation publicly, it will enhance his status with the people. A true dictator compels and controls, while a democratic leader invites and occasionally cajoles. Again, while Moses does not run for election, he does experience what we call in American politics the "permanent campaign," the attempt to remain popular with the people, rooted in respect for them and their collective power.

All democracies are imperfect, and all reconcile various tensions. Rather than bemoaning Israel's Jewish democracy, we should celebrate it as a miracle, that despite constant warlike conditions, it has preserved equality, liberty, consent of the governed, civil society and individual dignity, as both Jewish and democratic values. ■

The stuff of memory

Sara Horowitz

One wonderful facet of academic life is the opportunity to live temporarily in places other than one's own home. Research projects, visiting professorships and the rhythm of the university calendar make it possible to spend weeks, months or even a year in some other city or country. Professors swap homes with colleagues in distant places, settle in apartments of other nomads or rent other short-term spaces.

And there you find yourself, with some small percentage of your wardrobe, none of your usual kitchen accoutrements, little of your library, away from the decor you've painstakingly put together and few of the life souvenirs you've acquired.

You find yourself, in other words, away from your stuff.

Most of my colleagues reflect on how startlingly liberating it feels to be away from your stuff. You feel light and portable – a better version of you. "We don't need so much stuff," you find yourself thinking. You don't miss any of the things left behind. You find yourself suddenly cured of attachment to things material, vitally connected to the intangibles that matter. And as the time to return draws near, you think it will be so odd to go back to all that stuff.

But then you're home, and it's not odd at all. We reconnect to our possessions quickly and happily. Because for most of us, our stuff helps define us and anchor us to time, place and context. That we save letters, photos, our children's macaroni paintings; that we treasure challah knives and kiddush cups passed down through generations; that we collect dolls, tchatchkes, watercolours, first editions or sugar cubes – this accumulation of stuff does not mean that we are superficial or materialistic. Except for the relatively few true ascetics, we human are creatures who make meaning in padding our nests. Our things are a physical sign of the web that connects us with our past, our present, our world, our people.

I thought of the importance of stuff recently when I saw *Woman in Gold*, the film that traces the restitution of a famous Klimt painting to Maria Altmann, whose Austrian Jewish family had owned it before it was plundered by Nazis during World War II and made its illicit way into a museum in Vienna.

The film succeeded in dramatizing an unusual story of art recovery without allowing the story of a painting, however magnificent, to eclipse the greater, more devastating story of the Jews of Europe under Nazism. Art may sometimes be recovered, the film reminds us at several key points, but murdered victims cannot.

The painting is truly amazing. Seen in its New York gallery, it dazzles. But Altmann treasured it not because it was great art or because it was valuable, but because it was a portrait of a much-loved family member.

For most of us, the stuff we treasure doesn't add up to millions. Still, we value our family artifacts no less, and for much the same reasons: they connect us to those who came before, to those we love, to our own stories, to ourselves. But no ambitious curator would eye them with envy. They would not end up on auction at Sotheby's.

In *Woman in Gold*, the Klimt painting becomes something more than itself. It becomes a symbol of all that was outrageously taken from the Jews of Europe – and of the enduring absence of accountability, and the insistence on justice, or at least, truthfulness about the past. Ironically, the painting's masterliness and value made its postwar possessors fight to hold on to it and at the same time allowed its rightful owner to locate it and demonstrate its provenance.

After seeing the film, I thought about the everyday stuff taken from ordinary folk during the war. These things – family heirlooms, photos, sentimental gifts and the like – would be no less precious to their inheritors, but are impossible to locate, impossible to recover. ■

Why Canadian conservatives respected Alan Borovoy

Michael Taube

Many Canadians were saddened to hear that Alan Borovoy, former general counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), passed away on May 11. This included many Canadian conservatives, too.

Surprised? You shouldn't be.

It's true that we didn't have much in common with him when it came to politics. As Barbara Kay noted in her fine personal tribute to Borovoy in *The Walrus* on May 12, "he established himself as Canada's most dogged defender of classical liberal values." I agree, but that was often in spite of his own hardline political tendencies.

To wit, the CCLA's most prominent spokesperson wrote in his memoir, *At the Barricades* (2014), "I was a social democrat, a civil libertarian, a secular Jew, and a philosophical pragmatist." (Canada's right would have agreed with his position of being "an unequivocal anti-Communist and perhaps even a Cold War hawk.")

That being said, many Canadian conservatives and libertarians shared one important trait with this social democratic thinker: his strong support for free speech.

I would be surprised if most right-leaning Canadian free speech defenders didn't publicly or privately respect Borovoy's lifetime of work in this particular area. There were always points of disagreement, and pretty strong ones, at that. Yet it's hard not to admire the fact that he often went against the left-wing grain when it came to freedom of speech.

National Post columnist George Jonas put it this way on May 13: "[Borovoy] derived his satisfaction entirely from defending civil liberties against encroachments from the right of the political spectrum. It never occurred to him that civil liberties can be threatened from the left, or more precisely he never let it occur to him, and resisted others trying to point it out. Consequently our association consisted of little except sharp debates during endless walks in Toronto's Yorkville district that generally began in the now defunct Coffee Mill. We agreed on virtually nothing except the importance of liberty. It was enough for a lifetime of friendship."

In my view, Borovoy was the closest thing we ever had to a left-wing free speech absolutist in Canada. He was always willing to strongly defend the rights of those he personally despised (neo-Nazis, anti-Semites) to ensure that the rights of all Canadians would always be protected.

A passage from his book, *The New Anti-Liberals* (1999), summed up his lifelong position rather nicely: "Freedom of speech is undermined not only by the convictions that are ultimately registered, but also by the prosecutions that are initially threatened. If we cannot speak our minds publicly without the fear of facing a criminal charge, we are not enjoying a meaningful freedom of speech."

Exactly. As I've argued many times before, freedom of speech is the defense of ideas that are objective and objectionable. A truly democratic society must support views that appear right to us and must tolerate views that appear wrong to us. We don't have to agree with an opposing viewpoint, but we must defend a person's right to support a particular position in a nonviolent manner.

If you don't happen to agree with those basic principles, please don't call yourself a free speech supporter. You're not.

This doesn't mean you have to like or admire the person who made a particular comment, however.

Consider this thoughtful example from the pen (well, computer) of *CJN* columnist Bernie Farber. In a May 12 column for *Now Magazine*, he wrote about a time when his mentor appeared on an open line radio show. "One of the callers turned out to be famous Holocaust-denier Ernst Zundel. Borovoy seized the moment. 'While I feel obliged to defend Mr. Zundel's legal rights, I have no comparable obligation to treat him with respect.'"

"It was quintessential Borovoy," wrote Farber. While I never had the opportunity to meet him, I'd have to agree.

Alan Borovoy, RIP. ■

Michael Taube is a Washington Times contributor, political commentator and former speechwriter for Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Anti-Semitism should be an international crime

Alan Baker

Anti-Semitism has always been, and remains, a major, recurring aspect of life. Curiously, while the phenomenon has been universally researched, the international community has never been asked to criminalize anti-Semitism as an international crime in a similar manner to the criminalization of genocide, racism, piracy, hostage-taking, crimes against humanity, war crimes and terror.

With the plethora of material dealing with anti-Semitism, and in light of the dreadful tragedies that it has wrought on humanity for thousands of years and its recent re-awakening, one might have expected that some effort would have been made by the international community, as well as the world's Jewish organizations, to declare anti-Semitism an international crime.

This would have been appropriate as well as propitious in an international community that is increasingly becoming open to the concept of extending criminal jurisdiction in order to counter impunity, including through the establishment of ad-hoc international criminal tribunals to deal with atrocities committed in various regional conflicts (Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia and others) as well as the International Criminal Court, which, pursuant to its 1998 Statute, was established to address "the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole."

By its very nature, its long, bitter and never-ending history, and its propensity to constantly re-appear in modern forms and contexts, anti-Semitism cannot, and should not, by any pretext of so-called "political correctness," be equated with, linked to or treated like any other form of racial discrimination. It cannot and should not be relegated to any type of listing of forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia. Anti-Semitism stands alone.

In this context, attempts over the years within the international community, principally at the behest of Muslim countries, to attach to it Islamophobia and other phenomena in various international resolutions and declarations (including the infamous 2001 UN anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa), are clearly artificial and transparent, and fail to do justice to what clearly is a unique phenomenon that must be dealt with independently.

With a view to correcting what is clearly a vast international injustice, and to universally criminalize anti-Semitism within the world community, a draft "International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of anti-Semitism" has been prepared by a team, headed by this writer, within the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. It was presented to the Global Forum to Counter Antisemitism, held in Jerusalem earlier this month.

This convention has been drafted following the accepted format of other UN international conventions condemning such crimes as genocide, racial discrimination, terror and other serious international criminal phenomena. It will be presented to the international community in a series of conferences to be held at the United Nations and other international organizations and in select capitals, and it will seek the support and sponsorship of states and Jewish organizations.

The aim is to encourage select states to sponsor the draft convention and either to present it to the appropriate UN bodies for processing as an international convention or to convene an international conference or forum dedicated solely to anti-Semitism, independent of and separate from the UN, with a view to its formal adoption as a draft treaty and its submission to states for signature and ratification.

In light of the complex and legal nature of the subject matter, and the novel idea of criminalizing anti-Semitism internationally, it's anticipated that this text will be the subject of considerable discussion and debate both within the relevant bodies dealing with the issue of anti-Semitism as well as in the wider international arena where political and other issues would be injected into the discussion.

It will not be an easy task, but it is necessary. ■

Alan Baker served as Israel's ambassador to Canada as well as the legal counsel to Israel's Foreign Ministry. Today he directs the Institute for Contemporary Affairs at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

News

Police investigate east end newsletter for hate

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

The Toronto Police Service's hate crimes unit has opened an investigation into a newsletter delivered in the Beach and East York neighbourhoods of Toronto that residents say is anti-Semitic.

Police are acting on a complaint from a member of the public who received the May edition of *Your Ward News* in their mailbox, said Det.-Const. Kiren Bisla.

"We're looking at it to see if it violates any hate laws," Bisla told *The CJN*.

Complaints about the publication were first raised by a Jewish postal worker who objected to delivering the newsletter, which claims it is delivered to 48,000 homes and has 200,000 readers.

The May edition of the publication features on its cover photo-shopped images of a purportedly Jewish postal worker, with a beard, kippah and payot (sidelocks), a bagel by his side and spraying bagel crumbs from his mouth, saying "It's the Holocaust all over again." Next to that image is a pictures of two stereotypical Jewish lawyers, with long noses, seeking to determine whether a past issue of the magazine promoted hate.

Inside the magazine, you'll find references to Jews and Israel that paints them as powerful, manipulative and invariably in a negative light. There is a claim that the attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in Paris was "a staged false-flag operation likely perpetrated by the Israeli Mossad and the American CIA (the same two groups that dragged us into wars for Israel, by destroying the Twin Towers and created the fake 'ISIS' threat.)"

Much of the material aimed at Jews was also employed by notorious anti-Semitic propagandists Jim Keegstra and Ernst Zundel: references to "ZioMarxist-controlled mainstream media;" a claim that "Marxist Jews in the Soviet Union" were responsible for killing 50 million Orthodox Christians; suggestions that the Holocaust "supposedly happened to your people;" that Jews have "an inherent supremacist attitude;" the claim that Ashkenazi Jews are really descendants of Turkish Khazars; and that Jews perpetrate massacres. A novel twist is the assertion that Jews were behind the Armenian genocide.

Bernie Farber, former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress and former head of its community relations department, said the publication "is a throwback to the times of the Heritage Front" – except the material published by the white supremacist Heritage Front was not as "in your face."

He referred to the front page of the newsletter, which was a part of a wraparound sponsored by editor-in-chief James Sears' New Constitution Party of Canada, as "ugly caricatures of Jews better left in the [Nazi-era newspaper] *Der Sturmer* than in a Canadian publication."

(The home page of Sears' New Constitution Party's website relies heavily on Nazi imagery, including upraised arms giving the Nazi salute.)

Farber, who noted that one of the photo-shopped caricatures on the front page was based on a picture of himself, applauded residents of the Beach who raised concerns about the newsletter's contents. And he rejected suggestions that marginal publications like *Your Ward News* should be left in obscurity.

The front cover of May's *Your Ward News*

"I always believe these people should be exposed," he said. "And if he violates the law, he should be subject to the law."

Len Rudner, director of community relations and outreach for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said "the caricature that appears on the May issue is clearly anti-Semitic. Whether that is the intent of the individual is a different matter."

He noted the magazine has repeated references to "zioMarxists," a conflation of Zionism and communism.

"It's difficult to escape the conclusion that the purpose of the material is to point to the Jewish community and demonize the entire community," he said.

Warren Kinsella, a lawyer and author of *Web of Hate*, a look at the extremist right in Canada, said he and other residents of the east end have started a website called Canadiansagainstprejudice.com to oppose the message of the newsletter.

The site lists *Your Ward News* advertisers and asks if they know what kind of newsletter they are supporting.

Kinsella said he has been in touch with Canada Post, which continues to be paid to distribute the magazine, despite examining its content. "They don't seem to care at all," he said.

Canada Post did not respond to a query prior to *The CJN*'s deadline, but the *Toronto Star* quoted a Canada Post spokesperson as saying that *Your Ward News* did not meet the standard for "non-mailable matter."

Leroy St. Germaine, publisher of *Your Ward News*, also did not respond to *The CJN*'s requests for comment, but he told the *Star* that the publication is not anti-Semitic, that the caricatures were meant to be humorous and that the publication is simply "not politically correct."

And in a message to readers, Sears challenges those who would use the courts to "silence us. I am a fearless, obsessed man with very deep pockets who is loved and admired by many wealthy sympathizers. Canada Post, a multi-billion-dollar crown corporation, submitted to me. Attack us and my wrath will be swift, unyielding and decisive. I will crush you like a cockroach." ■

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This program is eligible for substantive CPD hours required of Lawyers by the LSUC

Will Challenges, Ethics and Halacha

Since 2006, B'nai Brith Canada's Estates & Trusts Group, Lawyers Division has been providing seminars to lawyers and accountants on estates and trusts issues. In each of our seminars, there is one thing that separates us from the balance of the CLE programs offered in the city.

Charles Wagner

We address ethical issues in the context of estates, Ontario and Jewish law.

Under the Substitute Decisions Act, a person can appoint a person as power of attorney for property to manage property and to make personal care decisions. The legislation sets out certain duties of that person which includes an obligation to obtain a copy of the last valid will and testament of the grantor and ensure in managing the grantor's property, that specific assets bequeathed to specific parties are not liquidated if possible. Arguably, that might require a court to adjudicate on the validity of a will prior to the testator's demise.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

We have invited Archie Rabinowitz of Dentons Canada and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner of Yeshiva University Torah Mitzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov of Toronto, to present a paper that compares and contrasts the obligations of a power of attorney under Ontario and Jewish law.

Archie Rabinowitz is uniquely qualified in this regard not only because of his time spent in Yeshiva studying Halacha, but because he is a senior member of the estates bar. Rabbi Torczyner is the Rosh Kollel of YU Kollel in Toronto. He has been a frequent guest speaker at the seminar and holds a series of CLE lectures for lawyers throughout the year on issue that arise when Halacha and common law conflict.

Archie Rabinowitz

Archie's and the Rabbi's presentation will address how the different legal systems deal with the Power of attorney issues. May the power of attorney profit from his/her role? Is gifting assets of the grantor permitted? What restrictions exist on the discretion of the POA with respect to property and personal care? Finally – what is the ethical and professional obligation of the orthodox Jewish power of attorney and lawyer when the obligations of Ontario's law and Halacha conflict?

The event will take place on June 2nd, 2015 at Shaarei Shomayim-Synagogue at 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5N 1V8. Registration is at 7:30am and the moot court will begin at 8:00am. The event is open to lawyers and accountants. Those lawyers and/or accountants interested in attending may contact Elyse Gruenspan at B'nai Brith Canada at (416) 633-6224 or email at egruenspan@bnaibrith.ca .

Charles B. Wagner, of Wagner Sidlofsky LLP, is a certified specialist in Estates & Trusts Law. He chairs the Estate and Trusts Group, Lawyers Division of B'nai Brith that created and runs this annual continuing legal education program for professionals dealing with estate and trust issues.

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Montreal event hails Harper as a modern-day King David

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca

Rabbi Saul Emanuel, right, executive director of the Jewish Community Council of Montreal, presents Prime Minister Stephen Harper with the inaugural King David Award.
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE / JILL THOMPSON PHOTO

Stephen Harper defended his government's anti-terrorism legislation as necessary for protecting constitutional rights and not a threat to them, as the opposition claims.

The prime minister received thunderous applause for Bill C-51, which will soon receive royal assent, from the more than 1,000 guests attending a dinner in his honour, held under the auspices of the Jewish Community Council of Montreal (Vaad Ha'ir) on May 21.

Harper received its inaugural King David Award for his clear and consistent defence of Israel and strong moral stance against anti-Semitism.

The event, held under extremely tight security at Montreal's Crowne Plaza hotel, benefits a new fund in memory of Lynn Eltes, who died one year ago, created by her husband Sam Eltes. This year's proceeds will be directed to Jewish education "in all its forms" in Canada and abroad, it was announced.

Guest speaker World Jewish Congress president Ronald Lauder stated "unequivocally" that Israel and the Jewish people have "no better friend" than Harper.

Harper's theme was that the world is an increasingly dangerous place and Canada must do what is necessary to keep its citizens safe.

"There is a war on Canada... the threat is real," he said, citing a recent CSIS report that "there are violent groups and people in the world who want to kill Canadians."

Bill C-51 provides Canada's security agencies with the tools to keep Canadians safe, without infringing on their freedoms, he said.

He also defended Canada's participation in the battle against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, saying "it is in our national interests" and "Canada can't opt out of the world."

He also affirmed Israel's right to defend itself.

"Israel's leadership has no choice but, at all times, to take the force it needs to protect what its enemies wish to destroy," he said.

"The only difference between Hamas and Israel, and ISIS and us, is that Hamas is closer to Israel. Israel is on the front lines. Those who turn a blind eye to Israel's enemies do so in the long run at their own peril."

Harper also said: "Our foreign policy is different from the approach in the past, when we were trying to be liked by every dictator with a vote at the United Nations... We refuse to be neutral."

Harper was praised throughout the evening in the most effusive terms and received several standing ovations, even shouts and whistles.

Lauder also emphasized that the world is becoming more perilous, especially for Jews.

"I believe we are at the most dangerous point since the end of World War II," he said.

"After the war, no normal person would express anti-Semitism. But three generations later, 70 years, it's once again out in the open. And Israel is the lightning rod for this anti-Semitism."

Lauder sounded the alarm that Iran "denies the Holocaust while it plans for the next one."

The accusation from certain quarters that Israel sent a rescue mission to earthquake-stricken Nepal "to steal children is no different from the blood libels of 300 years ago," he said.

The boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign's "ultimate aim is to destroy the Jewish state."

Anti-Semitism is a daily phenomenon, particularly in Europe, he added. "When a young boy in a yarmulke can't walk safely on the streets of Paris or London or Berlin, something is terribly wrong... We've been this way before."

The situation is made all the worse because "the world is silent," with Harper being one of the few exceptions among political leaders, Lauder continued.

The evening's MC, Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz of Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem, said Harper's strong moral stance has special meaning for him as the son of a Holocaust survivor.

"The battle scars of anti-Semitism are not theoretical for many people in this room. You [Harper] understand this... You learned about anti-Semitism and what happened in World War II from your father, and you vowed to stand with the Jewish People." ■

Jewish values enhance life, JEDx speakers tell event

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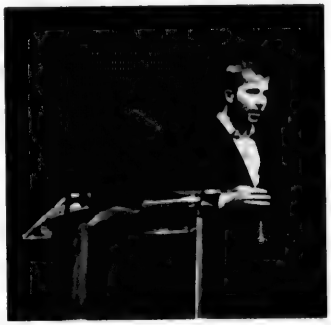

Michael Katchen JAMES YIGITOZ PHOTO

People show greatness when the stakes are high, Rabbi Rafi Lipner, executive director of The House, an organization that seeks to cultivate a deep appreciation of Jewish values and traditions in Jewish young adults, told an audience of 550 at The House's third annual JEDx event.

A variant on the popular TED talks, JEDx, which stands for Jewish Ethics Defined, was created as a platform for young Jews to be inspired by the stories of innovators who have integrated Jewish values into their personal and professional lives.

Held May 20 at St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and primarily attended by Jewish young professionals, this year's theme was "No Compromises," and the four featured speakers discussed different ways they have stuck by their values.

In his opening remarks, Rabbi Lipner stressed that only when people have strong values is the notion of "no compromises" relevant.

Jonathan Medved, founder and CEO of the global equity crowdfunding platform OurCrowd, spoke about embracing traditional Judaism as a young adult and how it has seriously enriched his life.

"I've never looked at being Jewish as 'giving stuff up,' but as what I got from it," he said, describing how he's woven Jewish values into his work life, such as giving his employees chol hamoed off on Sukkot and Passover and establishing a kosher kitchen in his office.

He said his observance of Shabbat has given him a healthy work-life balance.

"I'll tell you this much: when Friday afternoon comes, I'm gonna be mellow. I'm going to be smelling the cooking, thinking about taking that first sip of single malt and playing with my grandkids... There's no such thing as an opposition between culture and Judaism. You can have it all."

The next speaker was Cheryl Reicin, a partner at Torys LLP and an internationally renowned lawyer specializing in life sciences and technology.

Reicin spoke about a life-altering experience she had at age 26.

Already a lawyer, she was flying back to her former home of New York from a vacation in Israel when the crew discovered a note someone had left in the washroom saying there was a bomb on the plane.

As the plane turned back, Reicin grew contemplative, reflecting on what she had done in her life so far to "move the dial."

Though she had experienced considerable career success, Reicin felt she hadn't done enough to make an impact.

When the flight landed safely and she returned home, Reicin began making changes. She got involved in legal work for Israeli biotech companies, she eventually joined a number of foundation boards, and she started a program with help from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto called Genesis, which runs a Jewish mentoring program.

"What keeps me sane is Shabbat. People ask me if it's impeded my career, but I say with 100 per cent certainty that it's enhanced it. I'd never be able to keep this pace without it."

Next up was Lynda Fishman, a social worker, inspirational speaker and author of *Repairing Rainbows*, a book about rebuilding her life after her mother and sisters were killed in a plane crash when she was 13.

She'd promised herself she would have a happy and fulfilling life despite this tragedy, and she described building a family, reinventing herself through several career changes – from hospital social worker to camp director to author – and inspiring others to be resilient.

The final speaker was Michael Katchen, the 27-year-old founder and CEO of WealthSimple, an "accessible" wealth management company.

He described how, in putting immense energy into figuring out his company's values, he'd briefly neglected investigating his own individual values.

He shared what he's since reflected on: that it's important to live deliberately, to surround yourself with people who will keep you honest, to hold yourself accountable and to "live up to your values even when no one's watching."

The latter principle has been informed by his Jewish values, he said, which have taught him to strive to become his ideal self. "Many of us here are just starting our careers, and this is the time to think about who we want to be and how we can get there, so we don't wake up in 20 years and go, 'This isn't who I wanted to be.'" ■

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 28, 2015

Dinner to honour community builder Aron Frankel

JODIE SHUPAC
shupac@thecjn.ca

In addition to the three children, 13 grandchildren and 19 great-children he left behind, Aron Frankel left a strong community legacy, says his daughter, Esty Edell.

On June 1, Bnei Akiva Schools will honour the late Frankel, one of the founders of Bnei Akiva's affiliate Orthodox high schools Yeshivat Or Chaim (for boys) and Ulpanat Orot (for girls), with the Aron Frankel Legacy Dinner.

To be held at the Terrace Banquet Hall in Vaughan, the event will include the dedication of the Aron and Miriam Frankel Beit Midrash at Ulpanat Orot – a newly refurbished beit midrash funded by Edell and her husband Joseph – and will also feature a number of speakers, including Edell, who will speak on behalf of her family.

Dinner co-chair Eli Rubenstein will give a tribute to Frankel, while the keynote speaker will be Rabbi David Stav, chief rabbi of the Israeli town of Shoham and co-founder of the alternative Orthodox rabbinical organization Tzohar.

Frankel, a Holocaust survivor and an immigrant to Canada from what is now Ukraine, passed away in 2008, leaving behind his wife Miriam.

Frankel was an avid community-builder and strong proponent of modern Orthodox Jewish education.

He helped found Yeshivat Bnei Akiva Or Chaim, the boys' division of the school, in 1973, and he helped establish the girls' division, Ulpanat Orot, in 1975, both in accordance with the Bnei Akiva principles of aliyah and love of the Land and People of Israel – values to which he was steadfastly devoted, his daughter said.

Hailing from a long line of scholars, Frankel was raised in a traditional chassidic family in Galicia and was forced into hiding along with his parents when the Nazis occupied Galicia in 1941.

Though his father was killed by the Nazis, Frankel and his mother managed to survive the war. In 1948 they moved to Toronto, where he studied under Rabbi Avraham Price, embarked on an accounting career and met his wife Miriam, with whom he had three children: Mark, Ralph and Esty.

Aron and Miriam Frankel

A founding member of Clanton Park Synagogue, Frankel became heavily involved in growing the local Jewish community and fundraising for Jewish educational and other initiatives, in Toronto, across North America and in Israel.

He helped to establish Or Chaim with a vision of integrating Torah education and love of Israel with a strong secular education, Edell said.

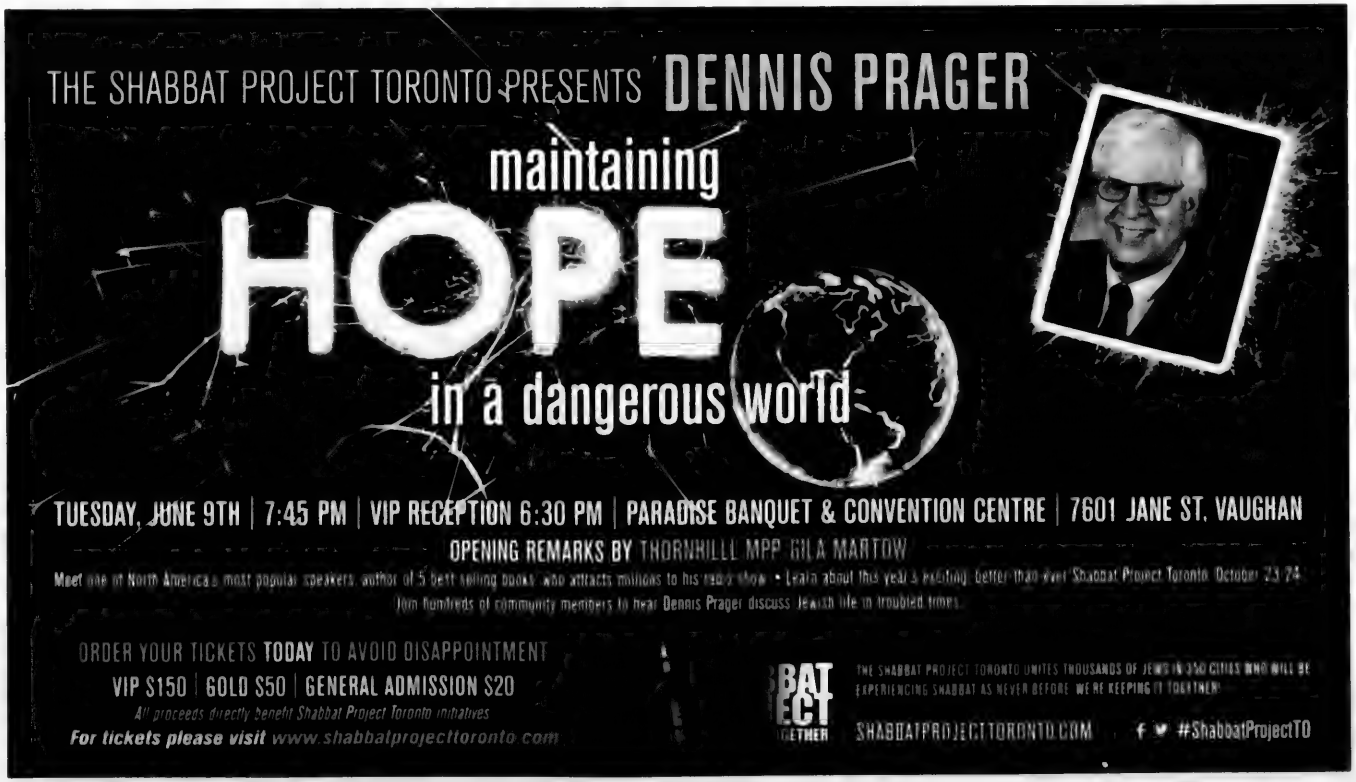
He saw this as a way of fostering future community leaders in North America and Israel.

A year or so after helping to establish the boys' high school, Edell was of the age to begin high school, and Frankel pushed to establish a girls' version of the school, one that would also emphasize Torah and love of Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael, said Shaindy Cohen Goldstein, who helped organize the legacy dinner.

"I'm very proud," Edell said. "My parents came here as ravages of the Holocaust, with nothing, just an indelible spirit and a strong need to succeed and create a family steeped in Jewish values, as well as a community steeped in the values of religiosity, education and commitment to make the world a better place."

The event begins at 6 p.m. and tickets are $180 per person. ■

For more information, contact shaindy@bneiakivaschools.org.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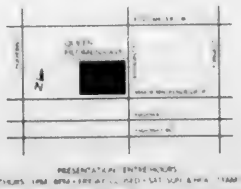

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 28, 2015

Na'amat Canada celebrates 90 years of volunteerism

JORDAN ADLER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

For Bess Plosker, volunteering has always been a part of her and her family's life. Growing up in Winnipeg, she watched her mother give back to the local community. Now living in Toronto, that spirit of giving has extended to her children and other relatives.

But Plosker, 91, has another family – a group of 80 women – that remains just as integral to her life. Plosker is one of the last surviving members of Club Masada, which this year celebrates 70 years of service to Na'amat Canada.

As members of an organization that supports and enhances the quality of life for women and children in Canada and Israel, Plosker and close to 40 other women in their late 80s and 90s are still active volunteers.

"I always felt that people need to give meaning to life, and live with a purpose," Plosker told *The CJN*. "We [in Club Masada] care about our work for Na'amat in Israel, but we also care about each other."

Founded in 1945, Club Masada's current efforts include a Spiritual Adopt-a-Child program to financially support children in Israeli day care centres.

For Club Masada meetings, only about 20 women are still able and healthy enough to come out. Regardless, these senior volunteers still lead the charge in fundraising for the organization.

To honour this continuous spirit of giving, the Ministry of Citizenship will recognize these senior volunteers with special awards at a May 31 gala in Toronto. The gala will also celebrate 90 years of Na'amat Canada, as well as the anniversaries of Club Masada (70 years of service) and Club Beersheba (60 years).

For many years, Na'amat volunteers in Canada were called "Pioneer Women." The Canadian contingent was formed to help contribute to Israel's growth from afar.

Na'amat began in Israel in 1925 as the Women's Organization for the Pioneer Women of Palestine. The original founders were members of the Labor Zionist movement that wanted to help build a country where women had benefits such as equal pay for equal work and access to post-secondary education.

Since its genesis 70 years ago, Toronto's Club Masada can boast having seven Toronto Council presidents and three of Na'amat Canada's national presidents. The Toronto club has also raised more money for Na'amat Canada than any other group in the organization's history.

One of those national presidents was Pearl Mekler, who served in the role from 1981 to 1984. Mekler is a founding member of Club Masada whose mother was a founding member of Na'amat Canada's first club in 1925.

"For some people, it was social and an escape," Mekler said, referring to Club Masada. "For me, it was more ideological. But I did make some lifelong friends."

Mekler recently came up with a program to honour Na'amat's founding mothers. The new initiative is aimed at Jewish women whose mothers and grandmothers were the original Na'amat volunteers in Canada, with the hope of spreading charitable goodwill to future generations.

Many years ago, those founding mothers stood on street corners handing out oranges to raise money for Palestine. Today, the hope is for younger Jewish women to remember their parents and grandparents through the spirit of giving.

Of the other programs Club Masada has championed, the Spiritual Adopt-a-Child fundraiser has been its most successful. The project has given financial support to more than 18,000 children in Israel as they move from one of Na'amat's many daycare centres through high school.

The founding members of Na'amat in 1925.

To mark 90 years of Na'amat, the gala committee hopes to raise enough money to "spiritually adopt" 90 children. A $1,000 donation will subsidize one of Na'amat's 18,000 children in daycare for a year.

Na'amat Canada has also helped to sponsor women's shelters for victims of violence and domestic abuse in Israel, as well as legal aid bureaus.

"It's part of my being… I cannot imagine life without it," Mekler said of Na'amat. "I feel fulfilled that I have contributed something to the building of the State [of Israel] and maintaining it." ■

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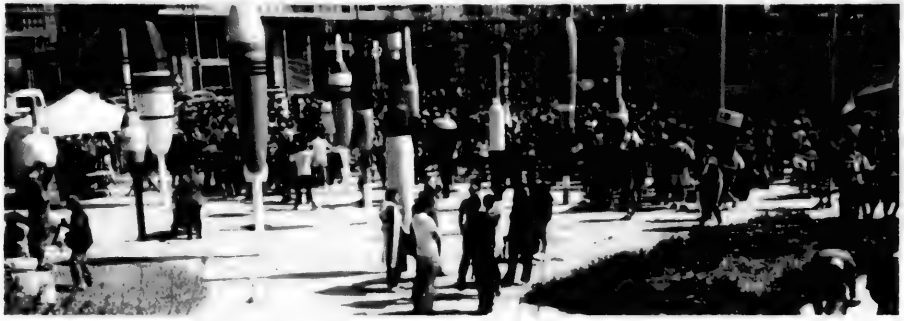
Annual UJA Federation Walk with Israel raises $1 million



Some 17,000 people ventured down to Toronto's waterfront May 18 for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's 48th annual Walk with Israel. Proceeds from the six-kilometre solidarity walk will go directly to programs and services in Israel supported by UJA. Organizers expect this year's event to raise $1 million for the first time. PHOTOS BY NOAH WOLGELERENTER, PAUL LUNGEN AND UJA FEDERATION

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Israel-Canada business growing on several fronts

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Reza Moridi, left, and Avi Hasson

Business ties between Canada and Israel continue to expand.

Earlier this month, Reza Moridi, Ontario's minister of research and innovation, visited Israel, where he and Avi Hasson, chief scientist of Israel's Ministry of the Economy, each announced $3 million in funding for companies collaborating in joint research and development projects in the high-tech field.

Around the same time, Innovation Saskatchewan, the Embassy of Israel and the Canada-Israel Industrial R & D Foundation (CIIRDF) hosted the first-ever Saskatchewan-Israel Agritech Roundtable in Saskatoon. The event brought together representatives of 10 Israeli technology companies and leaders of more than 30 organizations in the province's agricultural sector.

Further to the west, an earlier effort to promote collaboration between Israeli high-tech companies and Canadian oilsands firms has led to 21 Israeli proposals to help Alberta oil producers deal with issues such as water reclamation and greenhouse gases.

And in yet another development, the Embassy of Israel and Startup Canada are sponsoring a competition to find Canada's top ICT (information and communications technology) startup to represent Canada in Start Tel Aviv, a global competition for founders of web or mobile startup companies in the seed stage of development. The winner, who must be between 25 and 40, will receive "an intense, all-expense-paid, five-day startup experience in Tel Aviv."

These are busy times for those promoting business ties between Canada and Israel, said Henri Rothschild, president of CIIRDF, which will implement the Ontario funding program in Canada.

Both Ontario and Israel have pledged $6 million for joint projects as part of the Ontario-Israel Collaborative Program (OICP), but that will amount to only about 40 per cent of the total invested in research. The Ontario and Israeli companies are expected to contribute or raise the rest, he said.

Each company is eligible to receive a maximum of $300,000 toward the projects, which are expected to focus on areas such as medical devices, information technology, advanced manufacturing, clean technology and the life sciences. Those are the areas that have already been funded by the two jurisdictions, based on a memorandum of understanding initiated 10 years ago.

To date, provincial and government of Israel funds have gone to support 15 joint research and development projects, leveraging nearly $17 million in investments from other sources and generating $52.5 million in revenue for the participating companies.

Rothschild said the corporate participants predict that in the next decade, up to $1 billion in economic value could be realized from the joint projects, though he suggested a figure closer to $200 million to $300 million might be more realistic.

"The new agreement will support existing collaborative research and development projects between Israel and Ontario-based companies and includes a new call for proposals for joint initiatives," the ministry said in a statement.

The CIIRDF will administer the Canadian portion of the joint project by soliciting calls for proposals, reviewing them, providing feedback and selecting the winning bids. The organization also serves as a "matchmaker," bringing together Canadian and Israeli companies eager to participate in the process. "Because we're well networked in Canada and Israel, we're suited to find matches," Rothschild said.

Moridi said Ontario "recognizes that [its] capacity to compete internationally and create the jobs of tomorrow depends on collaboration. That is why we welcome this continued partnership with Israel."

Hasson added: "The OICP is a highly effective gateway that enables the Office of the Chief Scientist to connect with ideal technology partners across Ontario and facilitate co-operative R & D that benefits both jurisdictions. This co-operation is essential to address our shared innovation and economic objectives."

In Saskatchewan, meanwhile, the gathering of Canadians and Israelis included Premier Brad Wall, Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak and key players in the province's agricultural sector, Rothschild said. Like the Ontario agreement, the Saskatchewan-Israel R & D Collaboration Program promotes joint development and commercialization of new technologies, with a focus on agriculture, clean tech, minerals, nuclear and energy.

Referring to the Ontario project, he said, "We're very excited. We know there are a lot of companies waiting for this announcement, waiting to make applications." ■

Chesed initiative aims to raise $3M in one day

SHERI SHEFA
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Charities from Canada, the United States and Israel are gearing up for the Millions For Chesed Giving Day on June 2, an ambitious all-or-nothing mission to collect $3 million for Jewish non-profit organizations within 24 hours.

Tobey Finkelstein, a Jewish community professional based in Baltimore and the founder and organizer of this initiative, said she was inspired to put this online crowd-funding event together following a number of successful crowd-funding runs for local organizations in Baltimore.

"I thought, I could do this [for Jewish organizations]," Finkelstein said.

"I approached the American Jewish Outreach Professionals (AJOP)... and within six weeks, we put together a giving day model and we sent it out to [a] list of different organizations. About 19 of them were able to, in this model, get some crowd-funding on the day [in February], and it worked."

In just 24 hours, the effort raised $1.36 million. But on June 2, organizers and participants are setting their sights higher with a goal of raising $3 million.

On the giving day, the 14 participating organizations' donation pages will go live, and will begin collecting donations.

There will also be a communal landing page (www.charidy.com), providing a general fund for those who don't want to donate to one specific organization, but prefer to have their donation disbursed to all the participating organizations equally.

What sets this fundraising initiative apart from many others is the all-or-nothing approach.

Finkelstein said the reason organizations aren't allowed to collect any of the donations unless they reach 100 per cent of their goal is because "it creates urgency for the donors, for the community... When there isn't a short time limit, in this genre, or even online... we forget about it."

"Something needs to break through your psyche to say, 'This is something I need to do now,'" she said.

"There is so much donor fatigue, it's annoying. My friends would hate me if all I kept doing was asking them for money... Because of the model, it's all or nothing, so it breaks through that. It's 24 hours, it's short, so I know you're not going to ask me for two months. You tell me and it's done."

Another aspect of the giving day is that every donation made is going to be quadrupled. Each participating organization is required to line up three of their major donors to leverage the community gifts that come in that day.

Tobey Finkelstein

> *There is so much donor fatigue, it's annoying.*

For example, if an organization has pledged to raise $100,000, they must bring $25,000 from the general community, while each of the three major donors will contribute $25,000 to bring the total to $100,000.

"So that $75,000 is riding on the backs of the little guy. It helps actualize it, like, 'Wow, our small donations make a huge impact,'" Finkelstein said.

Chasdei Kaduri is the only Canadian charity taking part.

Jonathan Tebeka, a volunteer with Chasdei Kaduri, a Toronto-based organization that has been providing weekly food deliveries to needy Jewish families in the GTA since 2013, said it is gearing up for the big day.

"We're still working on getting our donors to match... and we're looking to raise $5,000 total," he said.

"I'm confident, because we get funding throughout the entire year from donors and they are very generous. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't be able be in operation for the past two years."

He said he hopes that now that this organization is a registered charity and can give tax receipts for donations, people may be inclined to give more.

For more information, contact Reesa Rosen, a Toronto-based representative, at reesar@charidy.com or 905-553-4427.

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Vancouver campaign raises record $8 million

JODIE SHUPAC
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The Vancouver Jewish community punches well above its weight, said Ezra Shanken, the CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver after the federation announced it had raised a record $8 million in its 2014 annual campaign.

The total, which is $290,000 more than was raised in the 2013 campaign, will go toward supporting programs and services within Vancouver's Jewish community and several Jewish communities and causes abroad.

Federation attributes a key part of this year's campaign success to the revival of a match fund that it hadn't used for several years, which saw gifts from first-time donors and those increasing a donation matched dollar for dollar by several major donors.

Shanken, who has held the position of federation CEO for just a year, noted that the $150,000 that was raised using this system "really drove the campaign and helped us to get to $8 million."

Most of the full amount raised – 65 per cent – will go to the 35 local agencies the federation supports and address causes such as Jewish education and assisting vulnerable Jews in the community.

The 2014 Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver campaign leaders are pictured at the campaign's opening night in September. From left are Israeli Consul General DJ Schneeweiss; Judith Cohen, women's philanthropy chair; Harvey Dales, campaign chair; and federation CEO Ezra Shanken. RHONDA DENT PHOTO

The rest will go overseas to help organizations such as the Jewish Agency for Israel and to bolster partnerships the federation is engaged in in northern Israel.

Campaign chair Harvey Dales said in a statement that he was "amazed and inspired by this community and the support received from thousands of donors and hundreds of volunteers."

He stressed that 93 per cent of the total was raised by volunteer canvassers who contacted and met with members of the community.

Shanken said 250 volunteers went out and met with anywhere from three to 10 individual donors each to talk to them about needs within the community.

"It's really quite remarkable to see how many volunteers go out year after year to have these incredible conversations with people," he said.

Vancouver is the third-largest Jewish community in Canada and the westernmost major Jewish hub, with about 30,000 Jews.

"In many ways, we take on the individual personality of being the Jewish centre of western Canada, but we also have a connection to other Pacific northwest Jewish communities like Seattle and Portland," Shanken said. "Seattle has twice as many Jews as we do, but our campaign is much stronger than what we're seeing south of the border. The infrastructure we have on the ground here is quite extraordinary for a community of 30,000."

He said it's been a strong year generally for the federation, which raised $250,000 for Israel during last summer's Operation Protective Edge and additional funds for special projects undertaken both locally and globally, such as an initiative to help Jews in Ukraine.

"It's been a real banner year for our Jewish community," Shanken said.

He emphasized that Vancouver is a particularly unique and dedicated Jewish community. "It's a very special place. If the physical beauty isn't enough for you, the warmth of the community is incredible. You can see how warm and generous they are by how they've stretched themselves to reach this record campaign," he said. ■

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Concordia to host international Israel studies conference

JANICE ARNOLD
jarnold@thecjn.ca MONTREAL

Concordia University, still associated in the public's mind as a hotbed for anti-Israel expression, will host 300 academics from many parts of the world devoted to the scholarly study of Israel in all its facets.

The 31st annual meeting of Association for Israel Studies (AIS) takes place at Concordia's downtown campus from June 1 to 3, when these academics will present papers on topics related to the modern state of Israel, or its pre-state years, in disciplines ranging from political science and sociology to literature and the arts.

It's "a huge feather in the cap" for the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, founded just four years ago at Concordia with a $5-million donation from the Azrieli Foundation, and its director Csaba Nikolenyi. It's only the second time the AIS meeting has been held in Canada.

The symbolism of such a conference taking place at Concordia can also not be ignored, he agreed.

The meetings alternate each year between Israel and abroad.

While the largest number will come from the United States and Israel, Nikolenyi said the academics are also from China, Russia, Japan, Egypt and Europe, including Hungary, the Czech Republic and Romania.

Nikolenyi, also chair of the program committee, chose as a theme, Sustainable Israel: A Changing Society in the 21st Century, to reflect the strong interest in ecology and development at Concordia. The university, for example, was recently selected as the executive secretariat of Future Earth, a UN project. That, of course, does not mean that participants had to present on that theme and, in fact, the great majority will not.

There is a mini-plenary on Sustainability in Israel featuring three Israeli academics from the Sustainability Research Centre of the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies.

The field of Israel studies has been steadily growing, and in the past decade, has expanded considerably, said Nikolenyi, a political scientist.

The AIS now has members in dozens of countries on five continents. Its current president is Hebrew University's political scientist Prof. Menachem Hofnung.

Among the prominent personalities taking part in the AIS meeting will be Anita Shapira, author of a new biography *Ben Gurion: Father of Modern Israel* (Yale University Press) and a Tel Aviv University professor emeritus, and Ilan Troen of Brandeis University, founder of the journal *Israel Studies* and considered one of the leaders in the field.

Jennifer Solomon, co-ordinator of the 31st Association for Israel Studies annual meeting, is joined by program assistants Marat Grebennikov, left, and Nate Dagane.

Of course, one need not be Jewish to be an Israel studies academic, and, in fact, there are Arab and Muslim participants. For instance, Menna Abu Khadra speaks on "Israel Studies at Egyptian Universities: Cairo University as a Test Case."

One of the Azrieli Institute's research fellows, Yakub Halabi, is on the meeting's local organizing committee.

Members of First Nations will be participating in sessions on sustainability.

The more than 75 working sessions scheduled cover such topics as Israel's relations with the United States, Palestinian rights, the status of Jerusalem, the settlements, the legal system, Holocaust research, security policy, gender equality, and Zionism today.

The effect of the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign will also be discussed. Last fall, Concordia undergraduates endorsed a BDS resolution.

The Azrieli Institute is a multidisciplinary research centre that fosters and supports graduate studies, as well as faculty research projects. Post-doctoral fellowships worth $24,000 are available, as well as support for visiting faculty fellows.

The institute created the first and only Israel studies undergraduate program in Canada, enabling students to take a minor in the subject.

Besides the working sessions, there are related events such as the screening of Israeli films, and exhibits, like the one on sustainable architecture and design by Technion students and another on the National Library of Israel's digital archives project.

Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler will give the keynote address "Israel, Human Rights, Global Anti-Semitism" on June 2, when Israeli Ambassador Rafael Barak will also speak. The meeting is open to the public. ■

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After 75 years, Sol and Frances Levin are still in love

SHERI SHEFA
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Having been married for 75 years come June 6, it's a question Frances and Sol Levin can't seem to escape.

Asked to share their wisdom about what makes a successful, decades-long marriage, Frances, who turns 95 in August, said it's hard to pinpoint.

"Well, you have to love each other first. You have to be kind to each other," she said.

But for Sol, 98, his answer was simple.

"I'm still in love with her."

Both Frances and Sol were born and raised in Montreal, where they raised four children and have since been blessed with a growing family of 13 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren. The couple spoke to *The CJN* about the ups and downs of their 75 years together.

Sitting in the library of the Dunfield Retirement Residence in midtown Toronto, where the Levins moved last year, they recalled the day they met in 1938.

"We met at a dance," Sol began.

"He was my best girlfriend's boyfriend and she told me about what an adorable guy she was going out with. And then we went to this dance," Frances said.

"He called me the next day and I said, 'I can't go out with you'... but he was persistent. But he wasn't the one for me, because I had a boyfriend."

Sol said he was taken with his future wife the moment he laid eyes on her.

"After I saw her, that was it. It was love at first sight, actually," he said, and he left his girlfriend at the time to pursue Frances.

"I wasn't attracted to him in the first place. He was too much for me. First of all, I was 18, and he was three years older. I never went out with anyone who was more than a year older," Frances said.

Frances, who had been living with her aunt since her mother died when she was just two years old, needed to be convinced.

"I wasn't sure about him, and my aunt used to say, 'He's so good.' And I would say, 'I don't know.' It took me about six months before I realized that he was the one."

Sol, who made a living as a businessman, said there was no formal marriage proposal.

"I don't think I popped the question. It was just assumed."

About two years after they met, when Frances was just two months shy of her 20th birthday, she married him at Montreal's Shaare Zion Congregation.

The Levins welcomed their first child in 1944, and within 3-1/2 years, they had three kids. They raised their family in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG), a residential neighbourhood in Montreal's west end.

Sol and Frances Levin

Frances said although they had a happy marriage, she did experience some difficult times. "You go through all kinds of feelings... There was a time when I was ready to leave him."

"Now you're telling me?" Sol interjected, barely rattled by this confession.

Frances said she was visiting her doctor, who was also a family friend, and she told him, "'I can't do it. It's too hard.' And he said, 'Tell me what would happen if he got into an accident and was hurt? I said, 'I'd want to die.' He said, 'There you are.'"

When asked what the biggest challenge in their marriage was, Sol said, "I didn't think we had any."

"You know what, he never had any, and it's still the same," Frances said.

"Everything is fine. Everything is great. Nothing bothers him. We're certainly opposites. No question."

Susan Levin, the couple's youngest child, said she grew up with a wonderful family life and parents who set a great example of what a happy marriage should be.

"Until last year, when my father couldn't do it anymore, he got her a card and flowers for every birthday and anniversary," Susan said. "And my father never left the house in the morning without kissing my mother goodbye. Never."

She said her parents also played together.

"They played bridge together, they golfed together, they went away during the winters," she said, adding that they're both still mobile and active, playing bridge in their spare time and keeping current by reading newspapers and books.

"But we weren't tied to each other. I could do whatever I wanted, go wherever I wanted. He didn't care. And he could, too," Frances said.

When asked to describe the kind of a wife Frances was, Sol said, "What kind? The best. She is the best of everything. You're the best of everything, darling," he said, turning to face her, reaching for her hand.

On June 6, they'll celebrate at the Dunfield with some 60 family members and friends. ■

Judaism must include both intellect and emotion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

That true test of valour, then, is to have a Judaism that includes both our intellectual selves and our emotional selves. We create this through action. We also create our Judaism through the meaningful texts that can enrich us – in our classrooms, at the dinner table or in any conversation.

The traditions of our fathers – the Halachah and the rituals – must not be dry and insensitive. We need to breathe spirit and beauty into it. We need to be a part of it. And the traditions of our mothers, which are experiences of the home, must also be intellectual and moral.

> *The traditions of our fathers must not be dry and insensitive.*

It has been 21 years since my mother, Francine Ruth, or Tzipora Rut, passed away. Those hands that wrote volumes, taught so many and provided both physically and spiritually for others, were put to rest. On her tombstone, my father chose the following verse from the book of Ruth to be inscribed: "*Ki yodea kol shaar ami ki eshet chayil at*" – the people at the gate know that you are a woman of valour. ■

Maharat Abby Brown Scheier is a Judaic Studies teacher in Montreal, where she lives with her husband and four daughters.

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Sloane Feldberg, 12, chairs annual Crohn's and colitis walk

SUSAN MINUK
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Twelve-year-old Sloane Feldberg is the honorary chair of this year's Toronto Gutsy Walk, which raises money for a cause that's been part of her life since day one.

Sloane was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis at age eight, but she was already quite familiar with the condition.

"There was blood in my stool, and I had a very sore stomach all the time. Ulcerative colitis was already in my family, as my mom [Raquel] was diagnosed the year I was born. I've had CT scans, MRIs, and have been put to sleep to have colonoscopies at the hospital," she said.

"Every day, I take medication to help control my disease. Without taking my medication, I would be sick – I really need it," she added.

"The Gutsy Walk brought a lot of meaning to me and my family, and allowed my mom and me to really bond and focus on our disease in a positive way by fundraising and bringing awareness to our friends, family and my classmates."

On June 7, Canadians in more than 60 communities across the country will join together for Crohn's and Colitis Canada's 20th annual Gutsy Walk. The five-kilometre Toronto event will start at 10:30 a.m. at Sunnybrook Park.

The mother-daughter duo is part of a team called This Bag Ain't Prada.

"Our logo is three people holding hands. Two have Prada bags and one has an ostomy bag to be a symbol of support," explained Sloane, who designed the logo.

"My mom was wearing an ostomy bag and it was definitely not like a Prada bag,

Raquel, left, and Sloane Feldberg at last year's Gutsy Walk

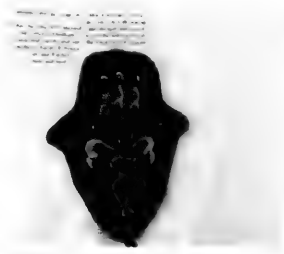
but her ileostomy actually saved her life," she said.

Diagnosed in 2002, Raquel Feldberg, 47, has spent more than 2-1/2 years of her life in and out of the hospital.

"I have had complications and multiple surgeries, which landed me in Mount Sinai Hospital for a total of approximately nine months between September, 2011 and May 2013. My colon was friable, full of infection and necrotic [dead] – it needed to come out immediately," said Raquel.

Raquel's diagnosis began a painful 11-year journey that she describes as a time of confusion, fear and frustration.

"I had four more major surgeries plus other painful procedures: full-time IV medication therapy, internal abscess and leak, internal/external drainage catheter through my backside for four months, major hair loss, severe muscle atrophy, painful skin infections and horrifying relentless



Raquel Feldberg used a handmade hamsa hand cover and prayer for good health that belonged to her late grandmother, and she would hold it to her heart before surgeries.

pyoderma gangrenosom splitting open my skin across my abdomen," she said.

After her final surgery in 2013 and while recovering in hospital, Raquel started a fundraising campaign and assembled a team from her hospital bed. Some 5-1/2 weeks later, she walked her first Gutsy Walk and was named Crohn's and Colitis Canada's top fundraiser in Toronto, and one of the Top 10 in Canada.

Crohn's and ulcerative colitis are diseases that inflame the lining of the gastrointestinal tract and disrupt the body's ability to digest food, absorb nutrition and eliminate waste.

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) describes a group of conditions. The two main forms are Crohn's and ulcerative colitis. People with IBD have one disease or the other, but not both.

"Since its inception, Gutsy Walk has raised $29 million. The Gutsy Walk is often a first contact point for people with Crohn's and colitis. It becomes quite a hopeful community event because people meet others who are living and succeeding with the disease," said C.K. DesGrosseilliers, marketing and communications manager for Crohn's and Colitis Canada.

One in every 150 Canadians is living with Crohn's or colitis, a rate that's among the highest worldwide. The number of new cases of Crohn's disease in Canadian children has almost doubled since 1995.

"To be able to share my story and the journey our family is taking with this disease is so important. We will continue to fight for the cure," Raquel said. ■

For more information, visit www.gutsywalk.ca.

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INTERNATIONAL

Disagreeing with Israel is necessary to defend it, Obama says

JTA
WASHINGTON

Open disagreement with Israel on some of its policies is a necessary component of the U.S. defence of Israel in the international community, U.S. President Barack Obama told the *Atlantic* last week.

In an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg posted May 21 on the magazine's website, Obama singled out Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's election day appeal in March to his followers to vote because Arab-Israeli voters were turning out in "hordes."

Obama strongly criticized the appeal, and Netanyahu later apologized to Arab-Israeli leaders.

"When something like that happens, that has foreign-policy consequences, and precisely because we're so close to Israel, for us to simply stand there and say nothing would have meant that this office, the Oval Office, lost credibility when it came to speaking out on these issues," Obama said.

"And when I am then required to come to Israel's defence internationally, when there is anti-Semitism out there, when there is anti-Israeli policy that is based not on the particulars of the Palestinian cause but [is] based simply on hostility, I have to make sure that I am entirely credible in speaking out against those things, and that requires me then to also be honest with friends about how I view these issues."

Obama has come under fire from pro-Israel groups and a number of Democrats and Republicans since 2009, when he told Jewish leaders early in his presidency that he was ending the policy of his predecessors, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, of not airing disagreements with Israel in public. His critics say open disagreements undercut the alliance and make Israel more vulnerable.

The president in his interview said his differences with Netanyahu were often overblown.

"What we said publicly was fairly spare and mild, and then would be built up – it seemed like an article a day, partly because when you get in arguments with friends, it's a lot more newsworthy than arguments with enemies," he said.

Obama said he remained strongly committed to Israel, likening its defence to the struggle for civil rights.

"There's a direct line between supporting the right of the Jewish people to have a homeland and to feel safe and free of discrimination and persecution, and the right of African-Americans to vote and have equal protection under the law," Obama said.

U.S. President Barack Obama FILE PHOTO

> *It is true to Israel's traditions and its values... that it has to care about Palestinian kids.*

"These things are indivisible in my mind. But what is also true, by extension, is that I have to show that same kind of regard to other peoples. And I think it is true to Israel's traditions and its values – its founding principles – that it has to care about those Palestinian kids."

Obama also said there was no inconsistency between his pronouncements saying the Iranian regime was anti-Semitic and his quest for a nuclear deal with the same regime.

"I think it is not at all contradictory to say that there are deep strains of anti-Semitism in the core regime, but that they also are interested in maintaining power, having some semblance of legitimacy inside their own country, which requires that they get themselves out of what is a deep economic rut that we've put them in, and on that basis they are then willing and prepared potentially to strike an agreement on their nuclear program," he said. ■

Will Vatican's Palestine reference impact Jewish-Catholic ties?

RON KAMPEAS
JTA, WASHINGTON

When considering the Vatican's creep toward recognition of Palestinian statehood, think "Israel-Vatican" and not "Jewish-Catholic," say Jewish officials involved in dialogue with the church.

A May 13 announcement on an agreement regarding the functioning of the church in areas under Palestinian control raised eyebrows in its reference to the "State of Palestine."

The upset was compounded by confusion over whether Pope Francis, in a meeting later with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, praised him as an "angel of peace" or urged him to attain that vaunted status. On May 19, a Vatican spokesman said it was "very clear" that the pope was "encouraging a commitment to peace."

But the Vatican's shift from terming its Palestinian partner as the Palestine Liberation Organization – the designation Israel accepts – to calling it Palestine comports with a shift in Europe toward accommodating Palestinian statehood aspirations, the Jewish officials said.

Referring to a State of Palestine was "disturbing, but not critical," Abraham Foxman, the Anti-Defamation League's national director, said in an interview with *JTA*.

Catholic-Jewish relations and diplomacy between Israel and the Vatican are "on different tracks," Foxman said.

Israeli officials, speaking anonymously, said they were "disappointed" in the use of "State of Palestine."

"Such a development does not further the peace process and distances the Palestinian leadership from returning to direct bilateral negotiations. Israel will study the agreement and consider its next step," an official told the French news agency *AFP*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

OPINION

The joys and perils of Israel-bashing

Gerald Steinberg

In the fashionable demonization of everything Israeli, one of the more amusing (and depressing) aspects is the eagerness to embrace and repeat attacks on the morality of the Israel Defence Forces, no matter how thin or absurd.

Recently, a number of self-proclaimed human rights organizations, along with friendly journalists, including the usual suspects in Canada, celebrated a 240-page document of anonymous testimonies produced by a fringe group calling itself "Breaking the Silence." Based on the instant publicity and their texts, it appears that the reporters simply copied from the press release, giving prominence to these tales.

However, for anyone who actually took the time to read and consider the claims, and had some knowledge of combat in a densely populated area such as Gaza, most of the allegations in the screaming headlines are not reflected in the details. Each fighter who fought in Gaza was aware of the dangers in an area where terrorists mingle with civilians, launch deadly missiles from houses and hospitals, kidnap soldiers or their shattered bodies, and where grandmothers become suicide bombers.

In this environment, far from committing terrible crimes, the soldiers whose "testimonies" supposedly expose terrible war crimes actually show both the fear and the admirable caution exercised by the IDF. As reported by one of the few journalists who actually read the document, "nowhere in the entire report are there rapes, massacres, or anything similar, or a single incident in which a civilian is shot in circumstances that could not be defended."

The "testimonies" are not provided as is, but edited in an awkward manner that includes the introduction of basic factual errors, reflecting the extreme political objectives behind the entire project. The anonymity of the soldiers, without any detail that would allow independent verification, adds to questions regarding the credibility of their (edited) stories. For example, as journalist Matti Friedman notes, the case of the soldier who claims to have fired at a bicyclist should not be taken at face value – "not because I doubt a teenage soldier's capacity for thoughtless cruelty, but because it's unlikely that a tank gunner could fire multiple shells and machine-gun bursts at easy targets and miss every time, as he claims."

Conspicuously missing from these reports is any hint of terrorism. The 4,563 rockets and mortar shells that were fired from Gaza toward Israel in July and August 2014 are simply erased from the record, as are the terror tunnels that went under borders and next to the kibbutz houses and dining halls of the families near the border. In this criminally immoral inversion, the leaders of Breaking the Silence erase Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and the other groups whose goals are to kill Jews and end the existence of Israel.

The dirty political war is facilitated by money (approximately $1 million US per year) from the New Israel Fund and a number European governments and church groups, who are told that it's for promoting human rights.

In addition to press conferences and a media blitz, the funds pay for extensive globetrotting. In the past two years, the leaders of Breaking the Silence have enjoyed more than 30 trips from Israel to different locations in Europe, North America, Australia and South Africa. Once there, in addition to being wined and dined, they repeat the tales that defame and libel Israeli soldiers, and turn the universal principles of human rights into cheap propaganda. In this way, they feed the growing market for Israel-bashing.

In response to the latest wave of false allegations, hundreds of soldiers have posted their own "testimonies," which stand in sharp contrast to those sold by Breaking the Silence. They do not have money from foreign donors to organize press conferences or go on world tours, but, as in the war against Hamas terror, their determination to succeed will make the difference. ■

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CANADIAN MAGEN DAVID ADOM

CANADIAN MAGEN DAVID ADOM ANNOUNCES NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT

Norton Segal, Q.C., National President, Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel, is pleased to announce the appointment of Sidney Benizri as National Executive Director.

Mr. Benizri brings a wealth of experience to this position which he will assume on June 1st, 2015. He has been involved for many years in a professional capacity with Communauté Sepharade Unifiée du Quebec as Director of Fundraising, Community Services, and Human Resources and Programs.

A graduate of the Universite du Quebec à Montréal (UQAM) with a Bachelor of Management in Accounting, Mr. Benizri is fluent in French, English and Hebrew.

MAGEN DAVID ADOM CANADIEN ANNONCE LA NOMINATION DU DIRECTEUR EXÉCUTIF NATIONAL

Norton Segal, Q.C., President National de Maguen David Adom Canadien pour Israel, est fier d'annoncer la nomination de Sidney Benizri à titre de Directeur Executif National.

M. Benizri, qui possede une grande experience dans le domaine des affaires communautaires, entrera en fonction le 1er juin 2015. Il a travaillé pendant plusieurs annees, au sein de la Communauté Sepharade Unifiée du Quebec, à titre de professionnel responsable des programmes et des ressources humaines, Directeur des services communautaires et Directeur des campagnes de financements. En outre, il a été Directeur adjoint de la division des jeunes adultes, à la Federation CJA, et il a aussi exercé la fonction de Directeur des programmes au Centre Hillel.

M. Benizri qui est trilingue (Français, Anglais, Hébreu), possède un baccalauréat en Gestion dans le domaine de la comptabilité.

ISRAEL CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT MDA · MDA CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT YOU

Recognition of PA 'a minor event' professor says

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

Marshall Breger, a professor at the Catholic University of America's School of Law who has led a number of Jewish dialogues with other faiths, said the use of the term Palestine was the product of an evolution in how the international community is treating the Palestinian question.

"De facto, the Vatican has accepted Palestine as a state," he said. "It just adds one more country to the over 130 that have recognized Palestine."

The issue is a matter of diplomacy and does not breach the sensitive issues under discussion between Jews and Catholics as they mark the 50th anniversary of the Nostra Aetate, the declaration that absolved Jews of responsibility for Jesus' death, Breger said.

"It's a minor event," he said. "It should not interfere with Jewish-Catholic relations."

Using Nostra Aetate as a basis, Jewish and Catholic officials over the years have addressed problematic references to Jews in the Catholic liturgy and the role of the Vatican during the Nazi period.

Morton Klein, the president of the Zionist Organization of America, told the *Washington Post* that the "Palestine" reference amounted to "appeasement of radical Muslims" and signaled "the historical Catholic enmity towards Jews."

For the most part, however, Jewish organizations dealing with the Vatican were concerned about the statement, but only insofar as it represented another success in efforts by the Palestinians to secure statehood recognition outside the context of negotiations with Israel.

"We are fully cognizant of the Pope's goodwill and desire to be a voice for peaceful co-existence, which is best served, we believe, by encouraging a resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, rather than unilateral gestures outside the framework of the negotiating table," David Harris, the American Jewish Committee director, said in a statement.

Weighing in with similar statements were the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the Union for Reform Judaism.

When the Vatican launched talks with the Palestinians in 2000, it referred to the other side as the PLO, but over time shifted to Palestine. Pope Francis in his 2014 visit to Israel and the West Bank spoke of "my presence today in Palestine" during a Bethlehem stop and referred to "the good relations existing between the Holy See and the State of Palestine."

Pope Francis in Israel in May, 2014

Daniel Mariaschin, the director of B'nai Brith International, said the recognition of Palestine raised concerns, but they must be seen in the context of an increased willingness in Europe to recognize Palestinian statehood and not of Jewish-Catholic relations.

He likened it to the French and British parliaments' recent non-binding recognitions of Palestine and Sweden's decision to recognize Palestinian statehood.

"It's important, I won't dismiss it, but it shouldn't be seen outside that broader context," Mariaschin said. "It raises the expectations of Palestinians to unmeetable levels and frustrates the Israelis who say we can't get a fair deal in the international community."

Obama administration officials continue to maintain that recognizing Palestine outside the context of peace talks is counterproductive. However, prompted in part by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's seeming election eve retreat from supporting a two-state solution, they now will not count out withholding the U.S. veto should the U.N. Security Council consider a Palestinian statehood resolution.

Seymour Reich, a former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, who also has been involved in Jewish-Catholic dialogue, said the Palestine recognition should serve as a "wake-up call" for Israel.

"It doesn't affect [Vatican] relations with Israel at all," Reich said.

Instead, he argued, Vatican recognition of Palestine is another manifestation of European disaffection with Netanyahu's hawkish policies and the expansion of settlements.

"It just puts more pressure on the Israeli government," Reich said. ■

Netanyahu suspends controversial plan to segregate bus riders

JTA
JERUSALEM

A controversial program to prevent Palestinian workers from riding on Israeli public transportation in the West Bank was suspended a day after it was launched.

On May 13, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon suspended the program, which restricted workers going to work to four West Bank checkpoints and required them to return home by the same crossings. The workers would then take Palestinian bus services the rest of the way home. The plan added hours to their daily commutes.

Palestinian workers are not allowed to stay overnight in Israel. They are allowed to exit and enter the West Bank through a variety of checkpoints using a magnetic card.

Yaalon announced the program in October. At that time, Israel's Civil Administration in the West Bank said it would explore other options to provide the Palestinian workers with appropriate transportation. It had been scheduled to be reviewed after three months.

Opponents had called the plan racist.

"The only reason to have separate Jewish and Palestinian buses is pure racism," Meretz party head Zahava Gal-on said in a Facebook status posted May 13. "The separation is just a symptom of 48 years of occupation, requiring us to be blind to the Palestinians so that we can live with ourselves."

Zionist Union party head Isaac Herzog called the separation on public transportation "unnecessary degradation" and said it "pours more fuel on the fire of hatred of Israel in the world."

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin welcomed the suspension of the program.

"It is important we remember that our sovereignty obligates us to prove our ability to live side by side," he said in a statement, speaking of Jews and Arabs.

Jewish residents of the West Bank and their local governments have waged a vociferous campaign over the last few years to prevent Palestinians who work in Israel to use Israeli public transportation there. Among the reasons given for keeping the Palestinians off Israeli buses is lack of room for Jewish West Bank residents and Jewish female passengers saying they have been harassed by the Palestinian labourers. ■

Jewish Life

Award-winning musician part of Jazz Festival

Alex Goodman

RUTH SCHWEITZER
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Toronto-born guitarist Alex Goodman was the first Canadian to take the top prize in the Socar jazz electric-guitar competition and win the public choice award at last year's Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

No stranger to awards, Goodman has also won, among others, the 2013 ASCAP Herb Alpert Jazz Composer Award and he was a finalist for the ASCAP Morton Gould Classical Composer prize last year.

Goodman, 27, said that awards bring "some legitimacy to what you're doing" and help musicians get work in markets outside of where they live, as programmers pay attention to them. With the boost that the awards have given him, Goodman is in a position to plan a Canadian and European tour.

Currently living in New York, Goodman played regularly in Toronto's jazz clubs up until 2-1/2 years ago. He's returning to the city with his trio, including drummer Ari Hoenig and bassist Rick Rosato, for a two-night stand at The Rex on June 18 and 19, as part of this year's TD Toronto Jazz Festival.

Goodman spent five years playing and composing in Toronto while studying music at the University of Toronto. He said he learned a lot from being part of the city's vibrant jazz scene. "The core of what I do is influenced by my time there."

But Goodman wasn't always sure that he wanted a career as a professional musician. After high school, he studied political science and music at Montreal's McGill University. At the end of second year, he realized that he would need to focus on one of the disciplines. "I wasn't able to balance both," he said.

After deciding to go with music, he returned to Toronto because he was offered opportunities to play in the city. "That's where I started to get serious" about music, he added.

Goodman said he enjoys the improvisational aspect of playing jazz. "I like the ability to improvise and create music in the moment and interact with musicians around you and create something fresh."

> *I like the ability to improvise and create music in the moment*

He added that what he appreciates about the jazz community is that "it has opened up not only to jazz traditions but other influences."

Goodman listens to "music both within and outside the jazz world," he said. He has an affinity for classical music as a performer and a composer, and he has "dabbled in classical guitar but never really got it to a professional level."

A prolific composer, he has some 140 original works and arrangements listed on his website. Some of his arrangements are classically sourced. "I've studied the canon of classical music to learn from the great masters," he said. "I also just really love the music."

Goodman has also arranged the music of George Gershwin and Radiohead. And he knows how to swing, which you can hear on his Juno-nominated third recording, *Bridges*. Goodman recorded his fifth album in three nights at Toronto's Jazz Bistro early in May.

The new as yet unnamed recording includes arrangements of works by Bartok, Mendelssohn, Scott Joplin and Harold Arlen, as well as some of Goodman's originals. ■

For more information about the festival, visit torontojazz.com. For more information about Goodman, visit alexgoodmanmusic.com

Plays written decades apart revived at Kensington Market

SHERI SHEFA
sshefa@thecjn.ca

The artistic director of Toronto's award-winning Theatre Asylum, Jennifer H. Capraru, is directing *FORNES x 2*, which features two plays, written nearly two decades apart, by "the greatest least-acknowledged female playwright of our time."

"Maria Irene Forné is kind of from the off-off-Broadway movement of the 1960s. She came up at the same time as playwrights like Edward Albee, and Sam Shepard, people like that," Capraru said, adding that Fornés has won a number of Obie Awards, (off-Broadway awards), and was also nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

"She wrote the first play, *The Successful Life of 3*, in 1965 and the second play, *Mud*, was written about 20 years later. So I decided to link them, using the same three actors in both plays because both plays are about a kind of love triangle."

Montreal-born Capraru, who has been working as a theatre director for more than 15 years, said she wanted to link the two plays by the Cuban-American playwright to expose a cycle of consumerism and poverty, which relates to the gentrification of Toronto's Kensington Market, where Capraru has lived for the past 20 years.

"The first play is hilarious. It's completely absurd, non-realistic. It's like a vaudeville cartoon, it's crazy and there's the music and the costumes, the lighting – everything about it is super wacky," Capraru said. "It draws on vaudeville, it draws on the Marx Brothers and that kind of comedy. It's slapstick, like old Jewish comedies," said Capraru, who is no stranger to directing Jewish-themed plays, such as *My Mother's Courage*.

"We see these three characters who are kind of unconscious, not really awake, they don't really take responsibility for their lives, they just have fun. The characters are called He, She and 3. So they don't even have names."

She said *Mud* – played by the same three-person cast made up by award-winning veteran actor Hardee T. Lineham, actor and filmmaker Michelle Latimer, and actor Jamie Robinson – is more about the need to escape.

"It's about people living in poverty, people trying to better themselves and not being able to, being limited by poverty, being limited by disenfranchisement, being limited by a lack of education. And the two

plays really relate to Kensington Market where I live," she said.

"The first play is kind of about how the market is being gentrified by conspicuous consumerism. The second play is more about how the market began – as a place for immigrants to come through, especially our community, the Jewish community. They are the ones who created the market."

Capraru, who is an activist with Friends of Kensington Market, a non-profit organization that recently fought off a plan to bring a Walmart into the neighbourhood, said there are currently three Jewish families who own a number of buildings in the area that are helping to stave off the gentrification of Kensington Market.

Capraru said the production will make references to the market "in the visual style of the two plays" and the play itself will be held deep in the heart of the market, at Augusta Avenue and Baldwin Street in an underground space with 10-foot ceilings.

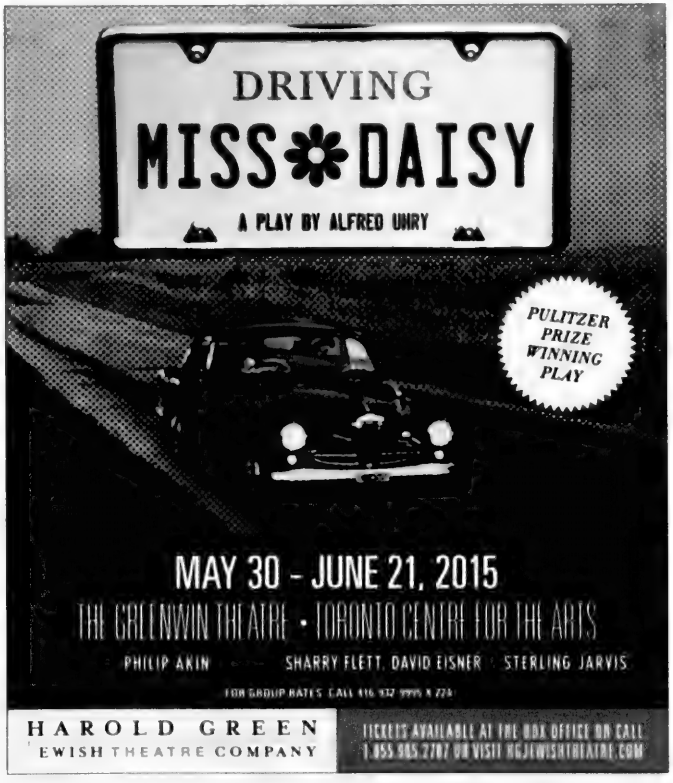
FORNES x 2 examines consumerism, poverty and relationships, and human rights issues in general, which is the focus of much of Capraru's work.

"I used to direct a lot of Jewish contemporary plays that are really asking who we are, focusing a lens on our humanity. And that is what these plays do as well," she said.

In July, Capraru will be presenting a play about Osip Mandelshtam, one of the foremost Russian poets of the 20th century.

The play will be presented at the Anshei Minsk Synagogue in Toronto as part of the Toronto Fringe Festival. ■

FORNES x 2 runs May 30 to June 14. For tickets or more information visit www.theatreasylum.com.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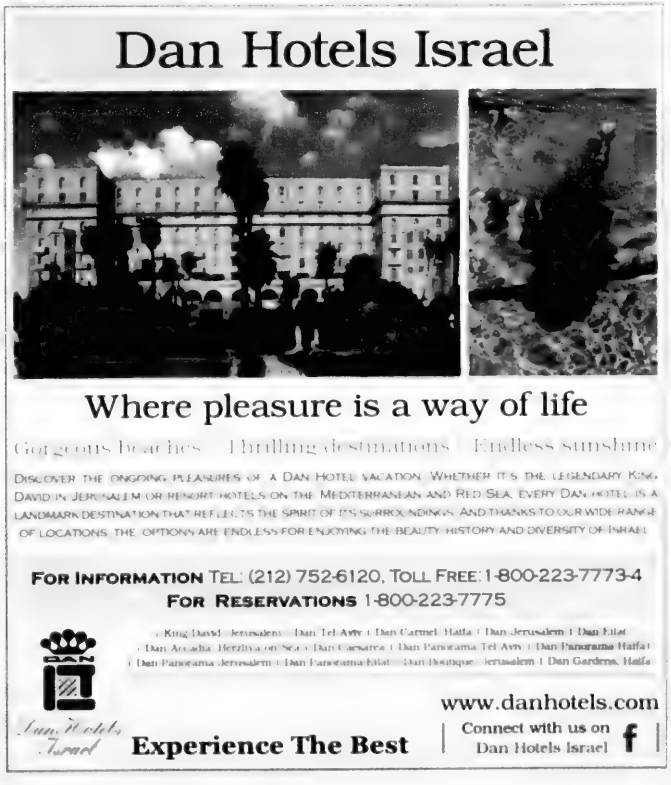
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VISITING RABBI DISCUSSES HEBREW WRITER S.Y. AGNON

Rabbi Jeffrey Saks

Rabbi Jeffrey Saks of Efrat, an expert on the writings of **Shmuel Yoseph Agnon**, delivers two lectures on Agnon, the only Nobel Prize winner in Hebrew literature, to mark the 45th anniversary of his passing.

Saks speaks on "Agnon and the Miracle of Faith: Jewish Life and Literature at the Crossroads in *The Bridal Canopy*" at Kehillat Shaarei Torah, 2640 Bayview Ave. (north of York Mills), Monday June 8, 8 p.m. He speaks on "Going Home Again: Jewish Life and Literature at the Crossroads in *A Guest for the Night*," at Congregation Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto, 613 Clark Ave., Thornhill, Tuesday June 9, 8 p.m. Free admission, everyone welcome.

• • •

Yiddish Vinkl: Myrna Neuringer Levy speaks on "World War I from the Other Side", a talk based on her recent book *Shattered Stones, Scattered Seeds: The Story of a Shtetl and the Family Who Lived There*. Levy, whose grandfather came from the Galician shtetl of Borszczow, provides a glimpse of what life was like in Galicia from the occupied "enemy's" point of view. Yiddish Vinkl, Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. Thursday June 4, noon. $20 includes brunch. RSVP, yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

• • •

Films about Jewish New York: The Toronto Jewish Film Society and the Yiddish Vinkl Toronto present *Kol Nidre* with *70 Hester Street*. Part musical and part melodrama, **Joseph Seiden's** long-lost *Kol Nidre* offers an unparalleled glimpse into the diversity of life, culture and language of Yiddish New York of the 1930s. *70 Hester Street* is director **Casimir Nozkowski**'s heartfelt tribute to his childhood home in a former synagogue on the Lower East Side. With guest speaker **Shirley Kumove**. Tickets $15, $10. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday June 7, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at the box office before each screening.

• • •

Call for Submissions: The 2015 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, co-sponsored by the Miles Nadal JCC of Toronto and the Segal Centre for Performing Arts in Montreal, seeks submissions from Canadian applicants. The winning play will receive an eight-hour workshop involving a professional director and up to seven actors. This workshop concludes in a public staged play reading presentation. Submission deadline, Thursday July 2. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, www.mnjcc.org/2015CJPC

• • •

Arts in Brief

• The Toronto Jewish Chorus presents its fourth annual gala concert, *Shir Delight 2015*, with artistic director **Judy Gershon, Amy Sky, Mark Masri** and **Arbah b'Shir**. Hart House Theatre, Wednesday May 27, 7:30 p.m. $35, $25. www.TorontoJewishChorus.org or UofTTix.

• **Katherine Barber** presents "Jewish Contributions to the World of Ballet". Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays June 1, 8 and 15, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Series $40, drop-in $16. Registration, 416-924-6211, ext. 0

• Critic **Adam Nayman** continues his series of talks with film clips on **Joel** and **Ethan Coen**. On June 1 the topic is "*The Hudsucker Proxy* and *Intolerable Cruelty*." Drop-in $12, students $6. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays, ongoing to July 13, 7 to 9 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606

• Seventy spirited singers of the MNjcc Community Choir perform their 19th annual spring concert of acapella, jazz, world, classical, folk, pop and other music. With conductor **Harriet Wichin**, pianist **Asher Farber** and accordionist **Ronen Segall**. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, Wednesday June 3 and Thursday June 4, 8 p.m. Tickets, 416-924-6211, ext. 0

• • •

At the Galleries

Toronto artist **Julie Gladstone** is a neo-pop, abstract landscape painter who explores questions around environmental destruction, climate change and what it means to be human. *Infinity Pool*, an exhibition of her latest "sublime-pop" paintings, is on view at Navillus Gallery, 110 Davenport Rd. Opening reception, Thursday May 28, 6 to 8 p.m. www.navillusgallery.com ■

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THE DIARY OF
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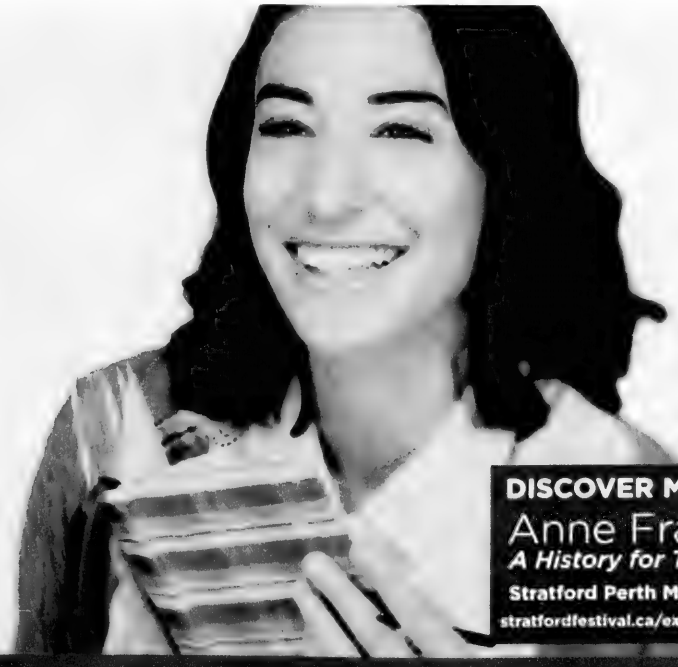

Sara Farb. Photo: Don Dixon

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Clowning around in a satirical look at office culture

DAVID SILVERBERG
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Forget birthday clowns and Stephen King's Pennywise. For 10 years, a new clowning duo has left Canadian audiences laughing with their improv-spiced zany shows.

Welcome to the wacky and entertaining world of Heather Marie Annis and Amy Lee, who play the sister clowns Morro and Jasp respectively. In their sixth show, they are once again trying to navigate life challenges as if they're two adolescents wearing suits for the first time. *Morro and Jasp: 9 to 5*, a satirical look at office culture, runs at the Factory Theatre until May 31.

In a story plunking the hapless sisters in a new company where they're pressured to come up with a "high-quality product" before investors arrive, Lee's Jasp gets stern as the self-appointed CEO while Annis' Morro remains clueless about her role. The conflicting personalities dish up, once again, a delightful mix of sharp one-liners, Pochinko-style clowning and heart-warming endings, something audiences have come to expect from Morro and Jasp shows.

"In the end, success to us is when audiences respond to the show and that they get the story," Lee, 31, says in an interview at a downtown bar. "It's important for us to speak honestly."

After all, Lee admits Jasp is an exaggeration of her own personality: like Jasp, Lee appreciates tidiness and order. Scheduling is important. But Lee says Jasp is more controlling than she ever would want to be.

Now celebrating 10 years as Jasp, Lee has enjoyed a cross-country route to her full-time job as a performer in Toronto. She grew up in Winnipeg and attended the Manitoba Theatre for Young People, before taking theatre at York University. There she met Annis and they hit it off immediately, playing Morro and Jasp for kids' audiences at first.

"But we soon realized we had to do adult shows to be fulfilled as artists," Lee recalls. They dove deep into the Toronto Fringe Festival scene, and quickly became fan favourites. Their shows each develop a theme to carry the sisters through varied adventures, such as reprising the roles from *Of Mice and Men* to camping in the wilderness to baking dessert. The duo even came out with their own cookbook soon after *Go Bake Yourself* debuted.

What Lee always appreciates about her

Amy Lee

Morro and Jasp shows is sprinkling the night with improv. "It makes sense for clowns to get the audience involved compared to other theatre actors," she says. For *9 to 5*, audience members might be called up to play office staff or business advisers, and everyone has to be take part in a group activity by the show's end.

"We love those unexpected moments. It keeps us on our toes," Lee adds.

Lee has immersed herself in the theatre community in Toronto, where she also works with Young People's Theatre and is assistant-director of other productions. Theatre is family, and Lee learned how strong community can be growing up in a Jewish home with parents active in synagogue life. "I've seen how Jewish people stress community, and I try to bring that to my theatre work," Lee says.

If you miss *9 to 5* this time around, rest assured you'll be seeing those red noses many times this year. Lee says they're remounting *Morro and Jasp Do Puberty* at the Toronto Fringe Festival, with their first show July 1 at the Tarragon Theatre Mainspace.

Plus, a video game app starring the clowns is in the works. This choose-your-own-adventure-style role-playing game could be the first gaming app based on a Canadian theatre clown production.

And if that isn't busy enough for Lee and her team, a TV pitch will be making the rounds soon, with the hope of snagging a TV deal for a Morro and Jasp series.

For now, see Lee and Annis while they're still underground darlings of Canada's theatre scene. At the very least, you'll see the roots of a hilarious family tree destined for greatness. ■

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Theatre Company's co-director acts out in Driving Miss Daisy

KATHRYN KATES
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company's co-artistic director David Eisner will don his actor's hat in the company's latest presentation, the Pulitzer Prize winning drama, *Driving Miss Daisy* by Alfred Uhry. *Driving Miss Daisy* takes place in the Deep South in 1948,and focuses on the relationship between Daisy Werthan, the rich, sharp-tongued Jewish widow, and Hoke Coleburn, Daisy's soft-spoken black driver.

"It is about a relationship that struggles with the racism that is in the background of the history of the times," Eisner says.

Eisner plays Daisy's son Boolie Werthan who has to insist his mother gets a driver because she is 72 years old and had an accident backing out of the driveway.

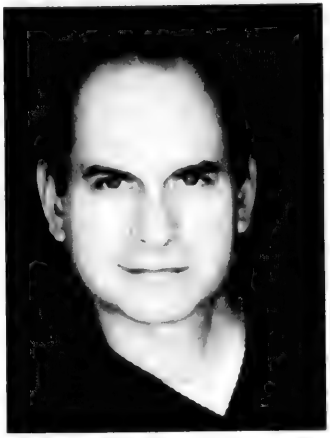
" The relationship of the driver and Miss Daisy grows from a frictional one to one of appreciation and love and for seeing each other for who they are," he says.

HGJTC decided to do this play as there is a Jewish element in it, as the Werthan family is Jewish. "It is a story about 'us and them' in my mind," explains Eisner. "I think it is a good reminder that racism is this self-inflicted toxic thing. The play is beautifully written and based on the grandmother of the writer Alfred Uhry. It has a lovely message and we are thrilled to be able to offer it to our audiences."

He says even though audiences may have seen the movie or a production of the play, he feels director Philip Akin has his own imprint and a production that people will see with fresh eyes. Eisner says he is excited to have this production in front of an audience.

Eisner can relate in part to his character, since his own mother, Janet, is 81. Eisner says his mother is a terrific lady who is with it and involved in many different things, although he does admit to using their relationship in developing his characterization.

Putting his co-artistic director's hat back on, Eisner says that he and fellow artistic director of HGJTC, Avery Saltzman are thrilled to be in their new space at The Greenwin Theatre. Subscription sales going into their ninth season are doing well and Eisner is so grateful to the Toronto Jewish audience and the audience in general for supporting the company, and they are working very hard to offer interesting productions.

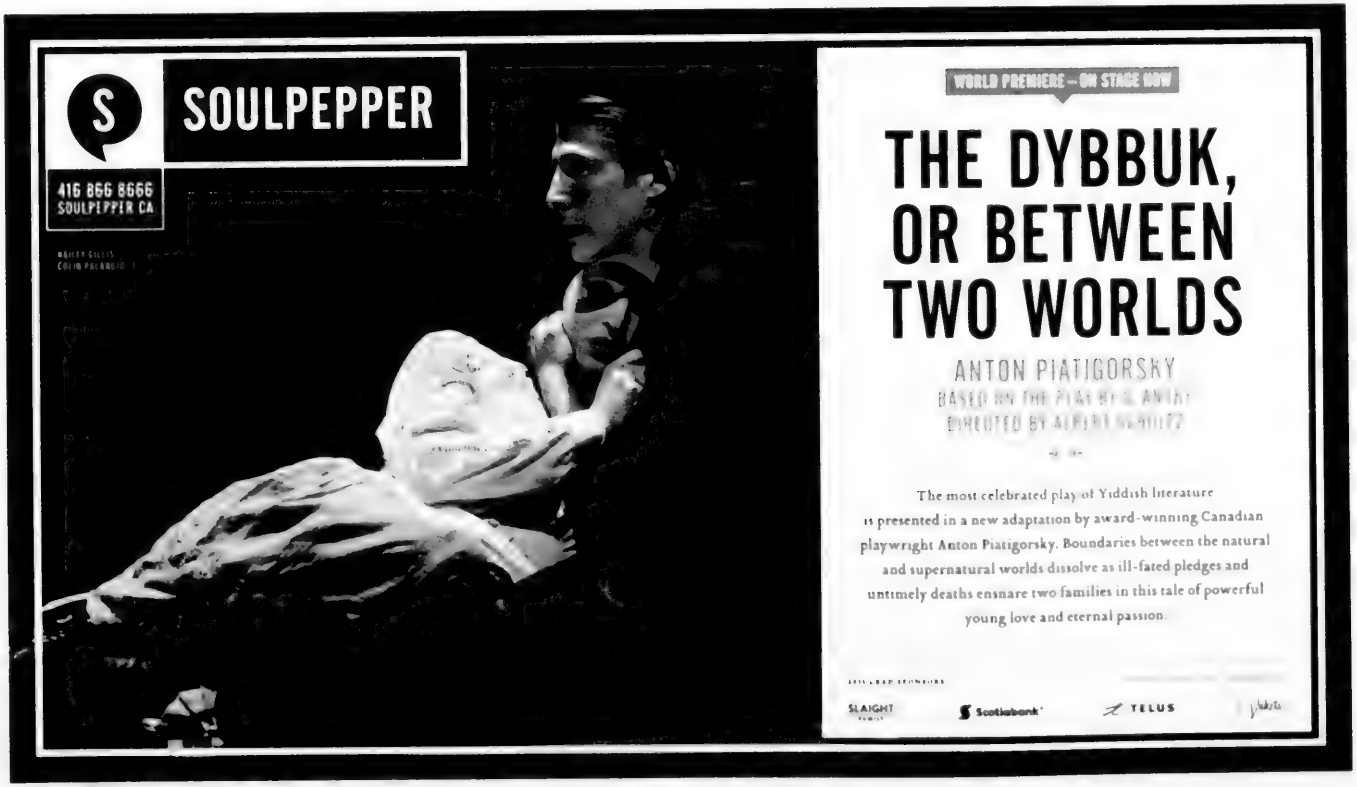


David Eisner

Eisner has devoted three decades to working in the entertainment industry including 100 television, film and theatre credits. One of his first roles was as the neighbourhood hooligan Guido Lefkowitz in the iconic CBC series *King of Kensington*. Many television viewers will remember him from the CBC teen series *Hanging In*. Other series appearances were the American *Highway to Heaven*, and *Cagney and Lacey* and the Canadian shows *Street Legal*, *Due South*, *The Eleventh Hour* and *Blue Murder*.

In 2004, he received critical acclaim for his starring role in the biopic TV movie *Choice: The Henry Morgentaler Story*, playing the controversial abortion doctor. As well as acting in over 600 episodes of *Rumours and Boarders* on CBC Radio, David has directed and produced over a dozen radio plays for the station. David most recently performed in HGJTC's stage productions of *Lost in Yonkers* and *New Jerusalem* ■

This production runs from May 30 to June 21 in The Greenwin Theatre at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. Joining Eisner on stage are Gemini Award nominee, Sharry as Daisy Werthan and Dora Award winner Sterling Jarvis as Hoke Coleburn For tickets to Driving Miss Daisy, call 1-855-985-2787 or online at www.hgjewishtheatre.com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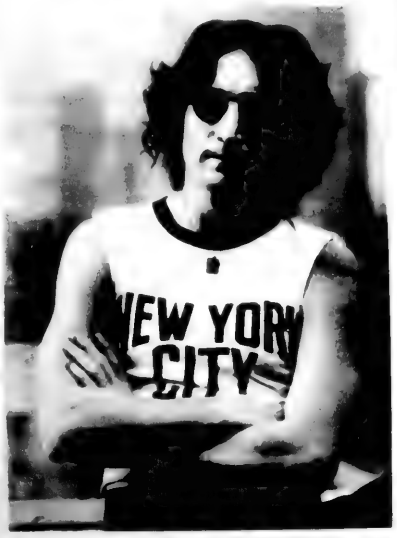

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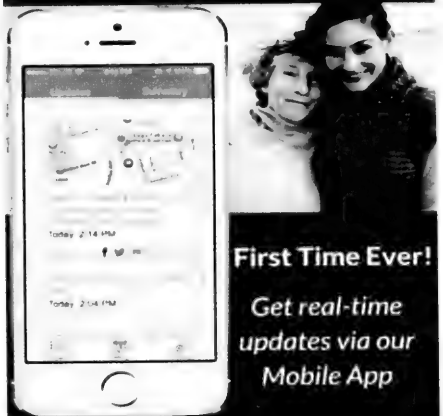

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Book debates issue of organ transplants

MARTIN LOCKSHIN
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

After the first human heart transplants in the 1960s, the late Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986), the leading authority on Halachah in the United States, ruled that transplants constituted "double murder": first, of the donor, whose heart was still functioning, and next, of the recipient, who invariably died shortly after the first experimental transplants.

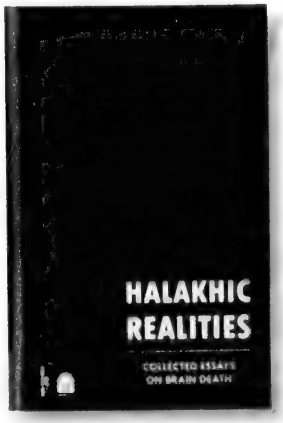
Later, transplant efficacy improved, and Rabbi Feinstein amended his position, claiming that transplants constituted murder only of the donor. As reported by reliable witnesses (but still disputed by some,) late in his life Rabbi Feinstein came around to supporting transplants as permissible according to Halachah.

This crucial change was primarily a result of the wide acceptance of "brain death" as a legitimate criterion for determining who is and is not alive. If we wait for a person's heart and lungs to cease functioning (the traditional way of determining death), the organs become unusable for most transplants. But if people are legally and halachically dead when their brain function ceases, even though their cardio-pulmonary function continues to be maintained by a machine, transplants are possible and legitimate.

This changes the Jewish religious view of organ transplants: if they are permissible, perhaps they are halachically obligatory or at least exceedingly meritorious. If we can save the life of another human being by donating an organ from our body, an organ that is no longer keeping us alive, shouldn't we do so?

The establishment "centrist Orthodox" rabbinic organization, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), has had a vacillating position on brain death. Decades ago, the RCA executive declared that brain dead patients are dead. But five years ago, the RCA published a long position paper (www.rabbis.org) that, while refraining from taking a definitive stand, unmistakably leaned toward rejecting brain death as a halachically acceptable way to distinguish life and death.

Now the newly established unabashedly modern Orthodox (or "open Orthodox") rabbinic organization, the International Rabbinic Fellowship (IRF), has joined the fray, publishing a collection of 22 essays entitled *Halakhic Realities: Collected Essays on Brain Death*, edited by Rabbi Dr. Zev Farber. (Full disclosure: I am a member of both the RCA and the IRF.) The essays, written by rabbis, ethicists and physicians, have some overlap, but surprisingly they manage to approach the issue from new and different angles. Most, but not all of the essays, support and encourage transplants.



Halakhic Realities: Collected Essays on Brain Death
edited by Zev Farber
Maggid Books International Rabbinic Fellowship

The variety of tone in the book is striking. For example, Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, sounding like the prophets of old, chastises those who say that a brain dead patient is not really dead:

"In the name of fealty to tradition, a tradition based on very limited and primitive science is upheld against a procedure that has saved thousands of lives. In the name of the sanctity of life, an act of lifesaving is labelled murder."

Contrast this with the dispassionate words of the philosopher-bioethicist, Jeremy Rosenbaum Simon: "Neither side has the clearly 'right' answers to these questions."

The internal differences in the book extend beyond tone. A highly respected Israeli rabbi who supports doing transplants, Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun, writes:

"Many people mistakenly believe that organ donation is the process of removing organs from the body of a dying person in the last moments of his or her life – God forbid! – an action that would be forbidden both halachically as well as medically and legally. The truth is quite the contrary. The entire medical establishment in our days agrees – and this rule is in force – that organs may be harvested only after the donor is deceased."

Since Rabbi Bin-Nun is convinced that brain dead patients are unambiguously dead, medically and halachically, he sees organ donation as permitted and even as an important mitzvah.

Yet, some of the essays by physicians raise questions about Rabbi Bin-Nun's certainty. The most gripping one is by Dr. Howard Doyle, a physician who performs transplants, treats transplant recipients, and also treats "the type of patient likely to become their donor."

Doyle supports transplants, but is candid about the medical and ethical ambiguities involved. While no one who was correctly diagnosed as "brain dead" has ever recovered to live a meaningful life, by most people's definition, Doyle describes many cases where patients were declared brain dead, but subsequently doctors reversed that determination, realizing that their brains were still functioning. Apparently, different jurisdictions have different rules about who determines brain death and how. In some U.S. states, "a physician isn't necessary . . and most require no specialized training." Even when the diagnosis of brain death is accurate, Doyle admits that such people are still alive in some sense of the word.

He concludes: "I do not believe that patients who meet the accepted criteria for brain death are dead – biologically, metaphysically, ontologically, and socially dead." But he continues, "I also do not believe a death so absolute is necessary for vital organ donation to be ethical. The donor need only be beyond harm. Or, stated differently, he should be dead enough." In the volume's summary essay, Rabbi Farber tries to justify Jewishly what it means to see an organ donor as not fully dead and still support transplants.

This first volume of essays published by the IRF sets a high standard. In general, it advocates for the mitzvah of organ donation. But in the best liberal tradition, it leaves room for different and even mutually exclusive viewpoints. This book will not end the halachic debate on brain death but it should move it to a higher level. ■

Versatile date pairs well with a variety of foods

EILEEN GOLTZ
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Dates pair well with other fruits, meats, and poultry. They are also excellent combined with vegetables, grains and in baked goods.

Medjool dates are considered the "best of the best" variety of dates you can get and while they are a bit harder to find, their amazing taste and flavour are certainly worth the extra effort and cost. It's best to store your dates in a tightly sealed container in a dark, cool pantry. They can also be refrigerated or frozen.

Couscous With Dates

- ❑ 1/3 cup water
- ❑ 2 tsp. olive oil
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. orange zest
- ❑ 1/8 tsp. salt
- ❑ 1/4 cup couscous
- ❑ 1 tbsp. finely chopped dried pitted dates
- ❑ 2 sliced green onions

In a saucepan combine the water, oil, zest, and salt and bring the mixture to a boil. Add in couscous and dates, mix to combine. Cover and remove the pan from the heat. Let set, covered, 5 minutes. Remove the lid, fluff the mixture with a fork and add in the green onions. Serve immediately. Serves 2. This recipe can be doubled or tripled.

Date Nut Bread

- ❑ 3/4 cup chopped pitted dates
- ❑ 1 cup cake flour
- ❑ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ❑ 3/4 tsp. cinnamon
- ❑ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ❑ pinch of nutmeg
- ❑ 3/4 cup oil
- ❑ 1/2 cup brown sugar
- ❑ 1/4 cup honey
- ❑ 2 eggs
- ❑ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ❑ 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 325. Grease a 9-in. loaf pan and set it aside. Place the dates into a bowl and cover them with very hot water. Let the dates soak for 15 minutes. In a bowl, sift together the cake flour, baking powder, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg. In another bowl, whisk together the oil, brown sugar, honey, eggs, and vanilla.

Combine the egg mixture with the flour mixture and mix to combine. Drain and pat dry the dates. Add the pecans and dates to the batter. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan. Bake for about 1 hour, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool on a rack until room temperature and then remove the bread from the pan. Makes 1 loaf. ■

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The Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, extends sincerest condolences to the Beker, Rorabaugh, O'Neil & Del Principe families on the passing of Bronia, z"l, a Holocaust survivor speaker and long time volunteer at our Centre.
May her memory be a blessing.
Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre

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Dear CHW Members and Friends,
We are pleased to announce our National Office has relocated to Toronto after 60 years in the beautiful city of Montreal, Quebec.
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We look forward to connecting with you.
Claudia Goldman
National President
president@chw.ca
Alina Ianson
National Executive Director
NEW NATIONAL OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION:
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Exhibit examines the difference between Ukrainian and Jewish memory

JODIE SHUPAC
jshupac@thecjn.ca

A Talmud Torah school in Dubno, in western Ukraine, 1912. One of the photos included in the UJE's exhibit courtesy of the Museum of the Petersburg Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Society. It was taken by Solomon Yudovin, a photographer who participated in the 1912-14 ethnographic expeditions led by S. An-Sky throughout the Jewish Pale of Settlement.

For Jews and non-Jewish Ukrainians, divergent narratives have arisen around some of Ukraine's historical events.

A Journey through the Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter. From Antiquity to 1914, is a traveling exhibition developed by the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter (UJE), a private, multinational initiative. Slated to visit four Canadian cities between late May and September, it seeks to give greater context to and showcase varying perspectives on important historical incidents that have shaped the Ukrainian-Jewish relationship.

The exhibit, which launches in Toronto May 28 at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre, Lebovic Campus, explores 2,000 years of Jewish presence on Ukrainian lands.

Through maps, books, photographs, posters and videos, it chronicles the parallel existences, struggles and transformations, as well as the cultural intermingling, of non-Jewish Ukrainians and Ukrainian Jews up to 1914.

The exhibit will run until June 7 at the Schwartz-Reisman Centre and will move to Winnipeg's Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural Centre for two weeks before returning to Toronto July 7 to 19 to be shown at St. Vladimir's Institute.

It will visit Edmonton and Montreal in September.

"One of the UJE's main goals is to create a shared historical narrative," said Alti Rodal, UJE's co-director and exhibit curator. "The two peoples have created separate narratives about the events of the past – particularly in times of crisis or violence – and one of our main goals is to have top scholars from Israel, North America and Ukraine come together and deal with issues about which there are different points of view... and reach an agreement, where possible, using evidence-based historical facts."

The UJE has already hosted a series of roundtable discussions on some of these topics with scholars of varying backgrounds, Rodal, a former professor of Jewish history at Concordia University, said.

The records of discussion that have emerged from these talks are in the process of being turned into a tangible "shared narrative," the content of which has helped inform the exhibit.

One controversial event the exhibit highlights is the Chmielnicki (Khmelnytsky) Massacre of 1648-9, when Ukrainian Cossacks, led by Bogdan Chmielnicki, rose up against Polish rule and massacred tens of thousands of Ukraine's Jews, who were known – and resented for – collecting duties and taxes on behalf of Polish landlords and bankers.

"For Ukrainians, Chmielnicki is a hero; from the Jewish perspective, he's a villain," explained Rodal. "Today, neither side looks at the other side, they just see their own perspective. Today in Ukraine, Chmielnicki is on a bank note and there's a major statue of him in Kiev. For Jews who visit Ukraine and see his image everywhere, they're taken aback."

The "difference in Ukrainian versus Jewish memory," as well as scholarly input on the subject, will be given prominence, Rodal said.

The exhibit is divided into four parts: the first features life in the territory that is today's Ukraine from antiquity to the partitioning of Poland in 1772; the second focuses on the chassidic movement, which originated on Ukrainian lands; and the final two examine the experiences of the then stateless Ukrainians and Jews in the Russian Empire and under Austrian Habsburg rule, respectively.

Several of the videos shown are the UJE's original creations, Rodal said, and deal with subjects like sites where Ukrainians and Jews encountered one another – like marketplaces, inns and taverns – and the everyday work of Jewish artisans in a range of crafts.

The UJE was launched in 2008 as a collaborative project between Ukrainians of Jewish and Christian – or other – heritages, and operates in Ukraine, Israel and various diasporas.

Funded and chaired by Ukrainian Canadian Jewish businessman James Temerty, the UJE works to promote stronger relations and understanding between the two peoples by engaging scholars, civic leaders, artists, governments and the public.

Three years ago, the UJE got some funding from the Canadian government to undertake several projects, including launching a website, creating a book of articles and developing the exhibit in question.

Rodal said the UJE made a point of showing the exhibit at major Jewish and Ukrainian centres in Canada.

Edmonton, for example, has a small Jewish community, she noted, but "a huge Ukrainian community." ■

Exhibit hours at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre are Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Monday and Tuesday, 1 p.m.-8 p.m. and Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
The exhibit is free.

WRY BREAD

Jews, rest easy. GOLEM is here

David Levine

OTTAWA — Prime Minister Harper's government continues to take bold action against anti-Semitism and hatred of all kind. Despite the controversy surrounding recent threats by government lawyers to have organizers of BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) campaigns prosecuted for hate speech, Canada's federal government has unveiled a broad new technological initiative designed to better enforce hate speech laws nationwide.

In a surprise move, it announced the formation of the new Government Office of Legally Enforced Mentalities (or GOLEM), a pre-crime program that utilizes the latest predictive technologies to target and eliminate anti-Semitic and anti-Israel speech before it occurs.

How does it work? If GOLEM's algorithm were to detect an upcoming hate crime – say, a terrorist plot, or a freshman gathering signatures for a divestment campaign – GOLEM would automatically send the name and location of the criminal to the nearest law enforcement officer, notify GOLEM's new judicial algorithm of the parameters for sentencing and contact an Uber driver to take the accused straight to prison.

As explained by Harper spokesman Richard K. Philip, "pre-criminal detection technology is based on a revolutionary algorithm that uses metadata, social media and the Matrix to target only those subjects whom we know are guilty, or will be guilty in the near future."

And how can they know that a crime will be committed? "Because of the algorithm," repeats Philip. "It's revolutionary."

Like the threatened BDS prosecutions, the GOLEM initiative will be authorized under the recently passed "Anti-Terror Act," Bill C-51 – and GOLEM's early success has silenced critics who called it "sweeping, dangerously vague and likely ineffective," or wondered about the wisdom of changing the Criminal Code to allow police to make "preventative arrests." (I can only assume that this explains their silence. We haven't been able to contact any critics of GOLEM since the day the program began.)

"Violence against Jews is illegal," says Philip, "and now, so is attempting, planning, threatening, considering or imagining it. We feel very confident we'll be able to prosecute these opinions underground to fester where they belong. And the real beauty of it lies in the old adage that once something has been outlawed, it never manages to gain any sort of allure or traction – especially within a student population."

GOLEM's trial project has been a huge success, uncovering many more subversive, terrorist and un-Canadian plots than ever imagined. Officials have confirmed that a major terror plot was disrupted (though details remain confidential), alongside 29 loose plans to deface synagogues, 953 offensive opinions expressed about the State of Israel and one 17-year-old student's plan – following an argument about reality television – to punch classmate Sharon Jacobson in the face.

Philip is quick to explain that GOLEM isn't just about arresting people: "We've managed to prevent the incarceration of several students who were just days from learning about a BDS campaign. By arresting their professor, those students have safely avoided the topic!"

While the technology behind this program promises hundreds of applications such as forecasting the weather or preventing murder – Philip confirms that Bill C-51 restricts the use of GOLEM "strictly to anti-Semitic and anti-Israel hate/thought crimes. The secret language in the secret part of the bill could not be clearer."

Philip highlighted the Harper government's strong relationship with Canada's Jewish population as the inspiration for the program: "We believe in small, effective government that looks after the people [and that goes double for you people [Jews]. Think of us as the older brother you always needed. We have your back."

And so, like its namesake, the GOLEM program is poised to stand watch over Canada and its Jews for years to come, tirelessly monitoring our phone calls, wireless networks and banking information, detecting every single encroachment on our civil liberties until the day when there are no more to be found. ■

Family Moments

Mazel tov! Leah & Allan Schneiderman celebrate 40 years of love and happiness on May 25. Happy anniversary! Love, Ellie, Yonatan, Mara, Dave & Ethan.

Mazel tov: 75th wedding anniversary Frances & Sol Levin. With love, your adoring 4 Children and spouses, 13 grandchildren and spouses , 25 great grandchildren.

Mazel tov to Sol Israel Sternfeld celebrating your 90th birthday. Love from your family, Doreen, Robin, Neil, David, Michael, Corey, and Sienna Rebecca Ann.

Happy 4th birthday to Ryker Klein! We're so proud of you! Love Mommy, Daddy, Everett, grandparents Heather & Gary Abrams and Madeleine & Bill Klein.

Email your digital photos along with a description of 25 words or less to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online **to www.CJNews.com** and click on **"Family Moments"**

What's New

MAY 28 - JUNE 4

by Lila Sarick

Thursday, May 28

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE
Stephen Berk discusses "The Second World War in historical perspective," tonight, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. May 29-31 he speaks at Beth Tzedec Congregation. May 30, "A tale of two elections (Israel and USA)"; May 31, at 10 a.m., "After 70 years: Auschwitz and anti-Semitism."

Saturday, May 30

SEXUAL ORIGINS
Aviva Richman discusses "Sexual consent: Rabbinic origins," 1:15 p.m. First Narayever Congregation.

TORAH STUDY
Abe Birenbaum discusses the Torah portion at Beth Tikvah Synagogue

Sunday, May 31

JEWISH BURIAL RECORDS
Nolan Altman discusses "JewishGen's Online Worldwide Burial Registry and the genealogical value of Jewish burial records," 10:30 a.m. at Temple Sinai. Sponsored by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto. www.jgstoronto.ca

KAFKA TRANSLATED
Editors and translators **Elana** and **Menachem Wolf** discuss "Franz Kafka, Georg Morderchai Langer: New translations," 11 a.m., First Narayever Congregation.

JAKE'S LEMONADE STAND
Jake Wagman hosts a lemonade stand, to raise money for sarcoma research at SickKids Hospital, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m., 102 Mountbatten Rd., Thornhill.

PARENTS OF LONE SOLDIERS
A meeting for parents of lone soldiers in the IDF, or for those wanting more information, will be held 7 p.m., in the Bathurst and Eglinton area. To RSVP and for exact location, email nirarittenberg@rogers.com

NA'AMAT CELEBRATION
Na'amat celebrates "90 years and counting," Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Tickets $18 by advance purchase only. 416-636-5425 or naamattoronto.com

Haifa U says thanks

Dr. Arnie Aberman received an honorary doctorate last month from the University of Haifa for his contributions to Canadian medicine and the State of Israel. From left are University of Haifa rector, Prof. David Faraggi, tribute chair Tony Comper, Aberman and university president Amos Shapira.

MUSICAL SALUTE TO ISRAEL
Club Chaverut presents **Michael Kinkis and Rachel** in a musical tribute to Israel, Beth David Synagogue, 1:30 p.m. $7/$10. RSVP 905-764-8141.

IF I HAD A HAMMER
Stephen Richer performs songs and stories based on the life of Pete Seeger, 7:30 p.m., Congregation Darchei Noam.

Monday, June 1

CHUG HATANACH
Rabbi Wayne Allen teaches Psalm 24 at 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue.

Tuesday, June 2

LUNCH & LEARN
Steve McDonald discusses "Zionism and Jewish identity through the eyes of a convert," at Beth Tikvah Synagogue's lunch and learn program. Lunch starts at 12:15 p.m. RSVP 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

VOLUNTEER IN ISRAEL
Learn about the program offered by Canadian American Active Retirees in Israel at an information meeting at Temple Emanu-El, 2 p.m. RSVP 416-665-2482.

PEACE OF MIND GALA
Peace of Mind, a program developed by the Israel Centre for the Treatment of Psycho-Trauma, holds a gala at The Warehouse. $118. For tickets, email pomcanada.com/tickets.

Wednesday, June 3

IMMIGRATION AND SPONSORSHIP
Lea Soibelman, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, discusses "Canadian immigration and sponsorship," today, 6:30 p.m. (in Russian) and June 10, 6:30 p.m. (in English). Day Centre for Seniors, 1600 Steeles Ave. W. Limited caregiver respite and transportation available. 416-635-2900, ext. 498 or 499.

BEER TASTING & FOOD PAIRING
Beth Emeth Men's Club holds an evening of beer tasting and delicious food with **Stephen Rich,** 7 p.m. $40. RSVP 416-633-3838.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
"Jewish history: A one-hour crash course," is the topic discussed at Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8 p.m. Sponsored by Jews for Judaism, 416-789-0020.

Thursday, June 4

YIDDISH VINKL
Myrna Neuringer Levy discusses "World War I from the other side," noon. Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $20 includes lunch. RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

KENSINGTON MARKET SOCIETY
Authors **Amy Lavender Harris, Sean Dixon, Michael Ross Albert** discuss the representation of Kensington Market in their works, 6-8 p.m., Lillian H. Smith Library, 239 College St. Presented by the Kensington Market Historical Society

GOLF TOURNAMENT
Chabad Markham holds a golf tournament at Sleepy Hollow Golf Club. To register, call 905-886-0420, ext. 222.

Coming Events

TALENT IN CONCERT
Ken Chasen, whose songs and prayer melodies are sung in North America, England and Israel, performs June 6, 7:30 p.m. at Temple Har Zion. Tickets, 905-889-2252.

VIP CLUB
The VIP Club (vision impaired persons) meets June 8, 7 p.m. at Bernard Betel Centre. $5/$7. Call **Bess,** 905-508-2892.

EATING DISORDERS DEMYSTIFIED
Dr. Heather Wheeler discusses "Eating orders demystified: Signs, prevention and treatment," June 8 at 7 p.m., Temple Sinai.

ISRAEL DAY FESTIVAL
Na'amat Canada hosts an Israel Day festival, June 7, Wood Valley Park (Lebovic Jewish Community Campus). 11 a.m.- 5 p.m.

S.Y. AGNON LECTURES
Rabbi Jeffrey Saks discusses the work of the only Hebrew Literature Nobel Prize winner, S.Y. Agnon, June 8 at Kehillat Shaarei Torah, and June 9 at Beth Avraham Yosef of Toronto Congregation, 8 p.m.

ISRAEL GUIDE DOG BENEFIT
Randy Bachman performs at a benefit for the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind, June 9, 7:30 p.m., Koerner Hall. For tickets, 855-985-2787 or www.rcmusic.ca

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Deadline reminders:
The deadline for the issue of June 11 is June 1. All deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; email **whatsnewcjn@gmail.com**

HIGH PARK WALK

The Canadian Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel holds a free guided nature walk in High Park, June 14, 10:30 a.m. RSVP by June 1, spnicanada@gmail com

JF&CS

GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Registration is required for all programs Classes are open to all members of the community. Fee reductions available Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com
All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted

- Effective Parenting: a 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-10. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m
- Parenting the child/teen with ADHD a 4-session group for parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. Starts May 28, 7-9 p.m
- Living with adult ADHD: A 4-session group for adults who have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. Starts June 2, 7-9 p.m.

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For Seniors

- **Adult 55+ Fitness, Miles Nadal JCC.** Play pickleball, a cross between tennis, badminton and Ping-Pong, Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. $9. 416-924-6211, ext. 526.
- **Adult 55+, Miles Nadal JCC**. May 28, **Janice Masur** discusses "Growing up Jewish in Uganda," 1:30 p.m. $4. Email lisar@mnjcc.org or 416-924-6211, ext. 155.
- **Earl Bales Seniors Club.** 416-395-7881. Walking group with brunch, June 8, 10 a.m.; Casino Woodbine, June 17; Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30 p.m.; Balance and co-ordination class, Tuesdays 10 a.m.
- **Bernard Betel Centre.** 416-225-2112. May 31, Silverthorn Symphonic Winds performs at 1:30 p.m.; June 2, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "Jonathan Netanyahu: the hero of Entebbe," 10 a.m.; June 4, lecture on "Osteoporosis," 1:30 p.m.; Mondays, June 1-29, **Rosalin Krieger** discusses "Being a mensch in Hollywood: the highs and lows of four distinctive Jewish-American actors," 1-3 p.m.
- **Support group for seniors** discussing health and wellness, financial planning and other issues. Meets Fridays 1:30-3 p.m. until June 12, Bathurst-Finch Hub, 540 Finch Ave. W. Sponsored by Circle of Care.
- **Circle of Care** offers free exercise and fall prevention classes. Call 416-635-2860
- **New Horizons** is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club open three times a week. Kosher food and trips. Call 416-256-1892
- **Adath Israel Congregation**. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub, 12:30 p.m. Call **Sheila,** 416-665-3333 or **Judi** 416-785-0941
- **Shaar Shalom**. Play duplicate bridge Mondays, 1:30 p.m. Lessons, 12:30 p.m Must reserve. 416-633-3838
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- **Temple Har Zion**. Play mah-jong Wednesday afternoons. Email bevmi chaels1@gmail.com
- **Beth Tzedec Synagogue**. Play bridge Thursdays 1:30-4 p.m., mah-jong, 2-4 p.m. Call **Maureen,** 416-781-3514
- **Chabad of Markham** offers lunch and learn classes for seniors with **Rabbi Meir Gitlin,** Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. for women; Fridays at 10 a.m. for men. 905-886-0420, or email Rabbig@chabadmarkham.org
- **Beth Sholom's** seniors group meets for lunch and exercise every Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Prosserman JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com To register for programs call ext. 4235.

- **Sadko Hadzihasanovic** teaches "Painting landscape with watercolour," Aug. 10-14, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.
- **Leon Soriano** teaches "Painting and mix media," July 14-16, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.
- Osteofit classes for those at risk of falling or who have osteoporosis offered Wednesdays at 11 a.m. For questions about the class, call **Sandra Renzacci,** ext. 4000.
- Free exercise classes for seniors, can be performed in a chair, offered Tuesdays and Fridays, 11 a.m.
- **Kathryn Chelin** teaches "Drawing for the terrified beginner," July 13, 17, 9 a.m.- noon.
- **Osnat Lippa** presents "Pioneering women artists of the modern era," June 9, 16, 1 p.m.
- Casual Yiddish conversation, Mondays, 1:30-3 p.m.
- **Jordan Klapman** discusses "Hollywood's Oscar-winning Jewish songs," June 4, 11 at 1 p.m.
- **Carol Lypsze** discusses her book of short stories, *The Saviour Shoes*, May 28, 7 p.m.
- **Rosalin Krieger** discusses sitcoms of the 1990s, July 28- Aug. 18, 1-3 p.m.

Miles Nadal JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org

- A photo exhibit entitled *I Work Here* by **Benjamin Rondel** is on display at the gallery until June 28.
- Israeli Kabbalat Shabbat for families with young children, May 29, 5:30 p.m Call ext. 321
- The MNJCC and Montreal's Segal Center for Performing Arts are sponsoring the 2015 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition. The winning play will performed in a public staged reading Submission deadline July 2. www.mnjcc org/2015CJPC
- *The Legend of Marshmallow Island*, presented by Mystic Drumz, May 31, 11:15 a.m. Tickets www.algreentheatre.ca
- **Katherine Barber** discusses "Jewish contributions to the world of ballet," June 1, 8, 15, 1:30 p.m
- **Adam Nayman** discusses the work of filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen, 7-9 p.m June 1. *The Hudsucker Proxy/Intolerable Cruelty*
- MNJCC Community Choir performs June 3 and 4, 8 p.m. For tickets, call ext. 0
- Accessible yoga for people of all abilities, June 7, 1 p.m.; Inclusive ballroom and Latin dance workshop, June 7, 2:15 p.m.; Mixed abilities dance event with DJ **Layah Jane,** June 28, 4 p.m. Call ext. 330.
- Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Kol Nidre* and *70 Hester Street*, June 7, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker **Shirley Kumove.** Box office opens one hour before screening time.
- Strength and Self: A weekly group for women who have experienced abuse in their lives. Be part of a group focusing on support, wellness and meditation. Mondays, 11 a.m. Free. Email strengthandself@mnjcc.org or ext. 147
- Register for Summer Institute for Creative Adults. Singers edition, seeking male voices, July 13-17; Theatre edition, Aug. 17-21. Ext. 250
- Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.; Sundays at 8 a.m **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200

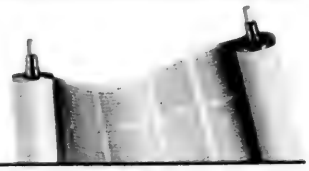
Schwartz/Reisman Centre

Lebovic Campus, 9600 Bathurst St 905-303-1821. Register for programs ext. 3025

- Beer and cheese pairing workshop July 16, 7 p.m
- The JCCs go to the Shaw Festival to see *Sweet Charity*, June 25
- **Nora Gold** discusses "Anti-Israelism on campus," July 20, 7 p.m
- **Suzanne Metz** offers a "Non-traditional life drawing workshop," July 14-16
- Bridge level 1 and 2 starts the week of June 22
- Create ceramic tea sets Aug. 4-7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m
- Intermediate and beginner mah-jong start the week of June 22. ■

Parshah

Naso | Numbers 4:21-7:89



Rabbi Aaron Katchen celebrates the Friday night tradition of blessing our children
Rabbi Michal Shekel considers the lessons we can all learn from the work of the Levites
Rabbi Howard Morrison counts the various meanings and interpretations of the word Naso

Aaron Katchen

"May the Lord bless you and watch over you. May the Lord cause His countenance to shine to you and favour you. May the Lord raise His countenance toward you and grant you peace."

"They shall bestow My Name upon the children of Israel, so that I will bless them."(Numbers 6:24-27)

My favourite time of the week is Friday night, after bringing in Shabbat. I dance with my children as we sing *Shalom Aleichem*, and in the moments before I make Kiddush, I give each of my children their blessing. The text of the blessing is Numbers 6:24-26 (above), an instruction by God to the kohanim (priests), to bless the Jewish People with these words.

In Israel and in many eastern traditions, the kohanim say these verses daily. In my Ashkenazi Diaspora world, we only hear them publicly on certain festivals. Otherwise, we are limited to a "remembrance" of them in our service, or we share them privately between parent and child on Shabbat.

But what does it mean to bless someone, whether it's the kohanim blessing the Jewish People or a parent blessing their children? As with most things in life, there is a simple answer and a complex answer.

The simple answer is that speech has power. Our words impact others, both positively and negatively.

The complex answer is that we are transforming ourselves into conduits to bring down God's blessings. The last verse invokes this very idea, that the source of all blessings is from God.

However, God is not a pull toy, where you pull a string and the doll talks – you say the blessing, and God answers.

As with every healthy relationship, we don't always get what we ask for. Rather, God gave us language to engage each other, bless each other and, to quote the verse, "grant peace." ■

Rabbi Aaron Katchen is associate executive director of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

Michal Shekel

Naso provides us with details about moving days in the wilderness and God's very own moving company, the Levites. Different clans had specific tasks: the Gershonites were responsible for the various coverings related to the Tabernacle and Tent of Meeting; the Merarites handled planks, poles, ropes and pegs; and the Kohathites were in charge of the sanctuary items.

In Bamidbar Chapter 7, the tribal chieftains bring offerings to dedicate the Tabernacle, including carts and oxen to pull the carts. These become the property of the Levites and are used as ancient moving vans, except that not all the movers got to use the vans: "But to the Kohathites he did not give any; since theirs was the service of the [most] sacred objects, their porterage was by shoulder." (Numbers 7:9) It seems that the most sacred items couldn't be trusted to moving vans and had to be carried manually. For the Kohathites, carrying the sacred objects on their shoulders is literally the burden of holiness.

The Kotzker Rebbe taught that in fulfilling this assignment, the Kohathites had to be fully committed to the task: "A person does not acquire even the smallest spark of holiness without effort." Rabbi Morris Adler also saw the Kohathites as role models going beyond matters of portage: "When it comes to the very heart of religion, we must not try to find – and cannot really find – a substitute for our own shoulders. We cannot transfer to anybody else, or to anything else, the obligations that rest exclusively upon ourselves."

Naso means "to raise." In modern life, we often seek spiritual elevation on paths that hold the promise of great joy and personal happiness. How interesting, then, that what we often approach as being the most burdensome can surprise us by being truly spiritually uplifting. ■

Rabbi Michal Shekel is the executive director of the Toronto Board of Rabbis and spiritual leader of Har Tikvah Congregation in Brampton, Ontario.

Howard Morrison

The title of this week's parshah is Naso. This Biblical word has many meanings in the Torah and Jewish literature. In Exodus 34:7, the root of Naso means "to forgive," based on God's 13 merciful attributes. We can imitate God by learning to offset our own personal feelings of hatred and seek to be forgiving.

The word "Naso" also means "to lift up." On festive holy days, Jews of priestly descent lead a liturgical ritual called *nesiat kapayim*, literally, the lifting of the hands. The priestly blessing is introduced by the words: "Praised are you Lord our God ruler of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to bless His people Israel with love." Lifting up the hand in our tradition expresses love. We can offset feelings of hatred with deeds of loving kindness.

Naso also means "to count." The fourth book of the Torah, called Numbers in English, begins with a series of countings. God counts the people of Israel as a whole, then again in smaller, more discrete units. When you love things, you count them over and over – stamps, coins, baseball cards, etc. You count them as a whole, and you count them again and again.

Do contemporary Diaspora Jews wish to be visually counted as Jews? Have we responded to God's call by accepting the challenges and responsibilities of being Jewish? When Israel faces hatred, will we pledge to support Israel by visiting and/or contributing in a meaningful way? Will we stand up to be counted?

Naso is the root of *nissuin*, the traditional term for Jewish marriage. During *nissuin*, the seven marriage blessings are recited under the chupah, concluding with the words: "May there be heard in the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of joy and gladness, the voice of groom and the voice of bride."

If you want to replace the atmosphere of hatred with something positive, beautiful and inspiring, take the word Naso with you. Express feelings of forgiveness, love, being called upon and counted on, and celebrate the joys of Jewish family life. ■

Rabbi Howard Morrison is senior clergy at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in Toronto.

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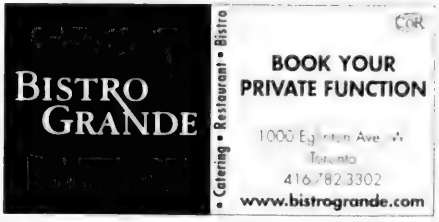

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THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS
MAY 28, 2015

Michael Khoury: Israeli Arab promotes trade in Canada

PAUL LUNGEN
plungen@thecjn.ca

Michael Khoury is Israel's trade consul to Canada. He hails from the predominately Arab city of Shfar'am, in Israeli's north, near Haifa. He is in the second year of a four-year posting in Toronto. He came with his wife, who works in the consular section, and three children attending local schools. He spoke to *The CJN* earlier this month.

Can you tell me a little about your background?
I am the consul for economic affairs of the State of Israel here in Canada. Our main job is to try to promote Israeli exports and help Israeli companies do business here in Canada, and to try to attract Israeli investors to Canada.

I joined the Ministry of the Economy in 2000 and before that I worked for Bank Hapoalim, the biggest bank in Israel, as a financial consultant. I decided to change careers because I believe exports and trade is the future and it is very important.

Where have you been posted before?
Canada is my second posting. My first was in Athens. I was sent there in 2003 for four years, and it was very interesting, due to the fact the Olympic Games occurred in 2004.

We succeeded to get eight Israeli companies involved in Olympic projects, with total sales or exports for the companies of around $30 million. They were involved in homeland security and telecom companies – cameras and surveillance systems.

What was the reputation of Canada in Israel as a posting for people like yourself?
It is a good place – good potential, good economy, nice people, bad weather. Yes, it is pretty much like the U.S. economy, but 10 times smaller.

We have two offices – one here in Toronto, the other in Montreal. I am the spokesman for the whole country. We will soon have four employees in addition to myself.

Are there big cultural differences in one country versus another when you try to promote business with Israel?
Of course. The biggest challenge here is twofold. First of all, Canadians don't look to Israel as a big enough market. The other challenge is that Israeli companies, when they consider coming to North America, mainly come to the United States. I'm trying to build a platform, or roadshow, to convince Israeli companies to consider coming for one or two days to Toronto or Montreal. I'm trying to get two or three delegations a year.

Another thing about doing business in Canada is that generally Canadians are conservative compared to the United States or Europe. It means it will take more time to do business and it will take much more effort to convince anybody in Canada to implement solutions or technology from Israel.

Michael Khoury

> *I'm part of Israel, and I talk to people as an Israeli.*

What are the main sectors in Canada you're trying to promote to Israeli businesses?
Now we are trying to focus on life sciences and medical devices. That's one. The other is cyber security. That can be relevant to different companies, banks being one of them. Hydro companies are another sub-sector. Any infrastructure or big companies, they need cyber solutions.

It is not physical security. It is security that has to do with information – anything to do with your computer, IT, different systems, internally and externally.

What does your office do to help Israeli companies conclude a deal?
I'm here to facilitate all companies that choose me. This office is a place where Israeli companies can get information and assistance to help them find relevant partners.

We try to initiate business delegations, together with our ministry in Israel and the Export Institute, which is affiliated with the ministry. For example, this year we decided to promote an event in Israel and succeeded in bringing representatives of seven hydro companies in different parts of Canada to a cyber tech event in Israel. We set up meetings for them with the companies and with organizations that deal with cyber issues. And now we are following up with them here.

When you talk to people about using Israeli products, companies or solutions, do you find resistance because of the political situation in Israel?
Not at all. In Canada, the government is very friendly and the people are really friendly. Companies, officials, NGOs – everybody I come in contact with – are really friendly people, and they are aware and open to consider co-operation with Israeli companies.

But doing business depends on price, on service, on quality. It depends on other things, not at all with the political situation.

You mention NGOs, but there are NGOs who advocate boycotting and withdrawing investments from Israel. Do you ever run into that?
I haven't. Even if there is something, it is very minor, and it's not relevant to companies or partners that we are trying to approach. All companies, all partners that we are trying to approach have nothing to do with this boycott thing.

Compared to what is going on with other countries around the world, it is very minimal.

And the anti-apartheid movement, you haven't felt that?
We haven't felt it, not at all. At the end of the day, we are succeeding in getting delegations from Canada to Israel.

What is the extent of the trade between Canada and Israel?
Trade is about $1 billion between the two countries – sometimes it's $1.2 billion– but it should be much more, in my eyes. It was about $1 billion last year.

So what do you think it should be?
It's been growing, but we should double that number, at least. But it needs a lot of awareness by Israeli companies of the Canadian market.

The Israeli companies are generally small and they have very limited resources. They have to choose which markets are most important. China is one of them. Germany is another one, maybe the U.S. Canada is smaller and that's maybe why Israelis don't consider Canada to be a big enough market. But it is.

You're a Christian Arab from Israel. Do you attend Jewish functions in Toronto and talk about Israel? Is it difficult because of your background?
It's not difficult, but I'm not a religious person, so I don't really care about religion. I respect myself and I respect the State of Israel. The Arabs are a minority in Israel and the Christians are a minority inside the minority. We are 20 per cent of the Arab minority.

It's very important to be part of Israel. We want to be part. We want to be part in every aspect, in representing the country abroad, and professionally and personally. I feel really part of Israel. So yes, I'm part of Israel, and I talk to people as an Israeli.

When I talk to people I make them understand that Israel is not only Jewish – 20 or 25 per cent are not Jewish.

So I'm part of this side. Maybe I'm not part of the mainstream of the Israeli society, but it is part of Israeli society, so that makes it more colourful, let's say.

I think it even makes it interesting for people to see something different, that somebody's who's not Jewish is representing the State of Israel. It surprises people in a positive way. I think it's good.

There are a few people like that, representing Israel abroad, mainly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Do you go out to meet the Israeli Arab community in Canada?
I do. I also have relatives in Canada who left Israel in the 1970s and '80s. I'm in touch with them. They are also proud of me that I am in this position.

Do you look at local Arab Israelis as someone who could do business with Israel?
Of course. In the last five to 10 years the State of Israel, the government has tried to create tools to help Arab companies develop technology and become part of society, part of the economy. We are 20 per cent of the population, but we contribute only eight per cent of the GDP to the general economy. That's a pity. Israel loses out of a lot of money, a lot of jobs, a lot of opportunities around the world.

So, a lot of things are being done right now to have this group of people, the Arabs, join Israeli society. Especially having them work in good companies and develop their own companies. A lot of high-tech is being developed right now.

I believe in 10 to 15 years, we will see quite a good number of Arab companies.

Most of these companies are very small and startup companies. It will take some time for them to be a company with solutions that can be sold outside of Israel. But we are getting there. ■

This interview has been edited and condensed for style and clarity.

Jewish history does not condemn the future

Backstory

PAUL SOCKEN

A stunning talmudic discussion ends with the sages concluding that while it would have been better if man had not been created, one should struggle for moral perfection. This is not the kind of conclusion one would expect to find in a cornerstone religious text of Judaism. Perhaps it should not be surprising, given that the Talmud was complied in exile, after the destruction of sovereign Israel and the loss of the two Temples in Jerusalem. Nonetheless, it reflects a sad and disheartening reality.

Non-Jewish thinkers can also be pessimistic about human nature and the human condition. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant was the supreme pessimist. He is known for the declaration: "Out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made."

The Bible, in Genesis, unequivocally says that God declared his creation good – except for man, whom He endowed with the choice between good and evil. Choice, it seems, is the key.

If we reflect on the state of the world, we must acknowledge the case of those who view the human condition negatively. Yet, if we ask how much pain and grief is the result of man's inhumanity to man, what would be the answer? If, miraculously, every person chose – here I reiterate the Divine gift of free will – to act humanely and compassionately, how much adversity would be reduced? There would, of course, be earthquakes and tsunamis, accidents and illness, but what percentage of human suffering would those constitute?

The talmudic sage Hillel responded to a potential convert who wanted to learn all about Judaism "while standing on one foot." He said, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. That is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary. Now, go and study."

The Torah is teaching that the way things are needn't be the way things will be. If man is willing to learn from history, to listen to "the better angels of his nature," to act charitably, to take responsibility, the world could be a much better place.

Pagan culture saw humanity as the plaything of the gods, at the mercy of their cruel whim. Judeo-Christian civilization believes in a benevolent God desiring the betterment of his creation and generously empowering them with the ability to repair a broken world.

> *The Torah is teaching that the way things are needn't be the way things will be.*

The Torah teaches "If you encounter an ox of your enemy or his donkey wandering, you shall return it to him repeatedly. If you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under his burden, would you refrain from helping him? You shall help him repeatedly." (Exodus 23:4). This is an ethics lesson of the highest order. We are commanded to treat even an enemy with honesty and integrity – and to do so repeatedly. This implies that such an act is meant to be part of a pattern of righteous behaviour, not a single magnanimous gesture. Judaism presents profound lessons in ethics and morality and leaves its implementation to the individual.

Just knowing that the world could be vastly improved and everyone's happiness could potentially be greatly enhanced if people undertook to make it so, means that it is possible. As Moses declares in his closing remarks at the very end of the Bible: God's commandment to choose life and to do good is "very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to perform it." Again, the choice is ours.

World history, including and especially Jewish history, does not condemn the future. Philosophers like Kant represent only their own gloom not the destiny of humankind. The biblical insistence on human choice and freewill is liberating and positive. Life has too often been almost impossible to bear, but it need not be that way. ■

OBITUARIES AND RELATED NOTICES

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Stanley Paulin	May 10/15	2 Barclay Court
Sydney Frankfort	May 10/15	175 Cumberland St.
Rose Copeland	May 10/15	343 Clark Ave. West
Hilda Middlestadt	May 12/15	302 Glencairn Ave.
Helen Miller	May 12/15	8 Covington Road
Alan Borovoy	May 11/15	710 Spadina Ave.
Saul Zitzerman	May 12/15	321 Chaplin Crescent
Harry Bromet	May 13/15	2055 Upper Middle Rd
Nir Bareket	May 12/15	119 Lascelles Blvd.
Jerry Katz	May 15/15	7 Flanders Road
Rose Lefko	May 16/15	133 Torresdale Ave.
Ruth Brooks	May 16/15	11 Townsgate Dr.
Heather Carla Levine	May 16/15	178 Romac Court

HEBREW DASIC

Rebecca Ostry	May 9/15	80 Danforth Avenue
Beatrice Konigsberg	May 14/15	229 Chemin Des Amarantes

Sidlofsky, Shirley Marion (Cohen)

Passed away at Wellington Terrace, Fergus, on Sunday, May 10, 2015, at the age of 86 years. Beloved wife of the late Dr. Samuel Sidlofsky (2010). Loving mother of Judith Sidlofsky Stoffman of Guelph and James (Simma) of Richmond Hill. Devoted grandmother of Malcolm Stoffman (Morgan Wyatt), Allison Stoffman (Kevin VanderWerf), Daniel Sidlofsky and Joshua Sidlofsky. Proud great-grandmother of Maxwell Wyatt-Stoffman, Michael Wyatt-Stoffman and Faith VanderWerf. Dear sister of Helene Pasen (Lionel) of Toronto.

Services were held at the Beth Isaiah Synagogue, Surrey and Dublin Streets, Guelph on Thursday, May 14, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. Interment was in the Beth Isaiah Section of Woodlawn Memorial Park. Private Shiva. Memorial donations to Parkinson Society of Canada would be appreciated.

Arrangements entrusted to the ***GILCHRIST CHAPEL – McIntyre & Wilkie Funeral Home****, One Delhi Street, Guelph, (519-824-0031). We invite you to leave your memories and donations online at: www.gilchristchapel.com*

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
JUDITH DUKE ע"נ
will take place
Sunday, June 7, 2015
at 11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
6033 Bathurst St. (South of Steeles)
Yavne Section
Reception Following at Bathurst Lawn Reception Room

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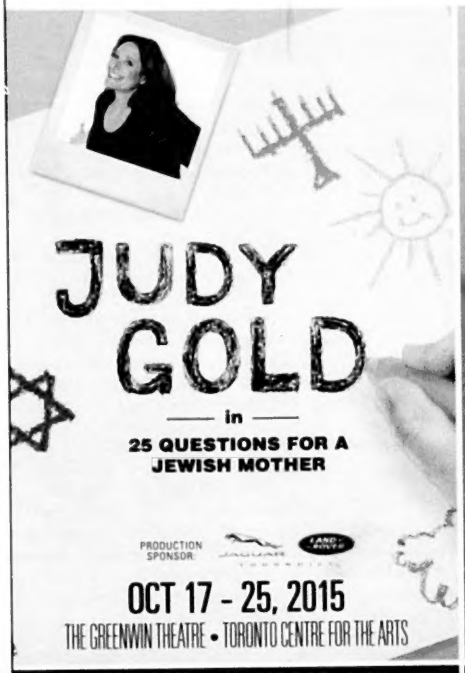
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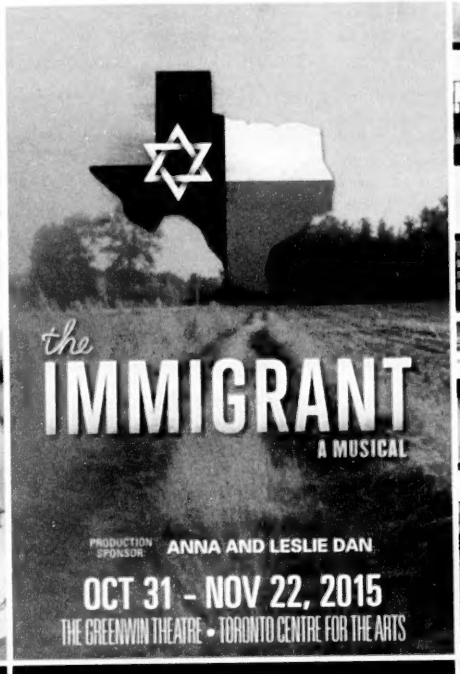
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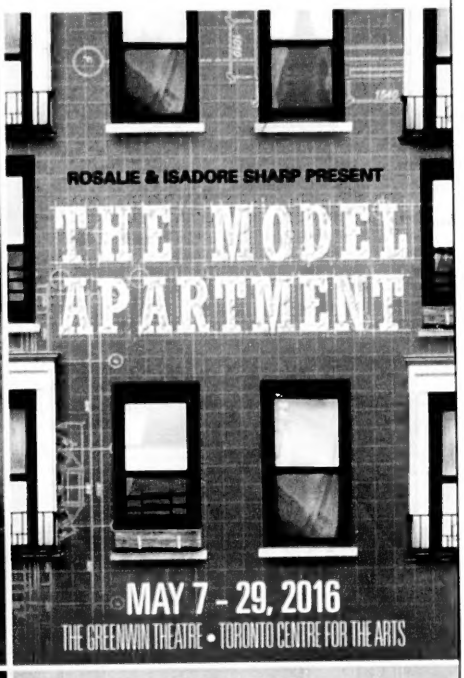

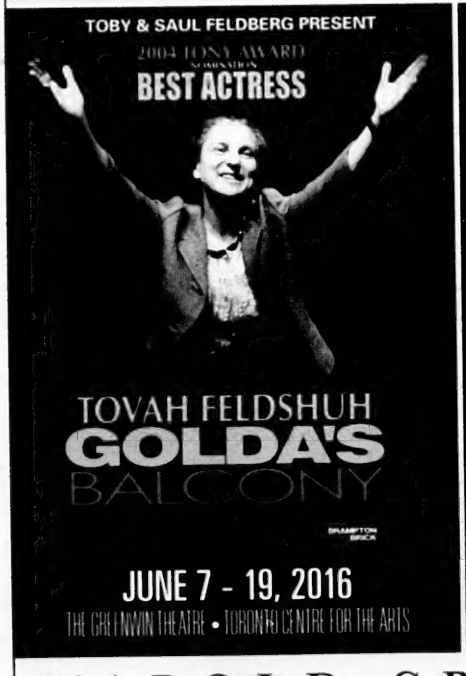

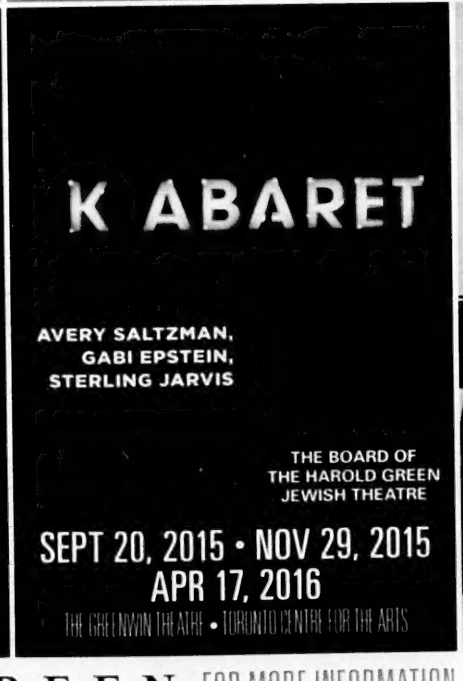
KABARET
AVERY SALTZMAN,
GABI EPSTEIN,
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THE BOARD OF THE HAROLD GREEN JEWISH THEATRE
SEPT 20, 2015 • NOV 29, 2015
APR 17, 2016
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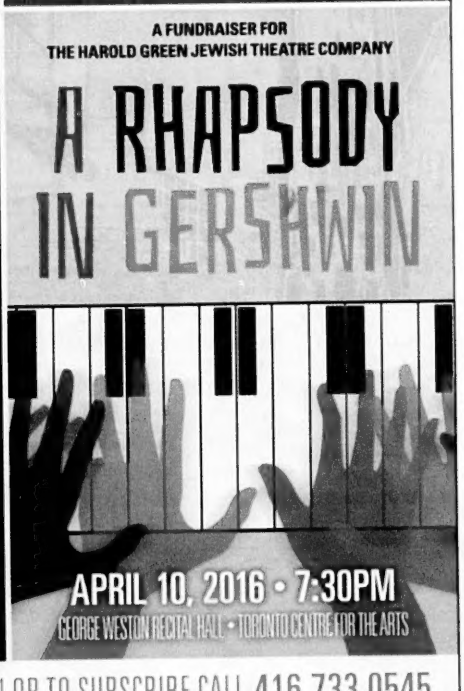
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